

Derbyshire 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 Derbyshire 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. 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?

1	2	3	4	5
-	✓	-	-	-

Why have you given this rating?

It was a detailed response, but it did not mention illegal foxhunting. It was focused mostly on the public order issues generated by hunts v FWGs. The force can only see FWGs as protesters.

Were there follow up emails and did the force reply?

- Yes
- No

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

1	2	3	4	5
✓	-	-	-	-

Why have you given this response?

Despite the fact that there are very clear issues between anti-hunting groups and Derbyshire Police, and the fact that the intention of CTC was to improve the relationship, this force did not avail itself of AAF as a resource. Others did.

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

- Yes
- No
- ✓ The force damaged the relationship between FWGs and themselves by openly criticising them in a FB post (see CTC1). Their words were quoted by the Countryside Alliance in an email to an AAF member and used to prove that trail hunting was valid.

What steps have they taken?

The force says it has tried to ask FWGs for meetings. But when AAF offered to meet (prior to CTC) we were ignored (until we insisted).

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?

48 officers out of 4174 have been trained. 1.4%. Also, there is a Rural Crime team, with 10 staff (8 of them police officers) and they are all trained. However, the training is not visible in the field and not used when illegal foxhunting is happening. If the officers recognise illegal hunting and take no action, this is a serious breach of trust.

How do you rate this force’s behaviour in the field with regard to illegal foxhunting and incidents involvingFWGs?

- Always appear biased
- ✓ Usually appear biased
- Sometimes appear biased
- Rarely appear biased
- Never appear biased

Why have you given this response?

A largely untrained force who struggle to connect with FWGs will inevitably often present as biased. They say they don't want to consider anti hunt liaison monitors.

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

1	2	3	4	5
✓	-	-	-	-

Why have you given this rating?

This force is able, but appears to choose not to. Rather, they focus on public order generated by clashes between the hunt and the FWGs. We do, however, accept that some of the anti-hunt groups in the area are extremely passionate.

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?

Their replies to us do seem to view FWGS as 'protesters' (which they aren't) which suggests an emphasis on public order. They see Public Order Liaison Officers as appropriate to attend hunting incidents when WCOs should arguably be the most relevant officers to attend in order to uphold the law.

Overall, how do you rate this force?

Take into account willingness to engage with AAF, willingness to engage with FWGs, actions in the field etc.

1	2	3	4	5
-	-	✓	-	-

Any other comments?

There is stalemate between the anti-hunting groups and the police – with no positive communication and no trust whatsoever.

That said, the force has secured two hunt-related prosecutions (Barlow Hunt New Year's Day 2020, and the incident where hounds chased a calf across a field) and this should be acknowledged.

However, it is the police who are responsible for upholding the law and they should be seen to do just that, no matter how the anti-hunt groups behave.

Regardless of the outcome of any court cases relating to the Hunting Office webinars which were exposed November 2020, 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?

Whilst appreciating hunting isn't a national priority, it is an issue in Derbyshire. FWGs and the police badly need to consider each other on the 'same side' (or as close as possible). AAF would welcome liaising with Derbyshire Police. We'd also appreciate (confidentially) knowing who they refer to when they say they 'work with several groups' as this is disputed in the FWG world.

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 and Media Reports mentioning both hunting and Derbyshire Police.](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/staffordshirehuntsabs/posts/452713945368782>

Dec 2019. Open letter to Derbyshire police (& others) from FWGs. There was no reply.

<https://www.facebook.com/HWM2018/posts/649720335624880>

10/7/21. Derbyshire police find resources to investigate a Hunt Investigation Team releasing a fox and a crow from a trap

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=202415634560019&id=112752006859716

18/9/20. Police came out to check on FWGs at request of hunt.

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=210866087048307&id=112752006859716

8/10/20. Sab detained and bruised.

<https://www.facebook.com/sheffieldsaboteurs/videos/2818669005125143>

21/10/20. FB post re 1/2/20 violence, Barlow Hunt.

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=213855973415985&id=112752006859716

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=214393430028906&id=112752006859716

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=213789073422675&id=112752006859716

3/11/20. 3 links above detail Barlow Hunt involved in: obstruction on highway, hounds chasing sheep, terrier men with terriers and allegedly bagged foxes A riot van, a 4x4 and 3+ police cars sent to monitor sabs.

Also re 3/11 incident above:

Quote from a monitor to the police on the day: I said to the police "they're on a fox & the terrier men are being aggressive to female sabs"

The policeman replied "we don't know the legislation, we can't get in the field"

<https://www.facebook.com/nottssabs/videos/477672103222606>

<https://www.derbytelegraph.co.uk/news/local-news/derbyshire-man-punished-after-hunt-5826097>

4/11/20. Calf chased by hounds, High Peak hunt (Harriers). A huntsman was subsequently prosecuted.

<https://www.facebook.com/Humbersabs/posts/270765697830037>

10/11/20. police turned up 2 hours after sabs report illegal activity. Sarcastic Twitter comment from Derbyshire Police drone team.

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=229113338556915&id=112752006859716

<https://www.facebook.com/sheffieldsaboteurs/posts/1505914432912211>

5/12/20. FWG injured by hunt support (police attended).

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=244047553730160&id=112752006859716

29/12/20. Cat killed by the High Peak Hunt hounds (Harriers)

<https://www.facebook.com/derbyhuntsaboteurs/photos/a.755652317851011/3942009229215288/>

!8/4/21. Derbyshire police find resources to pull up bikers with wrong sized number plates yet they frequently don't act on hunt quad bikes being ridden illegally.