Wiltshire Police is supporting the National Rural Crime Awareness week that starts today. Since the pandemic the Force has seen an increase in rural crime across Wiltshire and Swindon, particularly theft of high value electronics, vehicles and equipment.

ACC Mark Cooper said: “Although we have seen an increase in rural crimes over the past two years they are often under reported. I am asking members of the public to be alert and report any illegal activities they may be a victim of or witness in our rural communities.”

“This week we will be publishing updates on the types of rural crimes, how to help prevent then and how to report them. Our teams will be out meeting farmers and members of the public and will also be engaged in pro-active enforcement activities. Our aim is to deliver safer rural communities, provide reassurance and enhance the trust and confidence in our police force during the week and for the years ahead. Rural crime is something that should concern everyone.”

“To put things into perspective, rural communities cover 94% of the geographical area of Wiltshire and Swindon and 80% of the land is used for agriculture by 2,329 farms. However, there is only 36% of the population living in the rural areas and they are being hit almost daily by both opportunist thieves and organised crime groups.”

This situation must cease and with the help of the public our rural communities will feel empowered, recognised and confident in the Police who are working with them and with partners to make the countryside safe and welcoming for residents and visitors alike.”

Although there is currently no national definition for rural crime it is any criminal activity that predominantly impacts on rural communities and business, such as machinery and agricultural theft, livestock theft, livestock worrying, poaching, criminal damage, arson, heritage crime and wildlife crime.

It may also be criminal activity that can take place anywhere in the force area but requires a unique approach due to specific issues associated with rural communities, such as isolation or a lack of access to services.

You can learn more about rural crime and how to report it on the Force website: [http://bit.ly/44WBzrC](https://s-url.co/bYYJAA)

You can follow the Rural Crime Team and read the awareness week updates on Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/WiltsRuralCrimeTeam](https://s-url.co/boYJAA)

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Assistant Chief Constable Mark Cooper