

# Cumbria Constabulary

[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 for Cumbria Constabulary 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? You can select multiple options.**

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

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

- Yes
- ✓ No

**How do you rate the response?**

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1	2	3	4	5
-	-	-	✓	-

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**Why have you given this rating?**

Cumbria didn't respond to CTC in detail. However, because the force was already tackling illegal foxhunting robustly, a detailed response wasn't required.

**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?**

They asked us to share any information we had about illegal foxhunting.

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

- ✓ Yes
- No
- Other

**What steps have they taken?**

They have a good working relationship with FWGs. Whether they have meetings with them is unknown.

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

- ✓ Yes
- No

**What do you think of the guide/aide memoire?**

1	2	3	4	5
-	-	-	✓	-

**Why have you given this response?**

In an FOI, the force wouldn't say whether or not they had an aide memoire. It is difficult to rate the policy without seeing it. But they did mention they had a

“Foxhunting Policy”, which they did not share for operational reasons. They do investigate offences, so they probably know what they are doing.

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

1	2	3	4	5
-	-	-	-	✓

**Why have you given this response?**

The FWGs have respect for Cumbrian police. Also, the force is undertaking a programme to train up frontline officers. The FB posts from FWGs show a positive response to incidents from the force.

**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
- ✓ Never 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
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**Why have you given this rating?**

While the way they have organised the force is not particularly special, their actions in the field are impressive.

When responding to CTC, they said they'd had a recent review specifically covering the policing of illegal fox hunting, including training plans for frontline officers. They have 30 trained WCOs who work alongside their other duties but no rural crime team. The absence of a rural crime team is interesting. In other forces, the rural crime team is essential, even though they WCOs are not often part of the actual team.

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

- Yes
- ✓ No
- Other

**Why have you given this response?**

FWGs have not complained of this.

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

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1 2 3 4 5

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- - - ✓ -

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**Any other comments?**

The force has openly declared that they will tackle illegal hunting. Many of the

others even don't mention it as a wildlife crime.

In many ways, we have very little information about Cumbria Constabulary, though they were responsive to our emails. Generally speaking, they are respected among anti-hunting groups.

We hope that Cumbria Constabulary continues to tackle illegal foxhunting effectively. The webinar exposure justifies and reinforces their actions. We also hope that the outcome of any court cases relating to the webinar will not change the force's positive attitude as what was stated in the recordings cannot be unsaid. The Hunting Office made it clear trail hunting IS fox hunting and there was much talk about ways to create a "smokescreen" to cover up illegal hunting. Disrespectful comments were made about the police. The Hunting Office represents all registered hunts in England and Wales therefore the discussions were relevant to all police forces.

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

There is always room for improvement in any organisation on any aspect. However, things do seem to be going well in Cumbria, without any help from AAF. The key issue is the recognition by this force that illegal foxhunting is a problem; other forces are in denial. In our discussions with other forces, we have used Cumbria Constabulary as an example of good practice, so it is a pity we do not have a great deal of information about the set up in the force in order to share it.

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.

## Hit reports and media reports mentioning hunting and Cumbria Constabulary.

<https://www.facebook.com/cumbriapolice/photos/a.154518278549/10158570226643550>

<https://www.facebook.com/NEhuntmonitors/posts/974008879730647>

14/9/2020. 'Report Fox Hunting Poster' and Facebook post by Cumbria police well received by those opposing illegal hunting

<https://www.facebook.com/cumbriasabs/posts/786622198795116>

9/10/20. Witness informs police of illegal hunting. Police investigate.

<https://www.facebook.com/cumbriasabs/posts/822950445162291>

12/12/20. Blencathra foxhounds out. Police attend. Police presence appears to lead to the hunt ending their day.

<https://www.facebook.com/cumbriasabs/posts/824730271650975>

15/12/20. Melbreak hunt illegally hunting. Reported to police.

<https://www.facebook.com/cumbriasabs/posts/831756590948343>

<https://www.facebook.com/cumbriasabs/posts/842416359882366>

26/12/20. Illegal hunting reported. Police investigate.