



A guide to dealing with woodland crime in Wales

A partnership initiative supported by the four Welsh police services



Introduction

Woodland owners and managers, members of community woodland groups and the general public may at times find themselves dealing with the aftermath of crime or may from time to time witness offenders committing offences.

The aim of this Guidance Booklet is to improve the way in which people report incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour, to increase their knowledge and ability to identify the more common offences committed in Welsh woodlands and how to work with the police and other agencies.

This in turn may assist those who own or manage woodlands to prevent and reduce crime and assist the relevant authorities in identifying offenders and bringing them to justice.

The status of Woodlands (land) in relation to the law

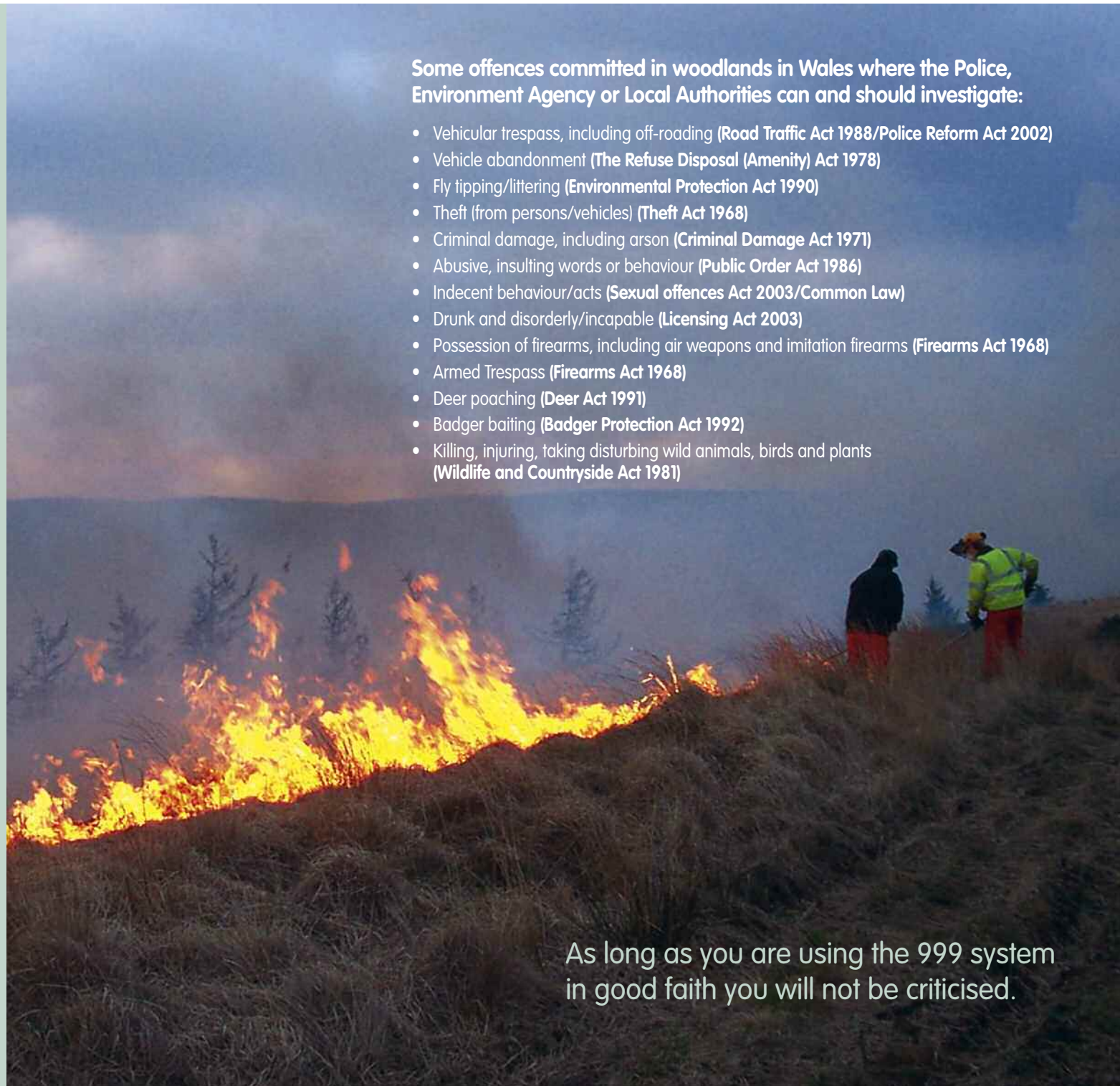
Public Place

Where land is dedicated as 'Access Land' under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2002 or where public access is permitted by a woodland owner for walking, cycling and/or horse riding that land becomes a 'public place' as the public have access whether by payment or not.

In such instances the Police, Environment Agency or Local Authorities have certain powers to deal with criminal offences or behaviour including powers of arrest.

Some offences committed in woodlands in Wales where the Police, Environment Agency or Local Authorities can and should investigate:

- Vehicular trespass, including off-roading (**Road Traffic Act 1988/Police Reform Act 2002**)
- Vehicle abandonment (**The Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978**)
- Fly tipping/littering (**Environmental Protection Act 1990**)
- Theft (from persons/vehicles) (**Theft Act 1968**)
- Criminal damage, including arson (**Criminal Damage Act 1971**)
- Abusive, insulting words or behaviour (**Public Order Act 1986**)
- Indecent behaviour/acts (**Sexual offences Act 2003/Common Law**)
- Drunk and disorderly/incapable (**Licensing Act 2003**)
- Possession of firearms, including air weapons and imitation firearms (**Firearms Act 1968**)
- Armed Trespass (**Firearms Act 1968**)
- Deer poaching (**Deer Act 1991**)
- Badger baiting (**Badger Protection Act 1992**)
- Killing, injuring, taking disturbing wild animals, birds and plants (**Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981**)



As long as you are using the 999 system in good faith you will not be criticised.

Reporting incidents of crime and / or suspicious behaviour

The 999 system should only be used in an emergency.

Examples of when to phone 999 would be:

- To save life and / or protect property
- A crime is in progress
- A crime has occurred and the perpetrators are or may still be in the area
- You honestly believe a crime is about to be committed e.g. persons trying to break down car doors or looking into several cars in a car park

Remember to pass the exact location, what you have witnessed or are witnessing and descriptions of persons and vehicles including registration number.

Routine number for all Welsh Police Services - 101

The routine number should be used for reporting:

- Crimes that have occurred and time has elapsed
- Information regarding crimes, incidents and criminals
- Non-emergency incidents that do not require an immediate police response

The police control room operator taking the call will ultimately decide on the level of response required, so that the incident could be graded as a routine response, where officers will attend as soon as they are free, to an emergency response where officers will be dispatched immediately. As long as you are using the 999 system in good faith you will not be criticised.

Remember to pass the exact location, what you have witnessed or are witnessing and descriptions of persons and vehicles including registration number.

Crime Stoppers

Crime Stoppers is a free and confidential number, information can be passed on anonymously and will then be forwarded to the relevant police force.

The number is: **0800 555 111**



Fly tipping - procedure for gathering evidence at the scene

In order to identify fly tipping offenders there is a requirement to identify, seize, document and preserve any evidence, found amongst fly tipping.

The following procedure should assist in identifying and hopefully lead to the successful prosecution of offenders:

- If safe to do so search through the items tipped (think safety - use gloves, carry some rubber gloves in your pockets or rucksack)
- Articles such as delivery labels/documents and correspondence to individuals or companies are a valuable source of tracing the origins of the fly tipping
- If such articles are found the individual should photograph the article in situ then photograph the scene (all of the waste fly tipped).
- The article should be retrieved and if possible bagged to preserve it. A written record should then be made of the exact time, date and location where the items were retrieved from (location of the fly tipping and location of the article amongst the fly tipping)
- When practicable the local authority Waste Enforcement Team / Environmental Health Team should be made aware of the facts, they may be investigating similar incidents in the local area or may have a suspect in mind (see contact list at end of leaflet)

If there is sufficient evidence to pursue the enquiry a statement should be taken from the individual reporting the fly tipping by the Local Authority or the Environment Agency. If you report it you have the right to be kept informed of the progress of the investigation.

Fly tipping witnessed in progress

If you witness fly tipping in progress phone the Police immediately on **999** and give them the exact location, description and correct registration number of any vehicles used, description of persons and direction of persons or vehicles making off from the scene. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO INTERVENE.**



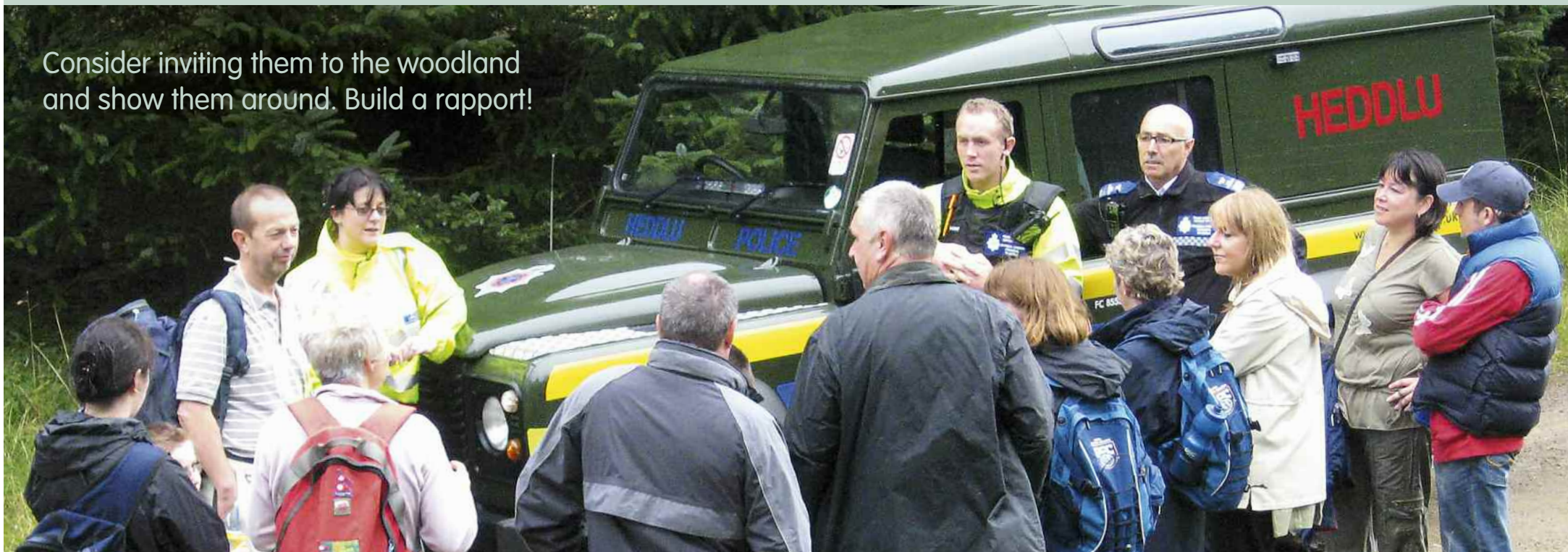
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How you can work with and assist the police and other partner agencies to deal with crime in woodlands

- Get to know your local Neighbourhood Policing Team
- Get to know who their supervisor is (usually a Sergeant)
- Find out who your Police Wildlife Crime Officer (PWCO) is
- Find out who your local Crime Prevention Officer is and work with them to 'Design Crime Out'
- You can do these things by visiting your local police force's website or by calling into your local police station
- Find out who your Local Authority and Environment Agency Enforcement Officers are by phoning their local offices or by visiting their website
- Find out who your local Fire & Rescue Service Community Officer is by visiting the local Fire Station or by visiting their website
- Arrange to meet with them and discuss the issues affecting your woodland

- Consider inviting them to the woodland and show them around, take them to the hot-spot and problem areas, walk the paths and trails with them. Build a rapport!
- Ensure you know how and who to contact. Obtain phone numbers, officers' work mobile numbers and e-mail addresses
- Consider inviting them to your group/committee meetings
- Invite the officers to your woodland events, it's part of their community work after all!
- Ensure you report incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour to the police or other agencies
- Pass useful information to them, it may be valuable intelligence!
- Keep a written log of incidents
- Don't accept a poor level of service, you have a right to complain if you are dissatisfied with the response
- Attend your local community police/partnership meetings, sometimes called PACT or Beat meetings. You may share the same problems as the local community

Consider inviting them to the woodland and show them around. Build a rapport!



Useful contacts:

Forestry Commission Wales **Mon to Fri 8.30 - 17.00** **0300 0680 300**
www.forestry.gov.uk/wales

Environment Agency **Mon to Fri 8.00 - 18.00** **08708 506506**
www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Countryside Council for Wales **0845 1306 229**
www.ccw.gov.uk

ConFor **01286 871874 or 0131 240 1410**
www.confor.org.uk

Llais y Goedwig **0845 456 0342**
www.llaisygoedwig.org.uk

Wales Forest Business Partnership **0845 456 0342**
www.wfbp.co.uk

Coed Cymru **01686 650 777**
www.coedcymru.org.uk

Coed Cadw (Woodland Trust Wales) **08452 935 860**
www.treeforall.org.uk/wales

Forestry commission Wales the Welsh Government's (WG) Department for Forestry and manager of public woodlands on behalf of WG

Environment Agency - principal aims are to protect and improve the environment, and to promote sustainable development. They play a central role in delivering the environmental priorities of central government and the Welsh Assembly Government

Countryside Council for Wales - the Government's statutory advisor on sustaining natural beauty, wildlife and the opportunity for outdoor enjoyment in Wales and its inshore waters

The Confederation of Forest Industries (UK) Ltd (ConFor) a support organisation for forest industries

Llais y Goedwig - a voluntary association of woodland community groups

Wales Forest Business Partnership (WFBP) - a voluntary grouping of businesses and other organisations across the forestry sector

Coed Cymru - an all Wales initiative to promote the management of broadleaf woodlands and the use of locally grown hardwood timber in Wales

Coed Cadw (Woodland Trust Wales) the leading woodland conservation charity

To report fly tipping

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	Mon to Fri 8.30 - 17.30	01495 350555
Bridgend County Borough Council	Mon to Fri 8.30 - 17.00	01656 643443
Caerphilly County Borough Council	Weekdays 8.30 - 17.00 Evenings and weekends	01443 866544 01443 875500
Cardiff County Council	Mon to Fri 8.00 - 19.00 Sat 9.00 - 12.30	02920 872087
Carmarthenshire County Council	Mon to Fri 8.00 - 18.00	01267 234567
Ceredigion County Council	Mon to Thur 8.45 - 17.00 Fri 8.45 - 16.30 Emergency out of hours - N. Ceredigion Emergency out of hours - S. Ceredigion	01545 572105 01970 625227 01239 851604
Conwy County Borough Council	Mon to Thur 8.45 - 17.15 Fri 8.45 - 16.45 Out of hours service	01492 575257 01492 517176
Denbighshire CC	24 hrs	01824 706101
Flintshire County Council	Mon to Fri 8.30 - 17.00	01352 703350
Gwynedd Council	8.30 - 17.30 Out of hours options to transfer to other numbers	01766 771000
Isle of Anglesey County Council	Mon to Fri 9.00 - 17.00 Email	01248 752860 waste@anglsej.gov.uk
Merthyr Tydfil CBC	Mon to Fri 8.30 - 5.00	01685 725410
Monmouthshire County Council	Mon to Fri 9.00 - 17.00 Mon to Fri 9.00 - 17.00 Out of hours service	01291 635705 01873 735484 02920 626371
Neath Port Talbot CC	24 hrs	01639 686868
Newport City Council	Mon to Fri 8.00 - 20.00 Sat 9.00 - 13.00	01633 656656
Pembrokeshire County Council	Mon to Fri 8.00 - 18.00 Sat 9.00 - 12 noon Out of hours will transfer 24 hr service	01437 764551
Powys County Council	Mon to Fri 8.30 - 17.00 Out of office hours	0845 607 6060 / 602 7035 0845 054 4847
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	Mon to Fri 8.30 - 17.00	01443 494700
City & County of Swansea	Mon to Thur 8.30 - 17.00 Fri 8.30 - 16.30	01792 635600
Vale of Glamorgan	Mon to Fri 8.00 - 18.00 Out of hours will transfer to 24hr service	01446 700111
Torfaen County Borough Council	Mon to Fri 8.00 - 18.00 With out of hours option for emergencies	01495 766654
Wrexham County Borough Council	Mon to Fri 8.30 - 17.30 Out of hours will transfer 24 hr service	07978 298989



You can get this publication in large print and other forms (e.g. Braille, audio tape) by contracting Forestry Commission Wales at the phone number or email address below:

Forestry Commission Wales

Tel: 0300 068 0300 Fax: 0300 068 0301

Email: fcwenquiries@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

(Calls to 0300 numbers are charged at a 'Lo-call' rate, this will be the same irrespective of where you are calling from.)

You can also contact us for information on translations or to arrange for an officer to telephone you to explain any area(s) of this publication you would like clarified.

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