

Suffolk 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 Suffolk 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?

Look at the content and the usefulness of the response.

1	2	3	4	5
-	-	-	✓	-

The officer who answered our emails was very accessible and open. All our emails were answered in detail and promptly.

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?

The officer had the same thoughts as we had about the relationship with the FWGs and said he would like to improve it.

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

- Yes
- No
- ✓ The officer has asked for FWGs to meet and talk but it hasn't happened.

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?

The force has three WCOs. There are 2795 officers in the force. However, they have successfully prosecuted the Thurlow Hunt.

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?

Although the force openly acknowledges that illegal fox hunting takes place (good) the Sept 20 newspaper article <https://www.eadt.co.uk/news/suffolk-police-save-money-by-changing-response-to-fox-hunting-3391898> suggests they are mainly concerned with public order - they only turn up if FWGs are present, which in reality might well mean FWGs are held up. When no FWGs are present the hunt can effectively do what they want. This policy is advantageous to the hunts.

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?

The Sept 20 newspaper article suggests they are mainly concerned with public order - they only turn up at hunting incidents if FWGs are present.

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 have had a successful prosecution. However, the Sept 20 newspaper article suggests they are more concerned with public order than illegal hunting - they only turn up at hunting incidents if FWGs are present. When no FWGs are present the hunt can effectively do what they want. This policy is arguably advantageous to the hunts. They don't ask for trail details

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?

The officer who responded to CTC was helpful. However, the FWGs don't trust the police and won't engage with them. The article in East Anglian Daily Times was worrying - it clearly showed that police think of fox hunts not in terms of breaching the Hunting Act, but in terms of public order.

The Wildlife Officer who responded to our email clearly acknowledged that illegal hunting exists and had himself been instrumental in securing a conviction in 2017. But this contrasts with their policy of apparently only attending a hunt situation if FWGs are there in order to maintain public order. If there are no FWGs present hunts can effectively do as they wish as they know police won't turn up. Also, there is no mention of illegal hunting on their website. They have information detailing what members of the public should do if they spot potential hare coursing for example but nothing whatsoever about illegal hare or fox hunting. Such a passive approach will inevitably lead to mistrust from FWGs/the public?

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

There should be less emphasis on public order, more on upholding the law (e.g. asking the hunt for trail maps/scent/layers (as per the NPCC guidelines.)

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 Suffolk Police and hunting

<https://www.facebook.com/NorthLondonHuntSaboteurs/posts/125509935939959>

15/9/20. Drone footage of clear cub hunting. Useful info for the police? They haven't been forwarded it to date. NLS have confirmed the cubbing was actually filmed over Semer in Suffolk. Believe not reported to the police but clear evidence cubbing takes place in Suffolk.

<https://www.facebook.com/nshuntsabs/posts/3483451971675510>

28/9/20 'Police save thousands by changing response to organised hunting' – the Police need to attend say FWGs.

Police officer quoted from the newspaper report above talking about what a waste of money it is going to a hunt which isn't attended by FWGs: "So you end up with a lot of officers being deployed, quite expensively, when there is no issue for them to police." Gives the impression Suffolk police sees hunting incidents entirely as public order incidents.