

COUNTING THE CRIMES

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“An evidence-based report by Action Against Foxhunting detailing the response from police to “Counting the Crimes” (CTC), which examined police response to hunt-related calls. CTC2 includes 34 individual reports on rural police forces, showing how they responded to CTC; the present relationship between them and local anti-hunting groups; their ability and willingness to enforce the Hunting Act 2004, and any plans they have for improvement.”

Published Autumn 2021

Hunting is a leisure activity and members of the public are suffering because of the hunts' antisocial behaviour

All police forces should now accept that illegal foxhunting is routine.

FOXHUNTING IS A CRIME, NOT AN OPINION.

THE PUBLIC LOOKS
TO THE POLICE TO
PREVENT AND
PROSECUTE
LAW-BREAKING.

TRUST IS CRUCIAL

Jackie Cox
Pip Donovan
info@actionagainstfoxhunting.org

AAF believes it is unethical for any officer with an interest in blood sports to be involved in any hunt-related incident or to be a Wildlife Crime Officer.



Preventing the crime of illegal foxhunting is as important as finding evidence for an investigation.

THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY CAN BE FOUND [HERE](#)

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8. REPORTS FOR INDIVIDUAL POLICE FORCES CAN BE FOUND [HERE](#)

IMPORTANT NOTE:

In between the publication of Counting the Crimes (Sept 2020) and the majority of our discussions with police, the Hunting Office webinars were exposed (Nov 2020). At the meetings, we discussed the webinar, but the guilty verdict (confirming that trail hunting is foxhunting) had not occurred. The majority of Counting the Crimes 2 (The Police Response) was completed before the verdict. We had already concluded that the webinar exposure was enough to show beyond any doubt that the trail hunting is foxhunting, and the verdict confirmed this. However, we have reviewed the body of the report to reflect the importance of the verdict. Please click here for an explanation of the webinars and the verdict.

[Webinars and Verdict](#)

PART ONE

1 THE HUNTING ACT

1.1 What the police said about the Hunting Act

- 1.1 (i) In our discussions with police, both through email and verbally, we discovered that many officers are dissatisfied with the way the Hunting Act was written. They are expected to enforce it, but find it difficult and time-consuming.

“The Hunting Act is very poor” Essex Police, November 2020

“The Hunting Act may be simple, but policing it can be a nightmare” Surrey and Sussex Police, October 2020

“The Hunting Act isn’t fit for purpose” North Yorkshire Police.

[The above comments are opinions and not official responses.]

- 1.1 (ii) Other individuals and organisations agree that the Hunting Act is seriously flawed.

Stephen Wooler, former Chief Inspector of the CPS, wrote this in a letter to The Times:

“The terms of the Act mean that prospects of a successful prosecution are slim since only the most blatant offences are capable of being prosecuted... Unenforceable law is no law and its disregard by society’s influencers undermines the rule of law.” Stephen Wooler, HM Chief Inspector of the CPS (2000 – 2010), letter to the Times, 7 December 2020.

- 1.1 (iii) [Advocates for Animals](#), a law firm specialising in legislation concerning animals told us this:

"Whilst The Hunting Act can be enforceable, as shown by numerous successful prosecutions, it still has far to go in ensuring those who illegally hunt wild mammals with dogs are brought to justice. For example there are loopholes which animal protection organisations believe need to be closed and the small penalty is out of sync with general animal protection law."

In particular, the police find it extremely difficult to prove that a person intended to hunt a fox.

*"At the moment we have to prove beyond reasonable doubt that they were involved in hunting a fox and this is a very high level of proof. The slightest doubt about any activity potentially being an accident makes it very hard for us to successfully prosecute and often the CPS will even refuse to authorise a charge". **Bedfordshire Police, 24 September 2020***

*"to prove the offence police require evidence of an active intentional pursuit of a fox which is clearly difficult to evidence". **Dorset Police, 7 October 2020***

*"Prosecutions are challenging ... it's a difficult task to prove "non-accidental killing", **Hertfordshire Police, 27 November 2020***

- 1.1 (iv) Police officers prefer to prevent crime rather than punish it, but they are frustrated by the failure of the Act to require the hunts to provide a map of the "trail" prior to a day's hunting. Most forces we engaged with agreed that if the hunts were legally obliged to produce a map of the trail, their job of policing the hunts would be significantly easier.

"In order to ensure that each hunt is compliant, and therefore not vulnerable to criminal prosecution, I would suggest that one method would be by maintaining maps of laid [trails] and contemporaneous recorded evidence of the [trail]." **DCC Paul Netherton, letter to the Hunting Office, June 2018.**

"We have asked the hunts to video the trail and send it to us before the hunt. But so far, they have not done this." **Staffordshire Police, 9 October 2010**

- 1.1 (v) The hunts are also not required to tell the police the dates or locations of the meets. Several police forces (*Staffordshire, Leicestershire, Essex*) said that they do not receive meet cards as the hunts are afraid that they will pass the information on to the FWGs. The problem for the police is that they do not know where the hunts start or where they will go, and they do not have the resources to drive about looking for them.

- 1.1 (vi) Police also said that if the hunts really did want to show that they were not breaking the law, they would willingly share their meet cards and trail maps with the police.

- 1.1 (vii) Police have to prioritise calls according to “threat, harm and risk” to people. Breaches of the Hunting Act are summary only, non-recordable and relate to animals. This means that the offence itself is, by police standards, minor.

*“Hunting isn’t a strategic priority for the Government, police, the PCC or local communities” **Leicester Police, February 2021***

- 1.1 (viii) The scale of the potential law breaking (over 11,000 meets per season, not including cubhunting) and the limitation of police resources are also significant.

*“The reality is we don’t have the resources. In Leicester, we lost 500 police officers and we can’t easily get to all domestic violence calls.” **Leicester Police, February 2021***

*“We simply don’t have sufficient resources to speculatively deploy our people. They go where they are needed most, focusing on protecting people and saving lives.” **Staffordshire Police, November 2020.***

1.2 AAF’s comments and recommendations

- 1.2 (i) Despite the evidence, supported at the time by the leaked webinars, some police (Northampton and Staffordshire, for example) refused to acknowledge that the hunts are not obeying the Hunting Act. Some forces even pointed out that because the webinar did not specifically involve their local area, it was irrelevant. The Hunting Office is the governing body for all hunts, so this can only be an excuse. The attitude of these forces contrasts sharply with other police forces (Gloucester, Cumbria and Essex for example) who are very ready to admit that illegal foxhunting is a problem. This inconsistency is illogical - hunts are breaking the law in all counties.
- 1.2 (ii) The government’s repeated refusal to strengthen the Act indicates that they have more concern for the hunting lobby than they do for their own police force. The government does not want this law upheld and is fully prepared to put their own employees in a difficult situation in order to preserve foxhunting. In 2005, when the Hunting Act was about to come into force, Boris Johnson, who was then a backbench MP, wrote a [column in the Spectator](#), urging hunts to “defy the police and the magistrates and the government”.
- 1.2 (iii) The Hunting Act does not make the police’s job easy, even for the forces who do want to take action against illegal hunting. The biggest problem is proving “intent”. If it included a clause about “recklessness”, the almost impossible job of proving what was in a person’s mind when he/she committed the offence would be removed. This would also simplify the police’s job in gathering evidence and putting together an investigation.
- 1.2 (iv) The hunts should be legally obliged to provide a map of the trail to police for every day’s hunting.

- 1.2 (v) While it is clear that the Hunting Act is flawed and does not protect wildlife as intended, it is preferable to no law at all. However, when the weaknesses of the Hunting Act are put in the context of the hunts' determination to continue fox hunting despite the law, the lack of police resources and the low priority of the offence, it is unsurprising that the number of convictions for foxhunting is small.
- 1.2 (vi) The Hankinson verdict of 15th October 2021, shows WITHOUT ANY DOUBT AT ALL that the Hunting Act is ineffective. The verdict confirmed that the hunts have been hunting and killing foxes since the ban, despite the existence of an Act outlawing the practice. The ease with which the hunts have circumvented the Act, the apparent readiness of the police to believe the excuse of "trail hunting" and the sheer length of time that the hunts have defied it, indicate that the law is enabling the hunters to hunt foxes rather than prevent them.
- 1.2 (vii) The webinars and the verdict do not, of course, stand in isolation. AAF and other anti-hunting organisations have been telling the police that the Hunting Act is being breached all the time, but many police forces have chosen not to believe us.
- 1.2 (viii) We have collected 65 reports of illegal foxhunting for the 2020 - 2021 season. Covid limited the season to a few weeks, rather than the usual six months, so these figures are reduced. This figure only shows the reports made to AAF. There are many, many more hit reports describing illegal hunting, at a guess 8 or 10 times more. Last year, the League collected 485 reports. Only some of these are reported to the police. AAF estimates that across the 34 rural forces involved in Counting the Crimes 1, the number of reports of illegal foxhunting for the 2019 to 2020 season is somewhere in the region of 750 - 800. We have based this on figures received from Warwickshire and Leicester Police. Leicester Police, in their "Operation Blackthorne Debrief" for the hunting season 2019-2020 received 12 reports of illegal foxhunting. A FOI request to Warwickshire Police revealed that they received 30 reports. It is important to note that these are *reports only*. If FWGs are not present at a hunt, it is unlikely that any breaches of the Hunting Act will be reported.
- 1.2 (ix) It is impossible to provide a national figure of the number of illegal foxhunting reports made to police. Police systems mean the number of reports cannot easily be counted. The number of reports for a particular offence/crime must be a factor in determining police resources. We cannot see how illegal hunting will be included, if there is no way of establishing the true figure.
- 1.2 (x) While the Countryside Alliance and the Hunting Office have gone to great lengths to deny that hunts intend to go out and illegally pursue live quarry, other bloodsports enthusiasts have freely admitted it. Here are two examples:
- Video taken at an AAF outreach stall in Salisbury, where a passer-by explains why he likes foxhunting and is not worried by its illegality.
- <https://www.facebook.com/ACTIONAGAINSTFOXHUNTING/posts/3750499825016245>
- In his article, John Musgrave (bloodsports' enthusiast) said this:

“Activists should realise they cannot impose their views on a different set of people without those people first agreeing. People obey the law because, in the main, they agree with it.” 18 February 2021.

https://www.conservativewoman.co.uk/16-years-after-blairs-ban-we-hunting-folk-will-not-be-hounded-out/?fbclid=IwAR2_X9dgxmgtHNUg1wjuoHtP0FTFWmi5tOIMySsdSNPLoBKsAV69EUw1gKY

- 1.2 (xi) **All police forces should accept that illegal foxhunting is routine. Denying this makes little sense in the face of all the intelligence and evidence we have. Additionally, the verdict on 15th October 2021 must be taken into account by all forces. Forces who said that the webinars did not affect them locally must understand that the Hunting Office is the governing body for all the hunts and therefore all the hunts are involved.**

PART TWO

2 EVIDENCE

2.1 What the police said about evidence

- 2.1 (i) In our discussions with police, we found that they are fully aware of the potential value of the evidence of illegal foxhunting gathered by FWGs.

“We want to build bridges with sabs and monitors. This is because they hold PRIMARY EVIDENCE that the police need to investigate allegations of illegal foxhunting”. Warwickshire Police, 24 November 2020

- 2.1 (ii) However, officers were sometimes unable to act on an allegation of illegal foxhunting because of the quality and quantity of the evidence offered by FWGs. This also applies to allegations of assault and intimidation.

“I can say with confidence that the vast majority of reports we get relating to illegal hunting have little or no evidence attached, which we need provided in order for us to take action.” Suffolk Police, 7 October 2020

- 2.1 (iii) Police said that they if they are offered **edited** footage, it is mostly likely unusable.

- 2.1 (iv) Police also said that another problem was the unwillingness of witnesses to provide personal details.

“Reports are often made to the police and recorded, but witnesses regularly refuse to provide a statement and/or support a criminal prosecution. This can result in there being insufficient evidence from the investigation to initiate criminal proceedings”. Leicester Police, 3 March 2021

“Kirksmeaton Boxing Day – the bloke with the fox and the minibus. We tried to investigate it but it was very difficult to find anyone who would speak to us. Getting the footage was a nightmare, and no one would give a statement. No one would go to court.” North Yorkshire Police, 14 December 2020

- 2.1 (v) Police also showed concern about the footage containing evidence of public order offences by FWGs themselves.

“When filming you need to ensure that you do not commit public order offences yourself. I dealt with some footage of a huntsman being abusive, which I would have loved to take forward, but it was among 30 minutes of the protestor abusing the huntsman. This ruins any chance of any prosecution for a public order offence.” Essex Police, 6 November 2020

2.2 Suggestions from the police about how to improve the quality of evidence

The following is an amalgamation of the suggestions from several forces: Leicester, Essex and Staffordshire

2.2.1 Footage

2.2.1 (i) All footage and photographs have to be provided in **unedited formats** and the 'owner' of the data has to provide it. Please also be aware that a requirement for a statement and participating in the court process will be required otherwise this evidence may be deemed inadmissible for the purpose of criminal proceedings. Video footage has to be consistent with the report. For example, where there are irreconcilable differences between what is reported and what the video evidence shows, the credibility of a witness can be undermined and the investigation/criminal proceedings may not be allowed to continue. Reports that illegal hunting is taking place are often undermined as a result of the quality of evidence provided, in particular from fragmented and unstable footage that doesn't capture the evidence effectively. Ensuring there is clear, stable and consistent footage will assist ensure the evidence is captured.

2.2.1 (ii) Ideally we would like the **original footage** (master copy) - so the S.D. card / Hard drive or potentially even the device (mobile phone) – this all helps to show that footage has not been doctored in any way and helps make the evidential case stronger. If the footage has been provided thirdhand we will want to find the original footage and speak to the person who obtained that footage. We will not be able to provide you with a replacement device.

2.2.1 (iii) Many Police officers will now be deployed with and recording events on their **body worn videos** to help provide an impartial line of evidence and help corroborate witness accounts.

2.2.2 Evidence and statements need to be provided to the police in a timely manner.

2.2.2 (i) Most hunting related offences reported to the police are summary only and therefore have a 6-month prosecution time limit. This means the police have 6 months for the allegation to be charged/initiate criminal proceedings and any barrier to obtaining evidence in an investigation can hinder its progress and prevent the case proceeding to charge.

2.2.3 Sound is important on videos.

2.2.3 (i) The use of the horn by the hunt is important and we need to hear this along with the hounds, or what the hunt are saying. Having this drowned out by the camera operator talking is not helpful. Let the video speak for itself, rather than have a commentary. So other than an introduction at the beginning about where you are and date, etc it is best to remain as quiet as possible.

2.2.4 Social Media

2.2.4 (i) **We would advise you NOT to put footage on social media.**

The Crown Prosecution Service (who prosecute cases) advise that your footage should not be in the public domain as this may adversely affect any subsequent proceedings. Similarly, footage simply taken from Social Media and forwarded onto the police without any context or evidential chain is unlikely to result in any further action.

2.2.5 Witnesses

2.2.5 (i) Witnesses/victims should be aware that providing a statement may result in the need for them to attend court and give evidence. In cases where the evidence in question is key to the prosecution case, the failure of a witness/victim to attend court when required is likely to result in a failed prosecution. **If a key witness/victim indicates they do not support a criminal prosecution from the outset, an investigation is not likely to result in charge/the initiation of criminal proceedings.**

2.2.5 (ii) Witnesses can be granted **special measures** when giving evidence to a court in criminal proceedings. These measures include the use of screens or video link, minimising the contact a witness has with a defendant. In summary, the witness has to show the court they are in fear of the defendant and/or giving evidence and the special measure proposed will improve the quality of their evidence. The police cannot promise the court will grant special measures to a witness, as the court will determine each application on its merits considering the evidence available.

2.2.6 Identifying Suspects

2.2.6 (i) Often an investigation will need to formally identify a suspect, and this identification needs to stand up to scrutiny at court, the best evidence is where a witness names a suspect or can identify them through an identification procedure (ID parade). This is part of the investigation process. Firstly, a statement would be required that will cover the aspect of the identification. If the suspect denied the offence/identification was an issue, a witness may be asked to attend a police station to partake in an identification parade. This is a strictly controlled and safe environment that supports a witness whilst ensuring the legal requirements of an identification are achieved.

2.2.6 (ii) Assaults could be prevented, harm avoided and the use of reasonable force and self-defence could be reduced. We advise to consider different methods of monitoring the hunt that could improve the evidential capture and does not involve trespassing on private land whilst still achieving the aims desired.

2.3 AAF's comments and recommendations

- 2.3 (i) While we are aware that police need good evidence to prosecute, they must understand how very difficult it is for the FWGs to obtain that evidence. The fact that the FWGs cannot always come up with evidence is NOT an indication that the hunts are not breaking the law.

"If hunting were that flagrant, it should be straightforward for people to obtain that evidence". Staffordshire Police, 19 November 2020.

- 2.3 (ii) We understand that police resources are limited, but some forces are making an effort to obtain their own evidence of illegal hunting. Suffolk, Gloucester and Essex forces are willing to utilise drones on hunting days. Other forces (e.g. Staffordshire) are not.

- 2.3 (iii) If, in the field, an FWG tells an officer that illegal hunting is happening, police should act on that information immediately. Police have said repeatedly that they do not have the resources to police the hunts on a regular basis, **but if they are already present, there is no reason why they cannot also look at the hunts' activities.** If they did, it would be a sign of good faith in the FWGs, who, in our opinion, are the experts. FWGs have the ability and knowledge to interpret the actions of the hunt for the police, but they can be dismissed too easily. Some police appear to give no weight at all to an allegation of illegal hunting if it comes from an FWG. However, police are expected to believe a complainant whoever they are. All the forces we have spoken to have told us that they want to "build bridges" with the anti-hunting groups, and they want to listen to what they have to say. Listening to the FWGs in the field is a necessary first step.

- 2.3 (iv) With regard to FWGs' own behaviour, we understand how stressful and difficult it is to sab and monitor a hunt. We also understand that it is very hard to stay calm when faced with intimidation from hunt support and staff, and that it is almost impossible not to allow your emotions to explode verbally when you know the hunt has killed a fox. However, if your words and behaviour are on the footage the police need as evidence, this might prevent a prosecution. Staying quiet (other than a simple narration of events, providing this does not mask the voice and horn calls made by the hunt) is always the best option.

- 2.3 (v) Police investigations into breaches of the Hunting Act are regularly dropped – and it is often for lack of evidence generally related to "intent". Anti-hunting groups have taken police advice, obtained good evidence, worked hard on presenting it and the cases are still dropped. This leads to lack of trust in the police and suspicions that police are either in collusion with the hunts or too weak to withstand pressure from them.

<https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/19170973.thames-valley-police-close-inquiry-illegal-fox-hunt/>

<https://www.thecanary.co/opinion/2021/01/20/its-one-rule-for-the-rich-as-fox-hunters-again-evade-prosecution-despite-damning-evidence/?fbclid=IwAR30IJaaYfiQQ-Y3p8IIDExc0YeltHChReJtY6du2uFWrFO2DfkcqJdK2ic>

<https://morethanjustbadgers.net/2021/01/25/crown-prosecution-service-why-they-drop-hunting-cases/?fbclid=IwAR0t5DvEQ9byAndUty218mjYB1Wc9BqpZlwnWmLNqHpJbCDaIrUdsrnD4mc>

2.3 (vi) Martin Sims (League Against Cruel Sports) says that police can easily make the wrong decisions:

“I get really frustrated and annoyed when I see clear cases of breaches of the Hunting Act and yet they are investigated poorly by the Police. In essence there are three reasons for that. Firstly, the cases are given to officers who do not have a clue on what they are looking at when provided footage of illegal hunting and they cannot relate what they are seeing on film to what the Act says. When complainants then come forward and address this with senior officers within Forces they are often told that they are relying on their own “in-house” experts to consider the cases. Let’s be clear, Police officers with little or no training in the legislation are not experts in any shape or form. Secondly, officers seem to shy away from gathering all available evidence on an allegation before going to the regional Crown Prosecution Service Lawyer for early investigative advice. How on earth can the Lawyer give appropriate advice if they do not have all the facts to hand. Yet decisions are made on this basis and only last week yet another example of this came to light. Thirdly, I see examples of where officers approach hunts about allegations before any investigation has started and then start speaking to hunt staff when not under caution and so any possible evidence is inadmissible. This is madness and in my 31 years as a Police Officer I did not see it in any other matter, other than perhaps wildlife crime in general, to which most Forces have improved their approach over the past few years. So the odds for prosecutions can be well stacked in favour of hunts”. (Email to AAF, 24/02/21).

2.3 (vii) The lack of training in the Hunting Act highlighted in “Counting the Crimes” must be addressed by the police in order for any of this to change. In particular, police need to understand the meanings of voice and horn calls as the huntsman’s intent is often clearly revealed in the instructions he or she gives to the hounds. If the police are incapable of translating the horn and voice calls, audible in evidence collected by the FWGs, then the investigations will be dropped too easily.

2.3 (viii) Police incompetence contributed to the failure of this recent case:

<https://thecitro.substack.com/p/cps-bunbling-appears-to-let-crawley?fbclid=IwAR3OosgB5T5WF8ze3ZDROxNGhaQL3rfAsSlc9PSEdBbaWDLLeAhRZf31qUhw>

“[The] case was dropped as we arrived at court because [the] prosecuting council found the CPS [Crown Prosecution Service] and police had failed to provide the defence in advance with the relevant video footage. This weakened the general case considerably and was simply an unprofessional failing.”

The case was prosecuted by Surrey and Sussex Police. In the opinion of AAF, this failure is inexcusable. Police cannot be even-handed and fair if they are too disorganised or incompetent even to provide evidence for a prosecution. This

particular failing is not (as far as we know) connected at all to lack of training about the Hunting Act. However, it is inevitably perceived as bias.

- 2.3 (ix) AAF met with Surrey and Sussex police on 30 October 2020. They were keen to build a relationship with FWGs, but in our opinion this was mostly prompted by public order issues rather than illegal foxhunting. They were confident in their approach to breaches of the Hunting Act.

“Sussex and Surrey have dedicated Wildlife and Rural Crime Teams and also nominate a lead investigator to manage any allegations of crime and disorder relating to hunt meetings. The investigation of alleged breaches of the Hunting Act 2004 is specifically included in the investigation plan and deployed officers and their supervisors have access to advice if required”.

- 2.3 (x) However, after their high-profile failure with the Crawley and Horsham prosecution, it is unlikely that the FWGs will feel it is a good use of their time to engage with the police in any meaningful way.

- 2.3 (xi) **If the FWGs go to lengths to record and submit evidence to the police and the evidence is of good quality, all police forces must make sure that allegation is investigated professionally and thoroughly. If the officer tasked with investigating it is not an expert, then he/she must call on an expert to help. Contacting the hunts before the investigation begins is totally unacceptable. Several times during our conversations with police, we mentioned that this aspect did concern us. While we understand that police do want to engage with groups, evidence suggests that some forces do not keep a professional distance when speaking to the hunts. Please see Part 4 “BIAS”.**

PART THREE

3 INFORMATION AND INTELLIGENCE

3.1 What police said about information and intelligence

3.1 (i) Definitions

Information and intelligence are different.

Definition of “information”:

Information is raw data, often factual, but not confirmed or analysed. Information will have worth, but it is not “intelligence”. Here is a simple example. A member of the public reports that she has seen men entering woods early in the morning, carrying spades. The men arrived on a quad bike, with the number plate obscured by mud. She knows there are badgers living in the woods.

Definition of “intelligence”:

Intelligence is something that police have analysed and can use to make decisions and take action.

For the example above, police would need to process the information and analyse it according to their systems. For instance, they might take into account that it happened on one of the days that the hunt is active in that same area and that hunts are known to block badger setts to prevent a hunted fox from going to ground. Once the analysis has been done, police may decide it is “intelligence” and potentially useful.

3.1 (ii) Several forces said that information and intelligence were important.

Leicester Police, 23 February

“any intelligence will be taken seriously.”

3.1 (iii) To manage both information and intelligence, police need clear and reliable systems to record, cross-reference and use for planning. This is a particular problem for information and intelligence relating to illegal foxhunting.

3.1 (iv) Illegal foxhunting is a non-recordable crime. It is also difficult to establish how many 999 calls have been made reporting illegal hunting. Different police forces use different systems for categorising 999 calls - some of them can identify calls mentioning “hounds” (for example) with a key word search, but searching for “hunt” is likely to generate too many irrelevant hits. FOI requests have been rejected on the grounds that it will take too long and be too expensive to find the information.

3.1 (v) It is likely that reports of illegal foxhunting are often simply filed, rather than used as information, or analysed to become intelligence.

- 3.1 (vi) It is unusual for police forces to keep clear records of hunt-related incidents. There are some exceptions:

Leicester Police keep very clear records of hunt-related crimes.

“If we were given reliable intelligence that had been obtained legally we would record it. We don’t have a specific system in place solely for hunt related intelligence, all intelligence goes through the same recording and evaluation process. If there was illegal activity in Leicestershire we have a dedicated rural crime team who would be made aware of the intelligence.

As with all other intelligence and information we receive and gather, we would make an assessment of both the intelligence and an assessment in regard the response we would make. As you are aware we only have so many resources and hunting is not a PCC or police strategic priority. These priorities inform our allocation of resources.”

- 3.1 (viii) Warwickshire Police recognised the failures of the present systems to record, analyse and use information concerning hunt-related calls and in response, they developed their own. Quotation from our notes taken at the meeting with the Rural Crime Team (24 Nov 2020):

“Unique to Warwickshire (as far as we know) is a method of recording rural crimes, including hunt-related crimes. Because illegal hunting isn’t recordable, police have no reason to keep stats about it, so generally speaking, they don’t. But the Rural Crime Team has a co-ordinator who is putting all these crimes on a spreadsheet, in order to gather intelligence, look for patterns and keep clearer records.”

- 3.1 (ix) Most forces have no straightforward, easily accessible system for recording and cross-referencing hunting offences. The systems used by Essex police (for example) are representative of most forces.

An FOI request to Essex Police on 27 April 2020 generated this reply:

Do Essex Police keep a record of reports of illegal hunting?

All reports of hunting are recorded either on our command and control system, known as STORM, or on our intelligence system. If a call is received into our Force Control Room with just the details that a hunt is taking place, e.g. riders in red jackets and hounds, but does not contain information to indicate it is unlawful hunting, then response from Essex Police is determined according to Threat Harm and Risk. The incident is closed either as non-attendance or after Officers have attended and no evidence of illegal hunting is found. This is not recorded on our intelligence system. If Officers attend, they may determine the attendance is suitable to be placed on our intelligence system.

If information is received through another source, e.g. through our Resolution Centre, then it should be placed on as intelligence.

Do they use it as intelligence?

Reports of hunts occurring but with no indication of illegal hunting are not used as intelligence.

If not, what is your approach to collecting intelligence on breaches of the Hunting Act?

All reports on our command and control system and intelligence system are sent to Officers on the Rural Engagement Team to develop or be aware of.

6 May 2020 (this was a follow-up question for clarification).

1) A report is received that a badger sett has been blocked up. The hunt is hunting in that area on that day. Hunts are known to block badger setts in advance of a hunt to stop a hunted fox from taking refuge in a badger sett. Blocking badger setts is illegal. If you receive a report of this, and a visit verifies that this has happened, would this be recorded as intelligence (or information) to show that the hunt may be hunting illegally? How would this be recorded? (Other forces are recording this type of incident and using it as intelligence/information).

The incident of a badger sett being unlawfully blocked would be recorded as a crime in Essex and given a crime reference number.

2) A report is received that a hunt is pursuing a fox. Officers arrive and are shown a fox's body, which looks as if it has been killed by dogs. However, there is no video evidence to confirm that the hunt was illegally hunting. Would this be recorded as intelligence (or information) to show that the hunt may be hunting illegally? How would this be recorded?

This type of incident should be recorded as either a crime, or intelligence. It depends on the amount of evidence available.

Does the Rural Engagement Team use these crimes to form intelligence about hunts? In other words - does the crime of badger sett blocking get connected in any way with fox hunting? And kept on record as such? Or does it just disappear into the vast pot of unsolved crimes, and lies there forgotten and unnoticed. These crimes ARE connected with foxhunting. If the police don't also connect them, then they are missing a very important and valuable piece of intelligence.

When the incident is recorded as a crime, the issue of a hunt being nearby is looked at, but unless there is evidence to prove it was a member of the hunt is responsible it will remain unsolved. There is no physical way of connecting a crime on our system with the hunt, we can only put them as involved or suspects if there is evidence to show this.

If the answer is "No, we don't use any information about badger sett blocking (or any of the other things related to foxhunting including the appearance of a dead fox during a hunt) to form intelligence about illegal hunting", then please let me know.

The Rural Engagement Team is made aware of all intelligence or crimes involving wildlife. We can direct our patrols to these areas if a pattern emerges, and if we know the date/time of the next meet.

3.2 AAF's comments and recommendations

- 3.2 (i) The Hankinson conviction on 15 October 2021 has already been referred to in this report. In terms of intelligence and information, the webinars (the reason for the prosecution and conviction) should be invaluable to the police. Not only does the conviction confirm, beyond any doubt, that hunts are illegally hunting foxes and using trail hunting as a cover, but they also provide the police with precise details about how they are doing it. All police officers should watch the webinars and understand how hunts deceive the police by laying trails.

Transcripts of the webinars can be found here:

<https://www.huntsabs.org.uk/mass-criminality-in-hunting-community-revealed-through-leaked-webinars/>

- 3.2 (ii) With regard to recording and analysing reports of illegal foxhunting, it is important that all police forces recognise that the current systems for connecting wildlife crimes with illegal foxhunting are inadequate. If Warwickshire can solve this problem, then other forces can too.
- 3.2 (iii) If an officer attends a call to illegal foxhunting, and that officer (because of his or her training) is incapable of recognising illegal foxhunting, most (if not all) information and intelligence opportunities are lost.
- 3.2 (iv) Many FWGs are knowledgeable and experienced with regard to the Hunting Act and are experts at spotting illegal foxhunting. They could help the police, but are often disregarded. They are rarely seen as valuable and reliable sources of information.

Police should listen to the FWGs when they report illegal foxhunting, even when the evidence is not sufficient to begin an investigation. FWGs are continually offering information to police about illegal foxhunting, but it is not recorded as information or intelligence, neither is it easily accessible for future learning.

- 3.2 (v) When police disregard reports of illegal foxhunting, they should bear in mind how difficult it is to collect any evidence at all to prove what is happening.
- 3.2 (vi) Police should also use other aspects of hunts' behaviour as information, particularly if the behaviour reveals a pattern. The following is a list of hunt behaviour common to most fox hunts.
- 3.2 (vii) Hunts obstruct FWGs views. Here is an example taken by the writer of this report on 16 September 2021.

https://www.actionagainstfoxhunting.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/IMG_3164.mov

3.2 (viii) Hunts block FWGs' vehicles, preventing them from seeing and recording their activities. This example highlights two issues. 1) Police failing to listen to FWGs and 2) Hunts blocking FWG vehicles.

<https://www.facebook.com/NorthHW/videos/508820460019202>

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=213855973415985&id=112752006859716

3.2 (ix) Hunts operate on land to which FWGs have no right of access. A recent example of this happened on Salisbury Plain on 2 October 2021. The Royal Artillery Hunt hunted inside a "RED FLAG" area. The public is forbidden to enter a Red Flag area, so the monitors attending the hunt did not enter.

3.2 (x) Hunts call the police about FWGs, hoping they will obstruct their progress. This often works.

<https://www.facebook.com/WestMidsHuntSabs/videos/548336116396746/>

24 April 2021. Hunt falsely tells Leicester Police that FWGs are armed:

<https://www.facebook.com/ManchesterHuntSabs/posts/4536758956341334>

3.2 (xi) Unlike drag hunts, "trail" hunts are secretive about the dates and places of their meets. Forces told us that they often don't have any information about the hunts whereabouts, even if they have asked. The hunts' secrecy clearly suggests that they do not want to be watched.

Drag hunt meet card:

<https://www.staffcollegedraghunt.co.uk/meet-card>

Hunts refuse to share "trail" maps with police.

3.2 (xii) Violence towards FWGs from hunt members and followers is increasing. [Part Six of this report). Again, this suggests that they do not want to be watched.

3.2 (xiii) **Preventing the crime of illegal foxhunting is as important as finding evidence for an investigation.** Protecting the individual fox from being hunted and killed by hounds is the main purpose of saboteurs. Like the police, saboteurs are trying to prevent crime. Even if the information and intelligence are not good enough for an investigation, police must accept that they are good enough to suggest that the hunts are illegally hunting foxes, and go on to take responsibility for prevention of this crime.

PART FOUR

4 BIAS AND PERCEIVED BIAS – CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS

4.1 What police said about training and unconscious bias

4.1 (i) Lack of police training in respect of illegal fox hunting:

Many forces have a very small number of trained wildlife crime officers. All forces said any officer (trained or not) might potentially attend a hunt related call.

There are understandably not enough resources to train all officers in depth. Some forces indicated they were keen to implement more training after speaking to us, at least one force certainly has.

What the police said:

“In most cases it is unlikely a WCO will be sent to an incident requiring an immediate or prompt attendance.” Devon & Cornwall Police, 29/1/21

“Our frontline officers are multiskilled and it is therefore accepted that they may not have a full knowledge of the intricacies of hunting legislation or activities.” Derbyshire Police, 23/10/20

“As a police force we accept that there is more to do around the training of staff in wildlife crime.” Warwickshire Police, response to Counting the Crimes

We are “very keen to have officers trained.” M.O.D Police, 29/1/21

4.1 (ii) Unconscious bias in hunt related situations:

We were repeatedly told by police forces that the combination of:

- standard police training in unconscious bias
- the Police Code of Ethics
- the police complaints system

were adequate to prevent police from showing bias when faced with a hunt situation.

What the police said:

“Kent Police officers and staff must remain impartial and objective when carrying out their duties. Awareness training has been provided in relation to “unconscious bias” to maintain this ethic”. Kent Police, 12/11/20

“Professional Standard Dept is the proper way to do it. Very efficient and effective” (re: an alleged biased WCO in another county.) North Yorkshire Police, 14/12/20

4.1 (iii) Many people struggle with impartiality and some will find their way into the police force. See the quiz below “Is policing right for me”:

<https://www.joiningthepolice.co.uk/is-policing-right-for-me/is-policing-right-for-me>

Q6 of the quiz (re 'Impartiality') asks ***"How do you think you would cope with staying impartial?"***

If the answer ***"I'd really struggle to stay impartial"*** is given, as long as other answers given are reasonably positive the quiz results come back ***"Congratulations. You've got lots of the qualities we're looking for. You sound like you would get a lot of enjoyment from the role. You should consider applying to become a police officer"***

- 4.1 (iv) Inadequate training on the subject of hunts and hunting within forces creates naivety. There have been several incidents of on duty police officers posing for photos at Pony Club shows, hunt hound awards and other events, apparently unaware that the events are closely linked to hunting.

Spring 2021 Police attending a hunt hound event:

<https://www.facebook.com/shropshireagainstbloodsports/posts/256276119584631>

August 2021. Police attend a Pony Club event:

<https://www.facebook.com/WestMidsHuntSabs/posts/2509597582518634>

- 4.1 (v) Quotes from FWGs relating to inadequately trained police:

*Incident in Derbyshire November 2020, quote from FWG **"if you'd like a quote from a monitor to the police on the day, I said to the police "they're on a fox and the terrier men are being aggressive to female sabs"***
*The policeman replied **"we don't know the legislation, we can't get in the field"***

*Incident in Yorkshire, September 2021, quote from an FWG in Yorkshire: **"The policeman didn't stop the hunt as he didn't know the law and it really upset him"***

- 4.1 (vi) There are other more widespread implications too. For example, the need for more adequate training also reflects on the police complaints procedure process (where the police effectively police the police). There is no reason to assume police investigating complaints about hunt related incidents will necessarily have been specifically trained in policing hunts.

- 4.1 (vii) There have been a number of controversial failed complaints, including this one in Northumbria:

12/12/20. Police attend a hunting situation where FWGs were being blocked/harassed, police effectively assisted the hunt:

<https://www.facebook.com/NorthHW/posts/209178874022661>

<https://www.facebook.com/NorthHW/posts/211817113758837>

<https://www.facebook.com/NorthHW/posts/209220590685156>

<https://www.facebook.com/NorthHW/videos/508820460019202> (VIDEO)

25/5/21 regarding the 12/12/20 incident above. Complaint not upheld despite the evidence provided including video evidence.

<https://www.facebook.com/1359138758/posts/10225744462862512/>

- 4.1 (viii) Most forces said they can't stop officers from belonging to hunts (or taking part in other bloodsports) and can't ask them to declare it.

Some forces varied from this stance to an extent. For example, Lancashire said that they asked officers to declare any business interest in shooting, but not any leisure interest. Dorset said they wouldn't let hunters be WCOs. Leicestershire ask officers who form part of their Operation Blackthorn team (the team involved in investigating hunt related crimes) to voluntarily declare any conflict of interest. Some forces have moved officers away from dealing with hunt related incidents after repeated accusations of clear bias, however there are still officers out there who take part in blood sports and who may get called to a hunting situation. Some of them are Wildlife Crime Officers.

This illustrates the situation:

24/10/21. Evidence emerged that an officer who served in Wiltshire Police for 32 years regularly took part in hunts:

<https://www.facebook.com/1202912723079637/posts/4386342861403258/>

A FOI request sent to Wiltshire Police by a member of the public in 2020 generated the following response. He asked for information concerning officers in Wiltshire who hunted:

"Our response: No information held. Our Counter Corruption Unit have run a keyword search for 'hunt', 'fox', 'hunting' and 'fox hunting under business interests submitted by staff members and this has come back negative. However please note staff members are not obliged to declare hunting interests"

4.2 Generic problems within police forces which may lead to accusations of bias

- 4.2 (i) These include:

- a lack of resources
- problems with administration/communication between officers
- inadequate technology
- low morale

What the police said:

Most forces we spoke to acknowledged the difficulties raised by a lack of resources.

"Officers are very thin on the ground". North Yorkshire Police, 14/12/2020

- 4.2 (ii) AAF have been made aware of a several incidents demonstrating apparent poor administration - documents not being forwarded to other officers or even to the courts. There have been complaints of disjointed communication when another officer takes over a case. Police information technology systems often appear to struggle to cope with receiving photographic and video evidence. There have also been reports of low morale amongst officers. All these factors impact on effective policing in general –including the policing of foxhunting. This can

create frustration and accusations of bias in hunting situations, especially when coupled with insufficient training.

Poor administration and communication:

Report 3/3/21. Police “forgot” to initiate an assault investigation:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=5537888819562137>

March 2021. Crawley and Horsham hunt court case. Poor police admin and knowledge. (Also poor CPS admin and knowledge). More detail about this case is included in Part Two of this report ‘Evidence’.

<https://thecitro.substack.com/p/cps-bungling-appears-to-let-crawley>

<https://thecitro.substack.com/p/intimidation-violence-and-illegal>

March 2021. Lamerton hunt court case. (Judge also showed poor/no knowledge of hunting procedures)

“In further calling into question witness testimony, the judge stated that the substantial delay in police collecting witness statements “cast an unwelcome and avoidable shadow over the case in general and the evidence in particular”.”

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=207595411151804&ref=sharing>

March 2021. Flint and Denbigh hunt. Officer allows evidence to time lapse on Hunting Act case

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2870619259874764>

March 2021. Kimblewick hunt. The police/CPS fail to recognise apparently obvious evidence of illegal hunting – was this a directly related to a lack of specialist knowledge?

https://morethanjustbadgers.net/2021/03/16/incompetence-or-collusion/?fbclid=IwAR2krYF4tVC5TufSyZvjnT9VKqF_GcL5sSGJqvNkzqQmfuZGadViXBOLNo

May 2021. Police refuse to take statements from witnesses because they are “not independent”, and dropped the case.

https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/fox-hunting-video-police-charge-b1854331.html?fbclid=IwAR1KdJQnTAoPJ2BZfMjXQJnEFSxZ6ilH2VbtQ7J8Nazlr8dBYJj_RB_woNg

October 2021. Lord Janner enquiry – **non-hunting related**. Police and CPS errors.

Professor Alexis Jay, chairman of the inquiry, said police and prosecutors “appeared reluctant to fully investigate” claims against Lord Janner despite “numerous serious allegations”.

“On multiple occasions police put too little emphasis on looking for supporting evidence and shut down investigations without pursuing all outstanding inquiries,” she said.

“This inquiry has brought up themes we are now extremely familiar with, such as deference to powerful individuals”

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leicestershire-58932593?fbclid=IwAR0VtmqhogaWnNUeiuu-giqSoRwria4yBeCOwin2dj3kSVQgQleSG_welDA

4.2 (iii) **Issues with technology:**

AAF have received several comments concerning difficulties in passing video or photographic evidence to the police. Below is a conversation with an FWG attempting to forward evidence to the police:

“The videos I have are too large for me to send via email. Would you be able to accept them from wetransfer.com”

“Yes we can try that but our internal security may reject it!”

4.2 (iv) **Low morale in the police force:**

March 2021. Article quoting a police officer’s thoughts on low morale - leaving the force after 20 years

https://emergency-services.news/im-done-police-officer-with-20-years-service-shares-sentiment-of-many-cops/?fbclid=IwAR2PHHcBcqK0ihL6OVylgSZKJxwj_4y51TuzaL3VKWNamIfxq0QEtfDwqOM

27/2/21. Letter from the Police Federation to the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer

<https://www.facebook.com/MikeReesPCC/posts/361268795398486>

4.3 The role of the CPS and court proceedings

4.3 (i) What the police say:

When asked how they felt about the failed Holderness case **Humberside Police** said *“a lot of Police work went into it”* so it was therefore *“disappointing”* in that respect **28/10/20**

<https://www.hulldailymail.co.uk/news/hull-east-yorkshire-news/fox-dies-new-year-hunt-4504489>

*“ it was clear that there were a number of concerns raised in regard how the case was presented at court and I have agreed to write to the Chief Crown Prosecutor to highlight these concerns. **Leicestershire Police, 14/9/21** (regarding the failed Quorn case August 2021)*

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leicestershire-58328233?fbclid=IwAR2jy_m15W6nkkq7CR6dTdpadyplcqNS8eVlxwWbRaI9nuVA08gQHcl3RUg

4.3 (ii) What the CPS say:

Nothing. They failed to respond to Counting the Crimes despite being chased by AAF and they didn’t acknowledge our emails. We can only conclude they have no interest in this matter, which is disappointing as lack of training and specialist knowledge within the CPS certainly appears to be contributing to the lack of prosecutions.

- 4.3 (iii) The police are often blamed for failed court cases involving hunts. As detailed in [Generic problems within police forces which may lead to accusations of bias](#) above, administrative failures by the police have contributed towards this in several cases. However, the lack of knowledge at CPS level and, on occasion, the way evidence is presented in court is a highly relevant factor which is sometimes overlooked. There is no guarantee the CPS personnel or the judge involved in a court case will have (or seek) the specialist knowledge required to fairly oversee a case against a hunt.
- 4.3 (iv) As well as the Quorn case referred to above, four of the cases quoted in [Generic problems within police forces which may lead to accusations of bias](#) also led to questions being asked about the way the CPS and the courts handled each case with allegations of incompetence and impartiality being made against them - see the Crawley and Horsham, Lamerton, Kimblewick and Lord Janner links. In addition:

January 2021. Report detailing a crown court judge with alleged close links to the Cottesmore Hunt

<https://www.facebook.com/NorthantsHuntSaboteurs/posts/3630605830342261>

October 2021. Following the Hankinson trial, Devon and Cornwall Police are reportedly “furious” that the CPS refused to prosecute others present at the seminars.

https://inews.co.uk/news/police-furious-member-house-of-lords-not-prosecuted-fox-hunting-1258424?fbclid=IwAR3Dkx1tqsDoXvWwDveEpGZ2kYe4yHnYalVr11ZJQ9W1c_MPG30OtAm-XYA

4.4 Senior personnel in police forces with links to hunting and other blood sports

- 4.4 (i) These individuals understandably cause FWGs and members of the public to doubt the ability of some police forces to operate with a truly unbiased approach.
- 4.4 (ii) A number of Police and Crime Commissioners throughout the country are known to be pro hunt or at least have an interest in blood sports. A British Association for Shooting and Conservation report in 2016 claimed that the majority of PCCs at that time supported shooting
- <https://basc.org.uk/basc-lobby-finds-majority-of-pccs-support-shooting/>
- 4.4 (iii) Police and Crime Commissioners have various influential responsibilities which theoretically could easily be manipulated to support their personal views on hunting. PCCs are elected along party political lines and their general priorities are declared but many of the electorate will have no idea of their stance on hunting.

<https://www.apccs.police.uk/role-of-the-pcc/>

“The role of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is to be the voice of the people and hold the police to account. They are responsible for the totality of

policing..... They are elected by the public to hold Chief Constables and the force to account, making the police answerable to the communities they serve.... Under the terms of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, PCCs must:

- appoint the Chief Constable, hold them to account for running the force, and if necessary dismiss them;*
- set the police and crime objectives for their area through a police and crime plan;*
- set the force budget and determine the precept.”*

4.4 (iv) In addition to the PCC situation, there are several retired senior officers throughout the country who are actively involved in hunting, several of them are MFHs (Master of Foxhounds). Again, this impacts on public confidence in the police especially as it's reasonable to assume these individuals didn't 'suddenly' develop an interest in hunting when they retired.

On 14th January 2021 Nick Herbert, an outspoken advocate of hunting and shooting was employed as chair of the College of Policing. Another controversial appointment:

<https://thecitro.substack.com/p/nick-herbert-from-architect-of-hunt?s=09&fbclid=IwAR1BtBthPzH4G76j1TmAc1bLfb79qhNmSMYXguOdZwVDgN28sUvXymghIDE>

4.4 (v) AAF acknowledge police forces themselves have no control over the election of PCCs, what activities officers choose to take part in following retirement or the appointment of Nick Herbert.

4.5 The relationship between the police and the Countryside Alliance Police Liaison Officer Phil Davies

4.5 (i) This has been a bone of contention for many years amongst those who oppose illegal hunting.

4.5 (ii) Former Dyfed Powys Police Chief Inspector Phil Davies has played a part in advising/educating the police in his role as Countryside Alliance Liaison Officer for many years.

The blog in the link below was written well before the exposure of the Hunting Office webinars:

<https://morethanjustbadgers.net/blog/unmaksed-phillip-davies-of-the-countryside-alliance/>

4.5 (iii) It has come to the attention of AAF that Mr Davies was *still* meeting with at least some forces even after the webinars – the webinars in which he was highly disrespectful towards the police as well as generally playing a part in the whole 'smokescreen' scenario.

4.6 Difficulties the police face in obtaining adequate evidence to present to the CPS

4.6 (i) What the police say:

The majority of forces we had contact with specifically said they were keen to engage with FWGs with the aim of securing evidence to enable them to proceed with cases of apparent illegal hunting. As discussed earlier in this report, it is notoriously difficult to achieve a prosecution under the Hunting Act. Forces repeatedly told us they were frustrated that FWGs posted videos and information on social media rather than passing the information to them. Several said they would welcome the chance to meet FWGs and describe exactly what sort of evidence is needed.

“We have also found that where video footage exists, the rules of evidence have not been adhered to and so we are unable to use this towards a successful prosecution.” North Yorkshire Police, 4/12/2020

“One of the challenges around achieving a successful prosecution under the Hunting Act is the level of evidence provided. This has mainly been in the form of social media posts showing video footage, but in evidential terms is often deemed inadmissible as the original footage cannot be secured from the person who originally shared it.....we would value your assistance in achieving the best possible outcome through securing the best evidence available.” Warwickshire Police (Response to Counting the Crimes)

4.6 (ii) The police also confirmed hunting is not a national priority and its importance will not increase unless more reports of illegal hunting incidents are received from FWGs and the public.

4.6 (iii) Many members of the public live in fear of reprisals from the hunt should they report hunts to the police. AAF are aware of several sinister occurrences following a hunt incident being reported. These include the arrival of a bottle of suspected urine in the post in one case and a decomposing dead rat delivered in another. Many people fear for the safety of their pets and livestock as covered elsewhere in this report. It is also well known that hunts will attempt to ‘pay off’ members of the public to persuade them to take matters no further. AAF have evidence of this available to the police on request.

“They (call operators) do get calls on this but often the victim makes the call and then drops it.” Essex Police, 12/11/2020

“If the police receive more calls about illegal hunting, then resources may be devoted to it. If there are no calls, then there is no response.” Essex Police, 12/11/2020

4.6 (iv) In summary: Members of the public are often scared of the hunts. The suspicion created by bias or perceived bias within police forces has led to many, if not most, FWG groups having no confidence in the police. Most FWGs describe personal experiences which have had at least some impact on their trust of the police, in particular being held up while the hunt carry on hunting. It’s a complex, difficult situation to resolve.

- 4.6 (v) A snapshot of one hunt saboteur's feelings towards the police (view from 4 minutes 26 seconds to 5 minutes 22 seconds):

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=479859920035469>

4.7 AAF's comments and recommendations

- 4.7 (i) Although educating officers in how to remain impartial is of course vitally important, the police are not infallible, there can be no guarantee all officers will be 100% exempt from showing unconscious bias in hunting situations after receiving unconscious bias training. It MUST go hand in hand with additionally providing the best possible training in how to handle illegal fox hunting. For example: an officer who has no idea that illegal fox hunting still exists, may well struggle to believe a frustrated, masked FWG trying to stop a hunt killing foxes, as opposed to the version of events provided by a smartly dressed, well-spoken huntsman on a horse. This scenario is regularly reported by FWGs and is shown in many of the FWG reports within this document.

- 4.7 (ii) AAF acknowledge that if 85% of the public don't support hunting, there's no reason why 85% of the police force don't support it either:

<https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/local-news/survey-finds-85-per-cent-975554>

- 4.7 (iii) We believe inadequate training within police forces is behind much of the perceived bias in the public domain and it's vital this is addressed.

"We all form opinions without enough knowledge – unconscious bias is fed by lack of understanding". M.O.D Police, 29/1/21

- 4.7 (iv) On the other hand, AAF believe allowing police officers with a personal interest in blood sports to have any involvement in the policing of hunting incidents creates a clear conflict of interest and does not meet the requirements of the Police Code of Ethics. This might involve approximately 15% of the police, assuming the numbers line up with those of the general population based on the links above.

"Section 6.3 of the Police Code of Ethics states, 'Membership of groups or societies, or associations with groups or individuals, must not create an actual or apparent conflict of interest with police work and responsibilities.'"

This is clarified by section 6.4 which states, 'The test is whether a reasonably informed member of the public might reasonably believe that your membership or association could adversely affect your ability to discharge your policing.'"
Quoted to AAF by Derbyshire Police, 23/10/20

Following the leaked webinars and the Hankinson trial, this conflict is particularly pertinent.

- 4.7 (v) In practice, it appears any officer can privately have pro hunt interests or even hunt themselves.

4.7 (vi) The conflict with officers involved in hunting is obvious but those with an interest in shooting is also an issue. Although shooting is legal, it has a close affinity with hunting. Both hunting and shooting follow the guidance and values dictated by the Countryside Alliance. Supporters of both form part of the minority who approve of 'field sports' and they tend to mix in the same close circles. The inseparable link between the different 'sports' was illustrated by the suspension of Phil Davies by the National Wildlife Crime Unit and the Countryside Alliance's membership being placed under review following the Hankinson trial.

https://www.itv.com/news/2021-10-25/countryside-alliance-national-wildlife-crime-unit-membership-under-review?fbclid=IwAR0wbRZIKO1nk3cZdZGP4LKy_jQbK5RyVmU7_3_kJEkYP_hZMiXMV0n1wvEI

4.7 (vii) According to Nick Herbert, chairman of the College of Policing, who has been involved in hunting and shooting for most of his life, ***“We’ll never grow out of hunting. It is something that will stay with us for the rest of our lives. It is an addiction”*** He has also stated ***“hunting is still in my blood and I could acquire the bug again very quickly.”***:

<https://thecitro.substack.com/p/nick-herbert-from-architect-of-hunt?s=09&fbclid=IwAR1BtBthPzH4G76j1TmAc1bLfb79qhNmSMYXguOdZwVDgN28sUvXymghIDE>

4.7 (viii) In the study “What is addiction” (W Sinnott-Armstrong & H Packard, 2013) the conclusion includes the words ***“Addiction is a strong and habitual want that significantly reduces control”***

https://www.hannapickard.com/uploads/3/1/5/5/31550141/fulford_-_philosophy_psychiatry_-_ch_50_-_sinnott-armstrong_pickard.pdf

It's therefore reasonable to doubt the effectiveness of any unconscious bias training when it involves officers with a personal interest in hunting or shooting. AAF believes it is unethical for any officer with an interest in blood sports to be involved in any hunt- related incident or to be a Wildlife Crime Officer.

4.7 (ix) AAF recognises that cut backs over the years have led to forces being stretched. We also understand illegal hunting is not a national priority. However it is clear that poor training frequently wastes the limited resources the forces **do** have. The two incidents below are a tiny snapshot. They both occurred only days after the Hankinson trail and 11 months after the webinar leak:

- 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.

- Incident 19/10/21. Wheatland Hunt, Shropshire. Blatant hunting and motoring offences. Police sat in their car throughout.

<https://www.facebook.com/730295794000883/posts/1556260678071053/>

4.7 (x) With regard to Phil Davies, the Countryside Alliance Police Liaison officer is still being afforded credibility by at least some police forces despite the evidence contained in webinars: This is surprising to say the least and bound to raise even more questions and accusations from those who doubt the ability of the police to remain impartial. Presumably the recent announcement by Chief Inspector Kevin Kelly, Head of the National Wildlife Unit (linked above) will mean this relationship will not now continue. The fact this move was not considered earlier is disappointing.

4.7 (xi) **We appreciate some of the points raised in this section are out of the control of the police. However, many are not and we look forward to forces considering the points we have raised, implementing any changes which will assist them in upholding the law in relation to illegal hunting, and therefore in turn start to counteract the frequent accusations made against them concerning bias.**

"We are guardians of the law" Bedfordshire Police, 24/9/20

PART FIVE

5 THE EFFECT HUNTING HAS ON THE GENERAL PUBLIC

5.1 What police said about the effect hunting has on the general public

5.1 (i) The true extent of the impact hunts have on the general public only emerged in the latter stages of our research, therefore this subject was not discussed in depth with all forces. Some forces acknowledged the issue to an extent:

“(Our officers) will investigate criminal trespass. Hunts will often repair any damage and then the landowner often drops the complaint.” Cheshire Police, 30/11/20

5.1 (ii) On the subject of the public living in fear of the hunt and having concerns for their families and pets:

“Police are aware there are issues in some areas of the country, however we are not aware of this in Cheshire. If we were to receive reports of such behaviour, we would deal with these robustly.” Cheshire Police, 30/11/20

5.1 (iii) George Monbiot’s article in the Guardian in October 2020 includes reference to the effect hunts have on the public:

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/oct/13/foxhunters-exempt-tories-public-order-crackdown?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other&fbclid=IwAR3rRuD97QLI4b78NiBSaNUKCrW1aQ52D-TkM5rKiPANO1nBooY-NefZ5Ek

5.1 (iv) In 2021, AAF ran a survey entitled “The effect that hunting has on people living in rural areas.” There were 609 responses. These are a few of them:

“I’m afraid to take my dog out on the days that they hunt in case they enter the field without warning.”

“Fearful for any domestic pets that are out when hounds are out as they just allowed to go through gardens. Angry at the arrogant behaviour of riders, terrier men, hunt support and followers. Sickened by the determination to inflict suffering and their enjoyment of it. Angry that they are apparently above the law. Angry that as a rural resident there is a presumption that I am pro-hunt”.

“Ranges from terrified as I have a reactive dog and hearing a pack of hounds coming in my direction is terrifying. Anger at seeing them break the law in deliberately hunting foxes (no trail evident!) Unable to leave my house should I be aware that the hunt plans to come by (Boxing Day). Great distress as the hunt have lost control of their hounds on 2 occasions that have broken into my garden and chased my chickens and cat.”

“I felt extremely upset, frightened. It was chaos, luckily the horses had just been brought into the stables otherwise they would have been scared and galloping around the field potentially injuring themselves and the people trying to bring them into the stables. Children ,dogs and cats living on the property. People trying to frantically catching the dogs and cats to keep them safe. Children being taken away to safety. Horses in the stables were upset and frantic potentially injuring themselves. Hunt horses and riders on the main road calling to the hounds. Unable to catch the fox which was hidden by the house. Huntsmen parked on main road with a trailer waiting to get hounds onto the main road and put in a trailer. Potentially very dangerous on the road, many large, articulated lorries travelling at high speed to the near Industrial Estate. High risk of injury and death to people and animals. This situation should not have happened. It is a disgraceful, unnecessary, wicked and cruel practice which should be banned.”

“I’m traumatized every time I hear them. I heard the dogs that morning and I jumped out of bed and ran outside. I went and told them (not nicely) to move off, that they were on a private road. I think one of them was recording me on his phone. I was trembling, I know there are foxes in an overgrown site beside my house. It makes me sick to my stomach and I was crying that morning”

“This is not a simple question, it covers many emotions, known only to those affected by it. Fear, frustration, isolation, every time I have called the police they have not attended. bar one occasion, and then the Officer threatened us. We made an official complaint, which was upheld.”

All the responses on the survey can be found here:

<https://www.actionagainstfoxhunting.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/The-Effect-that-Hunting-has-on-people-living-in-rural-areas.-.pdf>

- 5.1 (v) Another notable incident happened in Cornwall on 6th March 2021, when Mini the cat was killed by the Western Hunt’s hounds on her own doorstep.

<https://www.keeptheban.uk/minis-law>

The killing of Mini attracted a great deal of media attention after a neighbour filmed the incident and the public saw for themselves what happened. In the video, the huntsman throws Mini’s body over the fence, presumably to try and hide the evidence. The case will be heard in court in December 2021. The neighbour’s video is both unique and crucial. We can only assume that other domestic cats have suffered the same fate - but with no witnesses (other than the hunt who are not going to tell anyone) and no evidence, no one else would know. Mini’s owner began “Mini’s Law” to prevent hunts from bringing hounds into residential areas. Mini’s Law petition attracted over 100,000 signatures and is expected to be debated in Parliament at some point in the future.

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/584076>

- 5.1 (vi) There have been many recorded killings of domestic animals by the hunts:

<https://foxhuntingevidenceuk.com/incident-reports/domestic-animal-kills/>

5.2 AAF's comments and recommendations

5.2 (i) The comments from members of the public speak for themselves. Hunting is a leisure activity and people are clearly suffering because of the hunts' behaviour. No other leisure group has this effect on the public. Not everything is a police matter, of course. However, where an individual (or a group) is unable to enjoy the place where they live because of the behaviour of another individual (or group), then that is a "neighbourhood policing" matter.

<https://www.college.police.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-policing>

5.2 (ii) AAF trust the police will look closely at our findings on this subject and take on board the extent of this problem. There are further examples of the hunts inconveniencing or frightening the general public on our individual police reports, plus we have links to many more which are available on request.

PART SIX

6 HUNT VIOLENCE

6.1 What police said about hunt violence

6.1 (i) It is standard practice for police to advise those finding themselves subject to threats, violence or intimidation from the hunt or their supporters, to "leave the area". It is not unusual for police to advise this and then not attend themselves.

6.1 (ii) This was the police response to a 61 year old female member of the public, who was subject to intimidating comments from a huntsman. She had discovered his hunt openly cubhunting. She knew if she left they would continue. The huntsman made it clear he knew where she lived – her house was very close by:

"the police will not be attending, remove yourself from harm" Avon & Somerset Police, 16/9/21

6.1 (iii) George Monbiot's article in the Guardian in October 2020 includes reference to hunt violence:

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/oct/13/foxhunters-exempt-tories-public-order-crackdown?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other&fbclid=IwAR3rRuD97QLI4b78NiBSaNUKCrW1aQ52D-TkM5rKiPANO1nBooY-NefZ5Ek

6.1 (iv) AAF has attended several meetings where FWGs have been present. In all of them, FWGs expressed their fear of increasing hunt violence. Video evidence of hunt violence which led to a prosecution:

<https://www.facebook.com/sheffieldsaboteurs/posts/1466637943506527>

October 2020. Conviction against Barlow hunt member October 2020 re New Year's Day 2020.

6.1 (v) Recent reports of hunt violence:

11/9/21. Mendip Farmers hunt. Fox killed. Multiple assaults and equipment stolen including cameras with evidence on:

<https://www.facebook.com/mendiphuntsabs/posts/4312874832133264>

18/9/21. Cottesmore hunt. FWG in his 60s suffers broken ribs following an assault:

<https://www.facebook.com/NorthantsHuntSaboteurs/posts/432915213382095>

[7](https://www.facebook.com/NorthantsHuntSaboteurs/posts/433562968650653)

[5](https://www.facebook.com/NorthantsHuntSaboteurs/posts/433562968650653)

[https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/local-news/hunt-saboteur-suffers-](https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/local-news/hunt-saboteur-suffers-broken-ribs-5949188)

[broken-ribs-5949188](https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/local-news/hunt-saboteur-suffers-broken-ribs-5949188)

25/9/21. Cottesmore hunt a week after the above incident. More violence:

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=4356748911061279&id=678149598921247

Three videos by Hunting and the Police, showing a compilation of violent attacks by hunts towards FWGs.

<https://youtu.be/863UNTDfeGk>

<https://youtu.be/sqdPRX7xNgc>

<https://youtu.be/isSvzEHOU18>

6.1 (vi) Following the Hankinson verdict, AAF and many other groups hoped that the hunts would stop illegally hunting and there would no longer be any need for FWGs to put themselves in harm's way. The day after the verdict, we consulted with several FWG groups to find out what was happening in the field. All FWG groups reported that hunts were out hunting as usual and the verdict had made no difference whatsoever. There was, however, a notable increase in violence. In Cornwall (for instance) this happened:

16/10/21. Western hunt. Theft, assault, criminal damage:

<https://www.facebook.com/WesternWatchCornwall/videos/461862788465637/>

An incident two weeks later:

2/11/21. South Down & Eridge hunt. Opening meet. Assault and theft involving a female FWG. Photograph of injuries.

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1726627447544680&id=161079287432845

6.1 (vii) NB: The examples in this section represent a fraction of the reports of violence AAF have logged on our records.

6.2 AAF's comments and recommendations

6.2 (i) Police have, on many occasions, advised FWGs to take themselves to safety, rather than continue to follow the hunt. However, this shows a complete misunderstanding of the motivations and psychology of FWGs. FWGs (and many members of the public) have deeply held moral beliefs and cannot betray them. They are compelled to stay and protect the animal rather than save themselves. Police should not be asking FWGs to leave animals in danger as the psychological, behavioural, social, and sometimes even spiritual aftermath of doing this would be arguably life-changing. Given that they are also trying to prevent a crime, police should show a greater willingness to support them.

6.2 (ii) The following clips, especially the videos, clearly illustrate why FWGs cannot merely walk away from these situations. Suggesting they do is an unreasonable expectation:

1/10/20, York & Ainsty hunt kill. (Case subsequently refused by the CPS). The second link is a personal account from an FWG present that day.

"The field riders were so smug, making jokes, laughing and mocking us. All aware of the incidents and all actively helping as they'd been around the edge of the beet field blocking the exits for the fox and therefore all assisting with the kill of that fox. It was really sickening, whilst many of us were in tears physically mentally and emotionally exhausted and they just continued with big sadistic grins. They then continued to kill the second fox.."

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

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=460397191962459&id=109967023672146

17/12/19. Barlow hunt. (Case refused by CPS June 2020).

"The fox was chased for at least 10 minutes, with sabs from Sheffield and West Yorkshire trying to distract hounds and call them off the scent. Hunt staff did nothing. The fox was killed, body retrieved and the footage made national news."

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=335752060759876>

6.2 (iii) **Hunt violence is increasing. Hunts are unpopular with the public, have been exposed as law-breakers in court, are losing hunting country, have been banned from some publicly-owned land, are having to face new and different opposition from groups such as Action Against Foxhunting and Mini's Law, and are struggling financially. Their reaction is to lash out violently at FWGs who are there in the field, protecting wildlife. Police should recognise and appreciate the job that FWGs are doing and step up to protect them when they are needed.**

PART SEVEN

7 LOOKING FORWARDS and CONCLUSION

7.1 Acknowledging hunt crimes

- 7.1 (i) Police forces cannot continue to deny that illegal foxhunting is happening all the time and in every county where there is a hunt. The webinar, the guilty verdict from the Hankinson prosecution, the overwhelming amount of information provided by the FWGs and the public, opposition from groups such as AAF, the hunts' own secretive, defensive, obstructive behaviour, and the increasing media attention - all of these are impossible to ignore.
- 7.1 (ii) Police have repeatedly said that they are **personally neutral** with regard to foxhunting. The statutory aim of the Hunting Act is:
“to prevent or reduce unnecessary suffering to wild mammals” and that “causing suffering to animals for sport is unethical and should, so far as practicable and proportionate, be stopped”.
- 7.1 (iii) When police say they are **personally neutral** about foxhunting, this can arguably mean they are also neutral on the subject of “unnecessary suffering to wild mammals” and that they have no feelings either way about animal cruelty. AAF believes that police would not openly say that about any other offence - the use of cannabis, is an example, or theft. Hunting is a leisure activity; it is not a cause and it is not worthy. Whatever the hunts claim, they are not helping society in any significant way. Hunting deserves no higher status than any other leisure activity. This status is a legacy of the past, where hunting was the “sport of kings and gentry”. It is the opinion of AAF that the only reason why police who say they are “personally neutral” is because they feel a peculiar deference to the outdated status of hunting. AAF believe this could be a root cause of the police’s reluctance to acknowledge hunting as a crime.
- 7.1 (iv) Gloucestershire Police have recently shown they don’t subscribe to deference in the face of the hunts and AAF commend them wholeheartedly. If Gloucestershire can adopt this strategy, surely all forces can?
https://www.gloucestershirelive.co.uk/news/regional-news/major-crackdown-illegal-fox-hunting-6170184?fbclid=IwAR22SoeREQnR433AyhhAmSOcY0gKTzcRZ8IDapnG2g_F63wyQgSKFt2NUpo

7.2 Enforcing the Hunting Act in the field

- 7.2 (i) AAF understands that resourcing is an issue. However, there is no reason why officers should not be able to take action when they are present at a hunt, or called out on the day. There is also no reason why police cannot challenge the hunts and ask key questions at the time. Training, however, is absolutely crucial (see below).
- 7.2 (ii) Targeting FWGs when called out by FWGs because they are witnessing a breach of the Hunting Act is unacceptable. This aspect was considered in Part Four of this report, “Bias”.
- 7.2 (iii) Trust between the public and the police is crucial. We have stated previously in this report that we believe that no officer who has any connections whatsoever with the hunt should be permitted to answer hunt-related calls, neither should they become Wildlife Crime Officers. The damage that pro-hunting officers have done to the local relationship between FWGs and the police is extensive.
- 7.2 (iv) Foxhunting is a crime, not an opinion.

7.3 Police websites and social media

- 7.3 (i) The police should also help the general public to recognise illegal foxhunting by covering it in detail on the force website. Police complain that they are called out by the members of the public who have just seen “red coats on horses” but no chase in progress. If the public is better informed, police are more likely to receive relevant calls. It also acknowledges the crime publicly.
- 7.3 (ii) Our “Field Guide” (see below) would be a good starting point for improving websites.
- 7.3 (iii) Police could also use their own social media to show that they are taking the crime seriously. This does not use up precious resources, but it does send a clear message to the hunts as well as the public.

7.4 Training and aide memoires

7.4 (i) Practical advice for all forces hoping to train their officers can be found here:
[Practical Advice for all Forces](#)

7.4 (ii) Our Field Guide for officers called to a hunt-related offence is available for download here:
[Field Guide for Officers](#)

We do not expect forces to use it as it is, but it is a starting point for any force that is committed to dealing with this offence.

7.4 (iii) Training is always available from the League Against Cruel Sports. Please email MartinSims@league.org.uk for further details.

7.4 (iv) We strongly advise police forces not to use the Countryside Alliance for training. This is because the Police Liaison Officer was/is Phil Davies. Because of Mr Davies part in the leaked webinars, the Wildlife Crime Unit has decided to cut ties with him:

https://www.itv.com/news/2021-10-25/countryside-alliance-national-wildlife-crime-unit-membership-under-review?utm_source=Facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=Orlo&utm_content=Hankinson+

7.5 Improving the relationship between police and FWGs

7.5 (i) Many forces have accepted that officers do hold a stereotypical image of animal rights activists in their minds. It is important for all forces to recognise that this image is thirty years out of date.

7.5 (ii) The image is heavily linked to the choice of clothing made by FWGs. When active in the field, FWGs need to wear practical clothing and some choose to wear face-coverings. Where they are used, it is for safety reasons. Hunts like to photograph FWGs and identify them. This was confirmed by Hunting Leaks:
<https://huntingleaks.is/2021/01/11/evidence-of-illegal-countryside-alliance-hunting-office-database-revealed/>

7.5 (iii) For example, the writer of this report who was not wearing a face covering, (and never has), was recently told by a huntsman “You live in..., don’t you?” This comment was designed to intimidate.

7.5 (iv) FWGs also have a stereotypical image of the police.

Police habitually ask FWGs to give their names when they engage with them. FWGs are reluctant to identify themselves because they do not trust the police. FWGs believe that police are gathering their names in order to pass them on to Counter Terrorism Unit. The Countryside Alliance are keen to spread this idea:

<https://huntingleaks.is>

However, the NPCC has confirmed that this is untrue: email (Adrian Woon, 3/09/2021):

“There isn’t an agreement for information sharing between police and the Countryside Alliance beyond what would be the case for any other group, i.e. anybody has the ability to provide information to police through arrangements such as Crime Stoppers... Please be assured that an individual stopped in the vicinity of a hunt conducting monitoring activity would not by nature of their involvement in the hunt be categorised as a ‘domestic terrorist’.”

It is right and appropriate for officers to request details of individuals they deal with when allegations of potential offences have been raised.”

7.5 (v) Police are not legally able to pass on information to the hunt about FWGs. If this does happen, then the matter should be reported.

“GDPR and DPA would legally prevent us from releasing information and it would go against the principles of disclosure that we’re governed by.

I would highlight that if an FWG had reason to believe that information was being inappropriately shared or released by police to a third party this would potentially be a disciplinary matter and I would urge it be reported as an official complaint to the home force.”

7.5 (vi) For the relationship between FWGs and police to improve, each group must engage with the other.

7.5 (vii) When we have asked FWGs to join us in our meetings with police, most state that it would be a “waste of time”. Some believe that they would be putting themselves in danger, and some refuse to engage on a point of principle.

7.5 (viii) AAF believes that the police should do more than simply invite FWGs to a meeting (as many have). For the FWGs to trust the police, the police need to change how they respond when answering hunt-related calls. Engage positively with FWGs wherever possible; seek their advice. Many FWGs are approachable and knowledgeable.

7.5 (ix) FWGs’ reluctance to give personal details also affects their decisions about whether to report hunt crimes or not. AAF would like to see all hunt crimes reported. Several police forces have suggested that FWGs make greater use of Crimestoppers. All reports made to Crimestoppers are anonymous.

<https://crimestoppers-uk.org/about-the-charity/general-enquiries/thank-you>

7.6 The effect hunts have on the general public and the issue of hunt violence

- 7.6 (i) Illegal hunting is far from being ‘only’ a wildlife crime. AAF were taken aback by the response to our survey “The effect that hunting has on people living in rural areas” (as detailed above.) We did not anticipate the level of fear, inconvenience and revulsion the public are clearly suffering at the hands of the hunts.
- 7.6 (ii) Equally, the ever-increasing degree of violence reported by FWGs attempting to stop wildlife crime in the countryside is truly shocking. Both the public and FWGs in the field seeking to prevent wildlife crime need the full support of the police in order to ensure the law is upheld.

PART EIGHT – REPORTS ON INDIVIDUAL POLICE FORCES CAN BE FOUND HERE:

<https://www.actionagainstfoxhunting.org/counting-the-crimes-police-response/>

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Counting the Crimes 2 is dedicated to the foxes who have been chased and killed by hunts since this “sport” began, and to the compassionate people who have done everything they can to protect them.