

Thames Valley 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 Thames Valley 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?

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

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

- Yes
- ✓ No
- Other

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

- Yes
- ✓ No

Why have you given this response?

TVP have been asked twice in an FOI if they have a policy or aide memoire. Unlike every other police force we have asked, they refused to answer.

How well trained are the police in this force?

Unknown

Why have you given this response?

No way of knowing as they refuse to answer the FOI on the subject. General feedback is more negative than positive

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?

Generally speaking, TVP ignore calls from FWGs. This suggests that this is their policy. One officer did take action on badger sett blocking, but this is not foxhunting. At least two FWG groups who work within the TVP area have largely positive relationships with other police forces, but not TVP.. The TVP wildlife crime unit partners with the pro hunt CLA, gamekeepers, and the NFU (all of whom traditionally have links with hunting/shooting) but have shown no interest in liaising with AAF.

TVP officers need a much greater understanding of the motivations and actions of FWGs. The AAF Study [“Why Hunt Sabs and Monitors are not Protesters”](#) clearly explains the issues. It is also crucial for officers to appreciate that FWGs are potentially a significant resource for the police. We realise there are issues surrounding this (perceived bias etc), and FWGs must obey the law, but of course officers are expected to engage with everyone impartially as per the Police Code of Ethics. From the feedback we've received officers do not always/readily listen to the FWGs in the field, focusing rather on

the more easily understood public order issues. Every police force we have spoken to has expressed some degree of frustration regarding the difficulty in communicating with FWGs. If forces put the best possible concise training in place and especially a top class aide memoir, it's highly likely the subsequent increased knowledge officers will have in the field will have the added benefit of improving the relationship with at least some FWGs,

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?

They refused to answer the FOI. All other forces provided the information. They also failed to take the proper action on a high-profile fox killing by the Kimblewick Hunt.

Why have you given this rating?

TVP were given an excellent opportunity to take action after the received CCTV recordings of the Kimblewick killing in the industrial yard. However, they decided not to prosecute because they had no reason to think that the huntsman "set out intending to hunt a fox on that day". It is absolutely clear to anyone that intentions can change during the day - and this was confirmed by Judge Cooper on 9th May 2019, in George Adams appeal against his conviction for illegal hunting. In our opinion, this is either astonishing incompetence or (more likely) collusion with the hunt to avoid prosecution.

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?

TVP aren't interested in either. It appears TVP often don't turn up to hunting incidents. We have received a number of reports that they have found the resources to police the badger cull though

Overall, how do you rate this force?

Many of the FWGs who we spoke to regarding TVP had good relationships with other neighbouring forces, working with them rather than against them. We struggled to find FWGs or MOPs who had positive comments to make about TVP. Comments we have received in respect of TVP include "we don't know of any good WCO" and "Thames Valley are universally useless" The public (as well as wildlife) undoubtedly suffer at the hands of the hunts eg: the recent Kimblewick case, the Village of Hornton banning the Warwickshire, The Heythrop causing chaos on the road etc (see media/hit reports). Yet TVP do not appear to place any importance on this. The force partners with various traditionally pro hunt/pro shoot organisations but seem unwilling to liaise with AAF or other groups. The only positive feedback we have for TVP: "The inspector responsible for policing the last Kimblewick protest near Chesham on Boxing Day 2019 was efficient and fair." Two officers were communicative when AAF requested details about the recent Kimblewick kill. NB: TVP do mention hunting with dogs on their public website.

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

Possibly the most disappointing force we have dealt with. The only positive effort they made was to answer our queries about the failure to prosecute the Kimblewick. TVP are clearly content with the way they respond to hunting incidents. We are not. The Hunting Act is being breached on a massive scale and we expect all police forces to take action.

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 and media reports which mention hunting and TVP

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2606248039705125>

<https://www.facebook.com/HuntSaboteursAssociation/posts/3768160299879342>

29/8/20 Old Berks hunt cubbing and intimidating young FWGs. Police called but no action taken

<https://www.facebook.com/HuntSaboteursAssociation/posts/3838717996156905>

September 2020. Member of public stops illegal shooting, TVP did not have correct knowledge of 'Wildlife & Countryside Act' and so did not attend. Not fox hunting but illustrates training issues?

<https://www.facebook.com/Bedsandbuckssabs/posts/3188804394549612>

19/9/20. Kimblewick hunt. Lone female FWG subject to harassment and threats from various male hunt supporters. TVP initially wouldn't come out to 999 call.

https://www.banburyguardian.co.uk/news/people/warwickshire-hunt-agrees-no-go-zones-banburyshire-village-2978652?fbclid=IwAR1ikm5Gp0w6YBMAomE-d7ydlqTnLXpKLBK4_gk0blU9BBQxAOY37A1HAvA

21/9/20. village of Hornton, Oxfordshire bans the Warwickshire hunt following disruption

[https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/18749135.heythrop-hunt-accused-almost-causing-crash-chasing-](https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/18749135.heythrop-hunt-accused-almost-causing-crash-chasing-fox/?ref=fbshr&fbclid=IwAR2TYB4KppeJYOrWCT8AOWd6tgUTUXvT7emHxHNZZi)

[fox/?ref=fbshr&fbclid=IwAR2TYB4KppeJYOrWCT8AOWd6tgUTUXvT7emHxHNZZi](https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/18749135.heythrop-hunt-accused-almost-causing-crash-chasing-fox/?ref=fbshr&fbclid=IwAR2TYB4KppeJYOrWCT8AOWd6tgUTUXvT7emHxHNZZi)
[tnvBmDXkNAFtbyye8](https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/18749135.heythrop-hunt-accused-almost-causing-crash-chasing-fox/?ref=fbshr&fbclid=IwAR2TYB4KppeJYOrWCT8AOWd6tgUTUXvT7emHxHNZZi)

26/9/20. press report. Heythrop hunt nearly cause a traffic accident in Chipping Norton.

<https://www.facebook.com/3CHuntSabs/posts/2721657398057227>

2/10/20. hit report. 'Gloucester police considered more efficient than Thames Valley' re blocked Setts;

"With [Gloucestershire Constabulary](#) taking sett-blocking more seriously over recent seasons (although it hasn't been entirely stopped in Glos either) there is a perceptible difference when you head across the border into, say, Oxfordshire....."

".....In the meantime [Thames Valley Police](#), you need to start taking sett-blocking and wildlife persecution more seriously! We will be reporting the blocked setts later and expect a positive response..."

<https://www.facebook.com/216653118514528/posts/1735426563303835/>

<https://www.facebook.com/HuntSaboteursAssociation/posts/4124350170927018>

12/12/20 Kimblewick kill and TVPs response to it.

<https://www.getreading.co.uk/news/reading-berkshire-news/thames-valley-police-identify-areas-21124615>

May 2021 Thames Valley Officers deliberately mow down a cow. Generated considerable negative publicity in relation to their lack of empathy towards animals.

Comments regarding resources devoted to policing the badger cull (in comparison to policing illegal fox hunting):

<https://www.facebook.com/Bedsandbuckssabs/posts/3183246775105374>

17/9/20. Badger cull: Sabs vehicle stopped, handcuffed, locked in police car. 6 officers, 3 police vehicles. Accused of 'going equipped' Resources for this but not hunting offences?

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=3251534931561826&id=736001806448497

27/9/20. Unit from TVP travelled to help Somerset and Avon Police re the badger cull.

<https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/19173994.quarter-million-pounds-policing-badger-culls-oxfordshire/>

22/3/21. TVP spend over £200,000 on policing the badger cull

TVP video Rural Crime video - Do the team still have similar partners?:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=10154524291578655>

14/2/17 video from TVP - explaining how their rural crime team partner with the pro hunt CLA (**see *CLA links below***), gamekeepers, NFU, all of whom traditionally have links strong links with bloodsports/hunting. The officer in the video says "it's all about police and the public". (FWGs are the public? AAF are the public?) AAF presume Thames Valley still partner with such organisations?

https://www.farminguk.com/news/hunting-reform-long-overdue-says-cla_36290.html

RE CLA (2015)

<https://www.thefreelibrary.com/CLA+warns+of+backlash+if+hunting+outlawed%3B+LANDOWNERS%3A+Ban+would...-a084587608>

Re CLA (2002)

Incident 16/10/21. FWGs in Oxfordshire who were monitoring an illegal hunt were stopped by the police following false allegations made by hunt staff – this is a very common tactic employed by hunts. Monitors were fully compliant with providing information to the police. No attempt whatsoever was made by the police to question the hunt, no interest was shown in the hunt at all. The FWGs were told to leave the area. They were quite happy to leave as the hunt were clearly finishing. Despite this they were followed for 10 minutes by police when they drove off. The monitors said there was no doubt they would have been further harassed by the police if they'd said they wanted to continue monitoring the hunt. Two vehicles and several police officers were involved; the FWGs were treated as the guilty party. An official complaint has been made against Thames Valley police.