ARMED police swooped on Aberystwyth town centre after a 28-year-old man got in a row with his pregnant girlfriend over a bag of oven chips.

James Thomas Smith, 28, went on the rampage through the Terrace Road apartment, breaking plates, bowls and a television digibox after taking a cocktail of lager and Valium.

Smith, who is on licence after being jailed last year for robbery and assault, then refused to leave the locked flat despite police pleas, a court heard.

He had arrived home after an 11-hour day and a row began after a phone was left to ring unanswered and he discovered there was only a bag of oven-ready chips for supper, his solicitor told magistrates.

Prosecuting, Lesley Harbon said Smith, who had arrived home after an 11-hour day and a row began after a phone was left to ring unanswered and he discovered there was only a bag of oven-ready chips for supper, his solicitor told magistrates.

An argument over a bag of chips sparked a full-scale siege by armed police after a man wielding a six-inch kitchen knife smashed up an Aberystwyth flat and terrorised his pregnant girlfriend.

James Thomas Smith, 28, went on the rampage through the Terrace Road apartment, breaking plates, bowls and a television digibox after taking a cocktail of lager and Valium.

His terrified partner, five-months-pregnant Victoria Williams, fled and called police.

Smith, who is on licence after being jailed last year for robbery and assault, then refused to leave the locked flat despite police pleas, a court heard.

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"What the f*** do you want? I didn't call you here," he then waved the knife aggressively, and said: "The next person to come in is going to have it," Ms Harbon said.

He then scrawled the knife aggressively, and said: "The next person to come in is going to have it," Ms Harbon said.

One onlooker said: "I have never seen so many police in one place. It is amazing how many people have just stopped to see what was going on.

The police are here with their sniffer dogs and armed response so there must be something big happening inside," Smith is a former Pemswelodge pupil and had reportedly been living in Cardigan with his partner until recently.

Police revealed that Smith had a string of drug-related offences.

Local county councillor Corinna Davies praised the police for their swift response.

"The police did a good job when you consider what they are in the height of the summer season," she said. "They cordoned off Terrace Road straight away and kept the public at a safe distance for the duration."

"These flats have improved of late but they do have such a high turnover of people. What is of concern is that this is the second time that the armed response unit has been called into Aberystwyth recently."

"These are changing times and worrying times for the town," she added.

The siege lasted for over two hours as police negotiators coaxed Smith down from his flat. Officers finally managed to bring him down at 6pm and he was taken away in a police van.

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