

Hampshire 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 Hampshire 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?

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

For email response - was the response detailed?

- ✓ Yes
- No

How do you rate the email response?

1	2	3	4	5
-	-	✓	-	-

Why have you given this rating?

It took a while before Hampshire Police agreed to the meeting.

Were there follow up emails and did the force reply?

- ✓ Yes
- No

For the forces who met with us, how do you rate this response?

1	2	3	4	5
-	-	✓	-	-

Why have you given this response?

Hampshire Police are particularly keen to involve the public in policing. No other force mentioned this, so this was interesting.

For the forces who met with us, how open were they?

1	2	3	4	5
-	-	✓	-	-

For the forces who met with us, how useful was the meeting?

1	2	3	4	5
-	-	✓	-	-

Why have you given this response?

Hampshire Police said that they would like to improve their relationship with FWGs. However, they seemed satisfied with their response to illegal foxhunting. Hit reports suggest that they do have room for improvement. To improve their relationship with FWGs, they need to improve their response to illegal fox hunting first.

There are some good initiatives in place with this force.

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

1	2	3	4	5
-	-	✓	-	-

Why have you given this response?

Hampshire Police was interested in what we said. However, we do not know if they took on board what we said as we have not had feedback on that.

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

- ✓ Yes
- No
- Other

What steps have they taken?

The force has had meetings with FWGs. In particular, they explained how lack of credible evidence is a real problem with progressing possible cases forward. They would like more meetings.

The officer agreed to come and see us on our outreach stall in Lyndhurst. However, she was not able to come because of personal reasons.

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

- Yes

- ✓ No, though officers have “snap cards”, and we do not know if illegal hunting is included.

How well trained are the police in this force?

1	2	3	4	5
-	-	-	✓	-

Why have you given this response?

Hampshire Police have a dedicated rural wildlife crime team called "Country Watch". This trained team would investigate illegal foxhunting offences.

Over 60 officers (including volunteers) are dedicated to rural crime which is unusual. They have snap cards but it is not clear if the cards include details about fox hunting (other documents for the public didn't at the time of the meeting). When asked if officers ever ask for trail details it was stated officers should have better training so they recognise when it would be valuable to ask this. They said they plan more training including with controllers.

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

Why have you given this response?

One issue among FWGs is Hampshire police's insistence on asking for everyone's names and addresses. FWGs are unhappy about providing these as they believe that the police might pass their names on to the hunt and this is seen as bias. Police say they tend to ask "everyone" for their names and addresses "so they know who they are". With FWGs, this is likely to cause friction.

One of the Hampshire Hunts (Hursley Hambledon Hunt) meets and hunts on the Southwick Estate. It is owned by Mr Thistlethwayte, who is a former High Sheriff of Hampshire. This may indicate that there are close ties between the police and the hunts. In our opinion, "close ties" means that the former High Sheriff may have undue influence in the police and might exert this when it comes to hunting offences.

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?

Good, given the dedicated team. But the hit reports suggest that some officers still see FWGs as the obvious law-breakers. The links with the ex-High Sheriff are also worrying.

There is a large, dedicated rural crime team. But more information and training specifically on illegal fox hunting is needed. Hampshire put effort

into trying to get the public onside helping with rural crime with their 'Dog Watch' and 'Zed Card' schemes which involve handy guides to help enable the public to spot and report rural crime. They said they would consider illegal hunting being added. They do have 'Hunting with Dogs' on their public website.

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?

Judging by the hit reports, Hampshire Police see all hunt-related calls as public order issues. They also see FWGs as protesters, even when they are trying to prevent illegal hunting.

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
–	–	✓	–	–

Hampshire Police's engagement with AAF was good. Also, the officer we spoke to was very keen to involve the public in policing issues. However, this force needs to prove that they are willing to challenge the hunts about illegal foxhunting before the FWGs will engage with them fully.

Any other comments?

The officer in the meeting quoted "The Police are the Public and the Public are the Police" (Robert Peel). They have some great ideas about getting help from the public. FWGs are members of the public and like Neighbourhood Watch groups, it would benefit the police if they used their information as a resource.

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 that 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?

As the force is keen to involve the public, it would be helpful if there was a clear description of illegal foxhunting on Hampshire's website. Training of officers is key.

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 Hampshire](#)

Constabulary and Hunting.

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=109270297613583&id=105536684653611

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=107610437779569&id=105536684653611

<https://www.facebook.com/southhampshirehuntsaboteurs/posts/386213679448674>
3/10/20. Police hold up FWGs. Allegedly ignore traffic offences by Hampshire Hunt.

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=119304253276854&id=105536684653611

10/10/20. Hursley Hambleton hunt – evidence sent to police of hunt breaking various laws/regulations

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=127002809173665&id=105536684653611

27/10/20 Hampshire hunt breaking various Covid and traffic regulations and hounds in cry, one loose on the road. Police presence. No action

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=148884453652167&id=105536684653611

12/12/20. Hursley Hambleton Hunt held on MFH's land. MFH has close professional links with the police.

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=148891763651436&id=105536684653611

15/12/20 Hampshire hunt. Assault, traffic offences, hounds on road. Police informed.