

North Yorkshire 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 for North Yorkshire 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. 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 email response?

1	2	3	4	5
-	-	-	-	✓

Why have you given this rating?

Thorough, knowledgeable reply, with the offer of a 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?

North Yorkshire Police were very keen to meet with us. We covered a lot of ground in the meeting and also dealt with some difficult areas - mainly the pro hunting WCO who did a great deal of damage to the relationship between the NY Police and FWGs.

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?

NY Police answered our questions in detail. The officer was honest about his view of the Hunting Act and about the difficulties that the force faces with regard to policing foxhunting. N Yorkshire is an enormous area; 85% of it is rural and there are 12 hunts. With officers thin on the ground, it is extremely difficult for the police to keep an eye on the hunts, even if they did have the manpower. The police are fully aware that the evidence-gatherers for illegal hunting are always going to be FWGs and this is why they would like better relationships with anti-hunting groups. NY police is very willing to listen to, and accept evidence from FWGs, and are also very keen to help them improve the quality of the evidence in order to secure convictions.

For all forces: how willing was THIS force to take on board what we said?

1	2	3	4	5
-	-	-	✓	-

Why have you given this response?

Our main aim for CTC was to find out why there was a lack of trust between police and FWG groups and whether this was justified. Having looked at the hit reports for N Yorkshire and spoken to various anti-hunting groups, we found that the pro hunting WCO was almost solely responsible for the lack of trust. This officer is no longer allowed to respond to calls relating to hunting. We would hope that this will improve things in the field. Other than that

WCO, we found no other evidence to suggest heavy bias in N Yorkshire.

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

- Yes
- No
- Other

What steps have they taken?

A North Yorkshire resident joined us in the meeting. We hope that communication will continue.

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?

Training is seen as important. It's ongoing and the force are open to more information on this. WCOs receive enhanced training. Need to bear in mind it's difficult to train all police in detail in respect of all wildlife crime as large county with officers spread thinly

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?

We have not found an incident of clear bias (other than the pro-hunting WCO).

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?

More training for response officers is crucial. It is likely that officers called to a hunt will not understand what they are seeing.

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?

We have not seen any reports suggesting this force routinely focuses heavily on public order. A recent hit report showed a North Yorkshire officer asking a vehicle containing FWGs what they were doing. When they explained, the officer simply left them to it.

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
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Any other comments?

The officer said the Hunting Act isn't fit for purpose. We were assured that several recently appointed senior officers are keen to tackle wildlife crime.

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

More training for response officers is crucial. Also, while most officers do appear to be neutral, if North Yorkshire would like to develop and maintain a better relationship with FWGs, then taking a proactive approach to policing hunts would be a good start. From our meeting, it was very clear that the police know about the extent of the law-breaking in the area, but their lack of resources limits what they can do. Without the trust of the FWGs, the situation will remain the same.

FWGs are a potential resource for police and should be viewed as such.

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 N Yorkshire Police and hunting

<https://www.facebook.com/yorkantihuntleague/posts/340965050572341>
2/10/20. Member of public see hunt chase and kill fox. Statement given, no action due to lack of evidence.

<https://www.facebook.com/yorkantihuntleague/posts/355166939152152>
22/10/20. YAS/BBMH prepare to hunt, terriermen seen with shovels, police attend.

<https://www.facebook.com/WestYorksHuntSabs/posts/1907137819425336>
12/12/20. Hurworth Hunt aggressive and drunk, police question hunt supporters.

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=3376535165801907&id=1426555787466531

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=3421256937996396&id=1426555787466531

26/12/20. Derwent Hunt illegally hunting, police informed by members of the public. FWGs believe they killed 2 foxes, fresh fox leg found. FWGs barged and blocked. Sheep worried by hounds.

<https://www.facebook.com/yorkantihuntleague/posts/427898255212353>

29/12/20. Illustrates the link between hunts and their violent support.

<https://www.facebook.com/ManchesterHuntSabs/videos/651058465834614>

<https://www.facebook.com/ManchesterHuntSabs/posts/3938698229480746>

1/10/20. York & Ainsty BBMH kill

<https://www.facebook.com/somersetwildlife/posts/784544602126970>

Re 1/10/20 kill above. Statement made by North Yorkshire police mentioned on a FB post

'Every incident of wildlife crime reported to North Yorkshire Police is investigated with all lines of enquiry followed to try and find those responsible.'

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1169208676877332&id=136464320151778

26/2/21. Police called to FWGs keeping an eye on possible illegal mink hunting. Hurworth hound exercise also taking place. Politely questioned by police who then left them to it.

<https://www.facebook.com/WestYorksHuntSabs/posts/1997403097065474>

8/4/21 post. FWGs threatened with meat cleaver North Yorkshire April 2021, presume reported to the police. Investigating possible mink hunting but it illustrates the violence FWGs face. The person threatening is wearing a Zetland hunt top (fox hunt).

<https://w.uktv.co.uk/shows/women-force/episodes/>

<https://northyorkshire.police.uk/news/new-documentary-highlights-the-work-of-women-on-the-force/>

TV documentary April 2021 (aired later) showing Bedale Hounds on a dual carriageway, North Yorkshire:

Officers taking it in their stride, no suggestion hunt kennels had done anything wrong.

https://www.keeptheban.uk/post/north-yorkshire-police-explain-why-it-is-hard-to-prosecute-fox-hunts?fbclid=IwAR2JjfGfoh9vgsU94V0IQaaUgcEY1_1tqZiVfNBwwwvopz1EXJvKcIn0hG0A

19/4/21 article. North Yorkshire Police explain why it's hard to prosecute under the Hunting Act

<https://www.facebook.com/yorkantihuntleague/posts/552363939432450>

8/9/21. Sinnington hunt out cubbing. Believe to have killed 2 foxes. Police attended and helpful. A quote was supplied to AAF from an FWG present that

say "The policeman didn't stop the hunt as he didn't know the law and it really upset him"

Intelligence for North Yorkshire police? :

<https://huntingleaks.is/sinnington-hunt-interpretation-of-mfha-guidance/?fbclid=IwAR3tGseHI-HJ1i3XvmmeAaWL1mh44XDPe6-FcgvZuUsd749QzKVV9wE9ir0>

Recently leaked Sinnington Hunt document discusses fake trail laying re 19/20 season. Police described as 'opponents' to the hunt (as are FWGs).