

Lancashire 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 Lancashire 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 this reply?

1	2	3	4	5
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Why have you given this rating?

Lancashire asked us to do this as an FOI. However, when the reply to the FOI was received, only 2 of the questions had been answered. This is because the questions at the end of CTC1 were inappropriate for an FOI which will only give "information held".

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?

We met with the Rural, Wildlife and Heritage Crime Coordinator - police staff, not police officer. The staff member was helpful and open, but as CTC concerns police action in the field, it would have been useful to talk to active officers as well.

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?

We gained an understanding of how Lancashire Police Force operates with regard to illegal hunting. Illegal hunting is not seen as a huge issue there as there are only two active hunts, both harrier packs. The force receives very few reports of illegal hunting/hounds out of control etc. This is mostly because the FWGs will not speak to the police because they do not trust them at all. There are no hit reports involving Lancashire Police. This does not mean that illegal hunting isn't happening.

This is a “stalemate” situation. The FWGs will not engage with the police because they believe they are biased. Something needs to change and we believe it is up to the police to “make the first move” by policing illegal

hunting effectively.

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

1	2	3	4	5
-	-	-	✓	-

Why have you given this response?

The staff officer we spoke to was keen to continue speaking to AAF. She was aware of the lack of trust between FWGs and police. We said that there were two reasons for this. Firstly, FWGs do not want to give their personal details to police as they believe they will be passed on to hunts and CTU. Secondly, FWGs believe that many Lancashire officers shoot and have connections with BASC. An FOI revealed that 1.4% of Lancashire police officers have firearms licences. This is higher than the national average, which is 0.8%. Out of the latest 20 officers trained in the Rural Task Force, 3 of them shoot. This is 15% and well above the national average, and above the figure for the whole police force. In our opinion, this is an issue and as it is stopping FWGs (who have primary evidence) from contacting the police about hunt-related crimes, it is one that needs addressing.

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

- Yes
- No
- ✓ Other

What steps have they taken?

Lancashire are passively hoping that FWGs will engage with them.

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?

This force takes training for rural crimes very seriously. LACS were scheduled to provide training (30 mins) but they had to pull out. Much as we appreciated the positive comments in our meeting with Lancashire Police it is clear training is a major issue. There is even some confusion between drag hunting and “trail” hunting.

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?

Difficult question to answer, with no hit reports for this force. However the reason for the lack of engagement with the force is mistrust. Therefore, the FWGs perception is that the police are biased.

Police are not trusted as they are considered to have strong links with the BASC. They do indeed have some links with them. The force dispute this but FWGs who have reasonable relationships with neighbouring forces say "In Lancashire the Wildlife Officers are only called Wildlife Officers, because all

of them, including their superior officers and members of the Counter Terrorism Unit, are involved in killing wildlife. They have a very cosy relationship with the BASC and the wealthy shooting estates In the Forest of Bowland and moors of East Lancashire. There isn't the faintest possibility that any of us or any other people/groups we know would ever involve the police." Justified or not, that is the feeling.

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?

They lack experience in dealing with illegal foxhunting because crimes are probably going unreported.

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

- Yes
- No
- ✓ No real evidence either way.

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?

On the plus side, the force did engage positively with AAF. On the negative

side, FWGs do not trust them and they compare unfavourably with other forces. The force needs to accept that the FWGs mistrust them for a valid and quantifiable reason. The shooting connection troubles the FWGs. The force needs to reach out to FWGs, maybe by taking some proactive action to spot and prevent illegal hunting.

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.

How do you think this force can improve?

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 reports for Lancashire Police and hunting.