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Elderly couple's ordeal should be wake-up call for police

Rocklands residents are living in fear after a spate of crimes in the area, the latest of which saw an elderly couple attacked on their smallholding over the weekend. Nicolas Hurter and his wife, Catharina, both 85, were lucky to escape with their lives after being assaulted by an intruder. In the past year, the Hurters have had several items stolen from their property, including ladders, grass cutters, a water tank and an electricity cable, all on different occasions.

This time, though, the crime against them involved violence — Nicolas needed 34 stitches in his head and left arm after being hit with "what felt like a steel pipe".

The couple's ordeal has stoked residents' concerns over the lack of a police presence in the area after a satellite station was closed a few years ago.

According to the police, the station was not suitable for use because of its dilapidated state.

A recommendation has been made to the department of public works to upgrade or renovate the structure.

Meanwhile, resident Marie Swanepoel has highlighted the urgent need for action, saying that since the station closed down the community had been "stuck with high crime and attacks; it's a daily struggle".

She said the situation was so bad that "while we are busy with one scene you hear there is another break-in".

Though crime is an ever-present concern, with many residents wondering who the next victim will be, it has not been the only challenge in the area.

Late last year, farmers who had been tearing their hair out over the shocking state of roads and long-standing service delivery issues, launched a petition highlighting their woes.

Their list of requirements was handed to Kabega Park police.

Now, as the new year hits its stride, we hope all the old problems plaguing this community can finally be ironed out.

The trauma suffered by an elderly couple should make the authorities sit up and take notice.