

Gloucester 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 Gloucestershire 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

For Email response - was the response detailed?

- Yes
- ✓ No

How do you rate the email response?

Gloucester Police force have a good reputation for policing hunts effectively. As they are making progress anyway, there was no real need to engage in detail with AAF at the time.

Were there follow up emails and did the force reply?

- ✓ Yes
- No

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

1	2	3	4	5
-	-	✓	-	-

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

- ✓ Yes
- No
- Other

What steps have they taken?

The force has regular meetings with FWG groups and other wildlife groups.

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

- ✓ Yes
- No

What do you think of the guide/aide memoire?

The force is working on an internal webpage accessible to all officers. Foxhunting is covered in some detail.

How well trained are the police in this force?

1	2	3	4	5
-	-	-	✓	-

Why have you given this response?

All new officers are trained on wildlife crime, given by experienced officers from the Rural Crime Team.

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?

Gloucester is one of the few forces which has the universal respect of FWGs. Having spoken to the officers responsible for wildlife crime, it is easy to see why. Not only are the officers fully aware of the extent of the law breaking by the hunts, but they are prepared to take action to prevent the crime and prosecute when they can. They do this openly; there is no denial and no excuses offered for lack of action.

Gloucester has a Rural Crime Team. There are four Rural Crime Officers, all of whom are also WCOs and Heritage Officers. All report to the same line manager. The RTC prioritises illegal hunting and if the trained officers are available when a hunt-related calls comes, then one of them will always attend. They also proactively monitor hunts when they can. Like all forces, Gloucester does have other priorities and on occasion, RTC officers might not be available to attend. However, as training on illegal foxhunting is given to

all new officers anyway, there is a very good chance that whoever attends the call is competent.

Having a dedicated, experienced, well-organised team to deal with hunt-related calls makes efficient use of Gloucester's resources. If you do a job properly in the first place, there is no need to do it twice.

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?

Gloucester Police deal with public order issues (from hunts and FWGs) at the same time as they deal with illegal hunting. They are fair to both sides.

Overall, how do you rate this force?

Take into account willingness to engage with AAF, willingness to engage with FWGs, actions in the field etc.

1	2	3	4	5
-	-	-	✓	-

Any other comments?

The 3/10 media report (below) lists Gloucestershire as the country with the most reports of illegal hunting. While this is good news, (people are prepared to report illegal hunting to the police – which doesn't necessarily happen in other forces) the challenge to this force is obvious.

Gloucester has an above average reputation for being helpful and proactive. They are known to work with FWGs re blocked badger setts for example (see hit report 3/10) and the events reported 3/11 below are to their credit. They also mention hunting on their public website.

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

Gloucester Police are clearly competent and proactive in tackling illegal foxhunting.

Our attention has been drawn to a number incidents where the Cotswold Hunt have repeatedly caused upset, fear and distress within the rural community. Other hunts are trespassing and intimidating residents. Engaging residents, as well as FWGs and the hunts might help tackle this issue. When we created AAF in 2018, with the declared intention of starting conversations about foxhunting outside the usual Social Media groups, we discovered that many people were afraid to talk about hunts in public. It was actually a taboo in some villages. If

Gloucester Police can join in (or start) the ball rolling with some open discussions concerning the hunts' anti-social behaviour, it might make the residents feel safer.

Officers might benefit from a greater understanding of our 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 mentioning hunting and Gloucester Police

<https://www.somersetlive.co.uk/news/somerset-news/somerset-second-highest-county-autumn-4773048?fbclid=IwAR0M0cHNXF28jTIya9prtoXq5KsL8YuvgeAXRmfcZaN3VajjzplHsD63n2l>

Gloucestershire were the county with the highest number of hunt related incidents mid August to end October 2020

<https://www.facebook.com/3CHuntSabs/posts/2700573426832291>
9/9/20. Heythrop caught on film cubhunting. Sent to police.

<https://www.facebook.com/3CHuntSabs/posts/2721657398057227>
3/10/20. Gloucestershire allegedly more efficient than Thames Valley re blocked setts.

<https://www.facebook.com/bathhuntsabs/posts/3412179412168768>
Oct 2020. Locals affected by the hunt in Painswick

<https://www.facebook.com/3CHuntSabs/posts/2750406945182272>
<https://www.facebook.com/3CHuntSabs/posts/2750433595179607>
<https://www.facebook.com/3CHuntSabs/posts/2756730417883258>
<https://www.facebook.com/3CHuntSabs/photos/a.1406136942942619/2750422988514001>
3/11/20. Heythrop Hunt. Police present in helicopter and on ground to enforce hunting act.

<https://www.facebook.com/3CHuntSabs/photos/a.1406136942942619/2750423578513942>
3/11/20. Quad stopped by police.

https://www.itv.com/news/westcountry/2020-11-16/south-gloucestershire-hunt-accused-of-illegally-killing-foxes?fbclid=IwAR14Yk2iu2HLx5_8eKiNHvSxiw4EqcHpje53TpWfWLzGW53pe9lYn-OrsoE

16/11/20. Beaufort Hunt accused of regularly hunting illegally.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=705979266970109>

Nov 20. Case dropped by Gloucestershire police re 2019 incident - baby deer apparently killed by hounds

<https://www.facebook.com/3CHuntSabs/posts/2778603345695965>

5/12/20 North Cotswold Hunt – Police attend to observe hunt.

https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9167799/Rider-41-crushed-horse-Beaufort-Fox-Hunt-sues-owner.html?ito=facebook_share_article-top&fbclid=IwAR00QD_5ExY0m-dWy8NuhAio36BX8v_jZizjI_PwEXQ_IOomdEilbAoWzjw

Jan 21. Beaufort hunt injury case Jan 21 - repeated references to 'fox hunting' not 'trail hunting'

Nov 2021 Gloucester Police state they will crack down on illegal hunting

<https://www.gloucestershirelive.co.uk/news/regional-news/major-crackdown-illegal-fox-hunting-6170184>