

## Bedfordshire Police

[Counting the Crimes 2](#) (CTC2) was written by Action Against Foxhunting in Autumn 2021.

CTC2 is a follow up to our first report [Counting the Crimes: Police Response to Hunt-Related Calls](#).

CTC2 consists of the main body of the report and reports on 34 English police forces.

The report on Bedfordshire Police is set out below.

All the reports on other forces can be found [here](#)

The report is based on a large amount of [research](#). Some of the research is included in the report, and the rest is available on request. To the best of our knowledge, everything is correct.

[The conviction of Mark Hankinson](#) occurred as we were writing this report. We know that the public will be looking to the police to take action against those who hunt foxes illegally and we hope that this report will be of use as it includes practical advice. The report is intended to be helpful and honest, rather than critical.

For the Facebook links, we are aware that posts on social media are not always completely accurate. We have tried to verify the contents, and have contacted many of the posters for further information. Some have replied, and some have not. We are always interested in hearing different views of the same incidents, and if police are able to provide further insight, we would be happy to include this.

FWG – Frontline Wildlife Guardian. The term includes both saboteurs and monitors.

If any force wishes to discuss the report, please contact us [info@actionagainstfoxhunting.org](mailto:info@actionagainstfoxhunting.org). We are happy to meet on line.



**How did the force respond to CTC?**

- One email
- ✓ Exchange of emails
- Meeting
- No response at all

**For Email response - was the response detailed?**

- ✓ Yes
- No

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1	2	3	4	5
-	-	✓	-	-

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**Why have you given this rating?**

The first email was a standard response. However, the exchange of emails that followed revealed that the officer who responded understood that illegal hunting was a risk.

**Were there follow up emails and did the force reply?**

- ✓ Yes
- No

**How willing was this force to take on board what we said?**

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1	2	3	4	5
-	-	-	✓	-

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**Why have you given this response?**

Prompt and detailed email response

**Has this force taken any actual steps to improve their relationship with FWGs?**

✓ Yes

**What steps have they taken?**

They have regular meetings with FWGs.

**Does this force have an aide memoire or any guide to policing illegal hunting?**

– Yes

✓ No

**How well trained are the police in this force?**

1	2	3	4	5
–	–	✓	–	–

**Why have you given this response?**

Mainly positive feedback from FWGs. However, having no Aide Memoire will put many officers in a difficult position especially bearing in mind Beds only have 6 dedicated WCOs. This is a small force, so 6 WCOs is a respectable number.

**How do you rate this force's behaviour in the field with regard to illegal foxhunting and incidents involving FWGs?**

- Always appear biased
- Usually appear biased
- Sometimes appear biased
- ✓ Rarely appear biased

**Looking at the response to our FOI asking about police systems and organisation with regard to foxhunting, how do you rate their ability to take action on illegal foxhunting?**

1	2	3	4	5
-	-	✓	-	-

**Why have you given this rating?**

There is some interaction between the force and the FWGs but in the field, they can just ignore each other. This suggests that the FWGs are focused on saving the individual fox, rather than gathering evidence for illegal hunting

**Do you think the force focuses too heavily on public order as opposed to dealing with illegal foxhunting?**

- Yes
- ✓ No

**Why have you given this response?**

FWGs themselves say the police generally do not “deliberately make their lives difficult”. The FWG police liaison officer often attends meets.

**Looking at the response to our FOI asking about police systems and organisation with regard to foxhunting, how do you rate their ability to take action on illegal foxhunting?**

1	2	3	4	5
-	-	√	-	-

**Why have you given this rating?**

We are aware this force has good knowledge of the Hunting Act and in turn recognises the limitations of it. They also have a positive working relationship with skilled and knowledgeable FWGs. They have a drone which has been used in fox hunting situations.

However, the lack of an Aid Memoir could lead to lost opportunities in the field.

**Overall, how do you rate this force?**

1	2	3	4	5
-	-	-	√	-

**Any other comments?**

The force responded to Counting the Crimes and engaged to an extent. This force has a better relationship with FWGs than most. The force was also keen to provide AAF with feedback.

**In the opinion of AAF, how can this police force improve?**

An aide memoire especially for officers who are not WCOs would be a positive move. The force could also show more willingness to acknowledge road traffic offences committed by the hunt - e.g. deliberately blocking roads, illegal quads (this point was raised by the FWGs).

All officers would benefit from a much greater understanding of the issues

surrounding illegal hunting and the motivations of FWGs. We have created three helpful documents:

[Practical Advice for All Officers](#) – this includes training advice

[A Field Guide for Officers](#) – to use if they are called to a hunt

[A Study - Why sabs and monitors are not protesters.](#) – an insight FWG organisations.

**There are no hit and media reports mentioning hunting and Bedfordshire Police**