

Dear Pip

The Ludlow Boxing Day meet has been held peacefully and successfully for years, publicly advertised, coordinated with Shropshire Council, and supported by road closures. Drag hunting is a legal, ethical, and well-regulated equestrian sport that offers significant social, economic, and community benefits. Hunt hounds are not "dogs at large" in a public space, they are under professional control and are brought into the area briefly and with advance notice and planning.

Drag hunting does not harm wildlife, adheres to animal welfare standards, and should not be restricted through legislation such as Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs), and not designed to block organised countryside events.

Shropshire Councils position on this as to why the Boxing Day drag hunting event should be allowed to continue is that.

- **It is a Legal and Controlled Activity:** Drag hunting involves hounds following a man-laid scent trail, not wildlife. It complies with the Hunting Act 2004 and is a popular countryside tradition. Educational outreach is often included to teach animal welfare, land respect, and rural heritage.
- **No Wildlife Harmed:** As the scent is artificial and no live quarry is involved, the sport does not breach animal welfare laws.
- **Community and Economic Value:** Events benefit local pubs, cafes, accommodation providers, equine services, and tourism. They promote community engagement, physical activity, and volunteerism.
- **Animal Welfare Focus:** Hounds used in drag hunting are professionally trained, monitored, and vet-checked, with high welfare standards.

Public Space Protection Orders are intended to address persistent antisocial behaviour such as drug use, vandalism, or dangerous dogs and dog fouling or control concerns not organised, lawful sporting events and there is lack of evidence for antisocial behaviour associated with this organised event. Routes are typically rural and pre-agreed with landowners.

Attempting to use PSPOs to stop this event has to be based on a legitimate public safety concerns, which is a misuse of the legal framework and may be subject to legal challenge as a disproportionate interference with lawful activities and freedom of assembly. Therefore, PSPOs are an inappropriate legal tool, and concerns should be addressed through dialogue, not legal restriction of lawful conduct.

Public Health Concerns

There is no evidence of harm from large numbers of dogs being at this organised event and no documented public health risk associated with hound packs used in drag hunting.

The hounds are trained, monitored, and contained, accompanied by professional handlers and do not interacting with the public unsupervised with veterinary oversight and welfare codes in place, to support the maintenance of high health standards.

Conclusion

Drag hunting, including public meets like those on Boxing Day, is a lawful, community-based tradition that adheres to modern legal and animal welfare standards. PSPOs

particularly those created for dog control or fouling should not be misused to suppress these events.

Kind regards

Andy Wilde
Service Director
Infrastructure
Place Directorate

From: Pip Donovan <info@actionagainstfoxhunting.org>
Sent: 01 September 2025 10:10
To: Customer Feedback <CustomerFeedback@Shropshire.gov.uk>
Cc: Sue Wedlock <suwedlock9@gmail.com>
Subject: OFFICIAL COMPLAINT - NO REPLY TO EMAILS

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Dear Sir, Madam

I am complaining because I have not received a reply to my email of 26th April, and my follow up reminder on 21st August. I am contacting you on behalf of a local member - Mrs S Wedlock, who lives in Church Stretton.

I am challenging the conclusions of Mr Wilde and asking simply - why are hounds belonging to a hunt exempt from the PSPO in Shropshire? His answer was not acceptable, as it is inaccurate and confusing.

Thank you.
Pip Donovan
Chair and Founder, Action Against Foxhunting.

Begin forwarded message:

From: Action Against Foxhunting
<info@actionagainstfoxhunting.org>
Subject: **!! Another REMINDER TO REPLY !! PSPO for Dogs in Shropshire**
Date: 21 August 2025 at 10:02:50 BST
To: Andy Wilde <andy.wilde@shropshire.gov.uk>

Dear Mr Wilde

You have not responded to my email from April. I have attached it below, for your convenience.

Thank you for your reply.

I have several points and questions.

1. You state *"Farming activity will be mostly confined to private property accept [sic] where movement is required for livestock, hunts, and possibly shoots. In these circumstances it would be reasonable to exempt working animals albeit for organised and timed events, for example hunts to avoid abuse and to enable enforcement should it be necessary"*.

Hunting is not "farming activity a "sport", and hunts are private businesses. Hunts are not farms. Unlike farms, hunts produce nothing. Their activities relate solely to the pleasure of the participants and the profit of the business. It is illogical to treat a hunt as if it were a farm.

Exempting hounds as 'working animals' is tenuous even when they are actually hunting. Unlike other genuine working animals, they are not providing a necessary service. Their services are for the pleasure of the hunts. Compare a hound with a sheep dog, and the difference is clear. The hounds are not providing any kind of a service on Boxing Day. They are behaving like any other dog. My questions:

- **Why are you putting hunts in the same category as farms when their activities are entirely different?**
- **Can ALL dogs attending the Boxing Day meet can be off the lead?**
- **Are you allowing hounds privileges that others cannot have?**
- **If another business asked for a road closure, which involved allowing thirty dogs to run about freely, would you prevent them on the grounds of the PSPO?**

2. I don't understand what this means *"it would be reasonable to exempt working animals albeit for organised and timed events, for example hunts to avoid abuse and to enable enforcement should it be necessary."*

- **What "abuse" are you referring to?**
- **And who is enforcing what?**

3. You state that the PSPO is in force when the dogs' activities have or are "likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality, be persistent or continuing in nature." With hounds running freely in the street, children will be interacting with them (in fact this is encouraged). There are many reasons why loose hounds are **likely** to have a 'detrimental effect' on those in the locality. Here are the reasons:

- Hounds are fed on a diet of raw meat, taken from farmed animals that have died of unknown causes. Hound kennels are rarely inspected (if ever) and veterinary records are kept secret.
- On Boxing Day in Tiverton, Devon, a sample of hound faeces was collected by a local councillor. **The sample was tested and it was found to contain Salmonella.** I can provide the evidence for that on request.
- A few days ago, **children were infected by Cryptosporidium** at a petting zoo. Hounds carry all sorts of parasites - including cryptosporidium. With no hand washing facilities (NB hand sanitiser does not kill parasite eggs), it would be astonishing if children petting hounds didn't pick up parasites of some kind. <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/suspected-parasite-infection-outbreak>
- Additionally, **a hunt kennel has recently lost a number of hounds due to an "unknown infectious disease"**. The circumstances and the images of their deaths are horrific. Even if this disease isn't zoonotic (no one knows what it was), people's dogs will be put at risk. <https://www.huntsabs.org.uk/hunt-kennels-the-infectious-timebombs-waiting-to-go-off/>
- The treatment of hounds is often appalling. This report shows their illnesses, diseases and indicates the insanitary conditions in which they are kept <https://www.actionagainstfoxhunting.org/the-lives-and-deaths-of-dogs-used-in-hunting-2/>

For an event involving dogs running freely in the streets, interacting with children and with domestic dogs, it is essential that each and every hound is tested for diseases - both parasites and infections - beforehand. As testing is extremely unlikely, **then no hound should be permitted to interact with a child**, meaning that it should be kept on a lead and away from children.

All this indicates that the hounds are "likely to have a detrimental effect on those in the locality".

4. The next point relates to the **type of road closure**. If you are treating hounds at a Boxing Day meet as 'working dogs' - ie being used for a sporting purpose, the type of road closure must be a TTRO, and not a TPCA. Here is my reasoning (plus some extra information):

Road Traffic Regulation Order (Special Events) Act 1994
Section 16A

1/ Section 16A of the RTRA (as amended by the Road Traffic Regulation (Special Events) Act 1994) gives local authorities powers to make orders (including TTROs) to close or restrict access to roads in order to facilitate, to allow members of the public to attend, or to reduce traffic disruption as a result of a *“relevant event”*.

A relevant event is defined as *“any sporting event, social event or entertainment which is held on a road”*.

2/ The order may *“restrict or prohibit temporarily the use of that road, or any part of it, by vehicles or vehicles of any class or by pedestrians, to such extent and subject to such conditions or exceptions as they may consider necessary or expedient”*

3/ Section 16A specifies the type of traffic control requirements that can be contained within an order under this section. They include

- a requirement for vehicular traffic, or vehicular traffic of any class specified in the order, to proceed in a specified direction or prohibiting it so proceeding
- specifying that the part of the carriageway to be used by such traffic proceeding in a specified direction
- a prohibition or restriction on the waiting of vehicles or the loading and unloading of vehicles
- a restriction on the speed of vehicles
- a prohibition or restriction on the use of a road by pedestrians
- a power to place relevant signage on the road for directing traffic
- Application of TPCA v Road Traffic Regulation (Special Events) Section 16 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1994/11/section/16>
- Hunting Hounds Exemptions Road Traffic Act Section 27 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/52/section/27>
- Control of Dogs Act 1992 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1992/901/contents/mad>

Finally, it looks as if you are allowing hunts privileges you do not allow others. If a hunt is allowed to bring 30 unleashed dogs into the town centre, then so should everyone else. When not hunting, hounds are just dogs. The road closure and lack of traffic is only one element of the problem, and it does not mean that the dogs should not be controlled at all times. The risk of disease is significant, and the council cannot, as a public body, ignore that.

North Shropshire Hunt

South Shropshire Hunt

Wynnstay Hunt (Sir Watkin Williams Wynn)

United Pack

<https://www.actionagainstfoxhunting.org/four-shropshire-hunts-issued-with-cpws/>

BREACH OF CPW On Saturday 12th, the Albrighton Hunt, despite having a CPW issued against them, called the police complaining of sab harassment. One of the stipulations of the CPW was that the Hunt were to inform the police whenever they were out. The Hunt had failed to do this.

Community Protection Warning – Staffordshire Hunt Sabs report that Staffordshire Police have issued the Albrighton and Woodland Hunt with a Community Protection Warning. It was issued because of their bad behaviour which included: trespass, lack of hound control, killing of a muntjac deer, and the killing of a fox. They have caused damage to property as well as harassment, alarm, and distress to residents and landowners. The CPW specifies that the hunt must not take hounds to areas where foxes are likely to be.

Best regards

Pip Donovan

Action Against Foxhunting

Education Outreach Campaigns

www.actionagainstfoxhunting.org



ENDING
FOXHUNTING
FOREVER.

On 25 Apr 2025, at 16:39, Andy Wilde
<andy.wilde@shropshire.gov.uk> wrote:

Dear Ms Donavan

My sincere apologies for the delay in responding. Further to your points you have raised in relation to the organised Boxing Day Event and provide further clarification in response to your email dated 7th January 2025 and our response provided on the 13th February 2025 Shropshire Council position is as follows.

Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) are one of the tools available under the Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014. PSPOs are wide-ranging and flexible powers for local authorities, which recognise that councils are often best placed to identify the type of activities which are having a detrimental effect upon the quality of life for those who live in, work in or visit the local authority area.

Concerns were raised through the consultation process about the potential impact of a PSPO on working animals and the rural economy of the county. Plainly problems of dog fouling are more acute in an urban setting, but not exclusively so, and any order introduced should not impact unduly on the ability of the farming community to go about its business. However, neither should their activity impinge significantly on the public or in public areas. Farming activity will be mostly confined to private property except where movement is required for livestock, hunts, and possibly shoots. In these circumstances it would be reasonable to exempt working animals albeit for organised and timed events, for example hunts to avoid abuse and to enable enforcement should it be necessary.

The consultation indicates agreement with the proposal to direct owners to put their dogs on leads where they are being a nuisance in a public area and for the safety of the public enjoying this space. Similarly, the consultation suggests dogs should be under control on the highway and whilst there have been objections raised about this particular aspect of the proposed control the safety consideration associated with dogs straying uncontrolled into live traffic would suggest this control is reasonable.

We have also taken into consideration the concerns raised about the ability of the public to access open

spaces for their own mental health considerations and for the welfare of their animals when exercising that the PSPO is sufficient at this time to control dogs and to take enforcement action where owners fail to comply or are inconsiderate of others.

Therefore the PSPO does provide for the control of dogs on the highway and on leads by direction to prevent dogs straying uncontrolled into live traffic, in consideration of this point and on the understanding that this activity is limited to an annual organised event, delivered under permitted road closures our position is that it is reasonable and proportionate that the restriction does not apply given the absence of live traffic or likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality, be persistent or continuing in nature.

We are in discussion with the organisers who have confirmed that they do clean up after themselves, as has been the case in previous years. In relation to any breaches we advise that people can contact Shropshire Council directly and that the order can be enforced by a police officer, a police community support officer that may be within the vicinity and the time of the alleged offence taking place.

Regards.

Andy Wilde
Assistant Director
Infrastructure
Place Directorate
andy.wilde@shropshire.gov.uk

Our organisation is working flexibly, so if you've received this email 'out of hours', whilst it suits me to email now, I do not expect a response or action outside of your working hours

From: Action Against Foxhunting
<info@actionagainstfoxhunting.org>
Sent: 14 February 2025 09:34
To: StreetScene <StreetScene@shropshire.gov.uk>
Cc: Sue Wedlock <suewedlock9@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: **!!** REMINDER TO REPLY **!!** PSPO for
Doas in Shropshire

Dear Ms Salisbury

I have taken advice and completely disagree with your conclusions. The hunt is a business - if the hounds are promoting a commercial business, that does not mean they are working. Working dogs - sheep dogs, guide dogs etc, are trained to provide a service to people. These hounds were not providing any service for which they are trained. Hounds are trained to follow scent - they were not doing that at the meet. They were running about, unleashed in the streets. If any other dog did that, no matter who owned them, you would take action. The 'working dog' exemption cannot possibly apply to 30 or so hounds running about unleashed in the middle of a town.

If I brought one dog into Ludlow and let it run about unleashed - and then claim it was promoting my dog breeding business, would I be exempt? If your answer is "yes" then your response to the hunt is consistent. If your answer is "no", then you are clearly favouring the hunt over other people. Please explain why the hunt is allowed to do this, when no one else is.

Please provide legal support for your conclusions. Please also let me know who answered your enquiries as to whether the faeces were cleared up. Was the person independent of the hunt?

We also have photos of horse dung left in the streets after the hunt left. I understand that the entire meet was chaotic.

Please also note - in Battle at another Boxing Day meet in a place with a PSPO, hounds were not brought because of the PSPO.

Best regards
Pip Donovan
Action Against Foxhunting
Education Outreach Campaigns
www.actionagainstfoxhunting.org

<image001.png>

On 13 Feb 2025, at 14:29, StreetScene
<StreetScene@shropshire.gov.uk> wrote:

Good Morning Pip Donavan

In response to your email dated the 7th of January 2025

For the purpose of the Public Space Protection Order for Dog Control, there are many aspects to the term, working dogs and it would not be realistic to try and identify all types of working dogs.

Hounds at a public event such as the one in Ludlow on Boxing Day were working to, promote, educate and gain supporters for the hunt group, we would therefore consider them exempt from the Order.

After your initial report I made enquiries and have been informed that the area was thoroughly cleaned afterwards to remove any dog or horse faeces.

Regards

Jane Salisbury
Dog Warden for Shropshire Council

From: Action Against Foxhunting
<info@actionagainstfoxhunting.org>
Sent: 07 January 2025 12:04
To: StreetScene
<StreetScene@shropshire.gov.uk>
Cc: Sue Wedlock <suewedlock9@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: **!! REMINDER TO REPLY !!**
PSPO for Dogs in Shropshire

Dear Ms Salisbury

Thank you for your response.

We disagree with your answer to our question.
We also feel it is inconsistent.

The hounds are not working when they are at a public event. Hounds are classified as "hunting dogs". Their job is to hunt - by following scent and leading the riders. At the Boxing Day event, the hounds were not hunting. They were not using any of their job-training for the event. Hence, they are not working. They were behaving as any other dog

working. They were behaving as any other dog would in the town centre, except that domestic dogs would be on leads, and not running around freely. If the hunt itself was taking place in Ludlow, that would be different. Then they would be working. A hunting dog, when not hunting, is not working. Additionally, in other counties, hounds are **specifically** exempted from the PSPOs. As Shropshire's PSPO does not exempt hounds, then that clearly suggests that they are included when they are in a public space. At a Boxing Day event, the hounds are not displaying anything - they aren't performing tricks or anything of that nature. They're just being dogs - and that is all. They have no practical function at all.

Also, either the PSPO does apply or it does not. If they should not be on leads (which we dispute), then the owner should not have to clean up the faeces. This means that there is no point in our sending evidence and witness statements as you will say they are exempt. The dogs cannot be considered to be working in one context, and not working in the other.

Thank you.

Best regards
Pip Donovan
Action Against Foxhunting
Education Outreach Campaigns
www.actionagainstfoxhunting.org

On 7 Jan 2025, at 10:46,
StreetScene
<StreetScene@shropshire.gov.uk>
wrote:

Dear Pip

Thank you for your email which has been passed to the StreetScene team for response. Our responses are below.

That you will ask the hunt to adhere to the PSPO and keep their dogs

to the force and keep them safe on leads while they are not working.

Our response: The hounds would have been working as a publicity event, going from or to a hunt, and as such the dogs would have been working.

That you will fine the persons in control of the hounds if they do not pick up the faeces immediately and That you will fine the persons in control of the hounds if they deposit the faeces in an inappropriate place.-

Our response: As there was no authorised officer present at the time this will not be possible, however if someone would be able to provide a full Section 9 witness statement to identify the hounds and the handler, we would look at the evidence provided and decide on what or if action should be taken

Kind regards

Sent on behalf of Jane Salisbury
Dog Warden for Shropshire

From: Kaylie Skelhon **On Behalf Of** Dan Morris

Sent: 07 January 2025 09:34

To: Action Against Foxhunting
<info@actionagainstfoxhunting.org>

Subject: RE: **!!** REMINDER TO REPLY **!!** PSPO for Dogs in Shropshire

Dear Pip

Thank you for your email, Dan is liaising with colleagues and a response will be provided as soon as possible.

Kind regards,

Kaylie Skelhon
Personal Assistant to
Andy Wilde Assistant Director for
Growth & Infrastructure

From: Action Against Foxhunting
<info@actionagainstfoxhunting.org>
>
Sent: 06 January 2025 11:33
To: Dan Morris
<Dan.Morris@shropshire.gov.uk>;
Sue Wedlock
<suewedlock9@gmail.com>
Subject: !! REMINDER TO REPLY !!
!! PSPO for Dogs in Shropshire

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Dear Cllr Morris

I have not received a reply to my email of 17th December. Since the email, the hunt has met in the Square in Ludlow, and we have had reports of what happened on the day. As we anticipated, the hunt breached the PSPO concerning dog fouling and dogs on leads.

Please respond to my question (repeated below for your convenience).

Public Space Protection
Order for Shropshire, dogs
used for hunting and the
Boxing Day Meet in Ludlow.

In answer to Mrs Wedlock's question raised at the council meeting on 12th December, you stated this:

This is an organised event with the use of working dogs and the organisers have advised that they will clean up

after themselves, as has been the case in previous years.

You define hounds as “working dogs”. This interpretation means that you believe that these hounds do not need to be kept on leads in public places. However, hounds are only “working” when they are out hunting. This is when they are using the specific skills they have been trained for. During a Boxing Day parade, these hounds are not “working” - ie not following a scent or hunting. The dogs are not using any of their skills for hunting. They behave like any other dog at the meet.

The PSPO for Shropshire clearly states that the “exemptions” (ie no need to have the dog on a lead) “will only apply whilst the dog is working”.

This means that all the hounds in Ludlow must be kept on a lead until they leave the public area and actually go hunting.

Secondly, the PSPO clearly states that dog faeces must be cleaned up “immediately”. This means that a person must be watching every single hound all the time and if the faeces are not cleaned up at once, the person in control of the dog should be fined. Also, the PSPO states that the faeces must be disposed of accordingly, or taken away. In our experience, the chaos of a Boxing Day meet makes it almost impossible to watch

every hound and pick up after it immediately. Also, the hounds deposit a great deal of faeces during the meet, and we have seen hunts throwing the faeces in bushes, rather than taking them away in a vehicle.

We will be present at the meet, and we will be recording any breaches of the PSPO.

Please confirm:
That you will ask the hunt to adhere to the PSPO and keep their dogs on leads while they are not working.
That you will fine the persons in control of the hounds if they do not pick up the faeces immediately and
That you will fine the persons in control of the hounds if they deposit the faeces in an inappropriate place.

Thank you.

Best regards
Pip Donovan
Action Against Foxhunting
Education Outreach Campaigns
www.actionagainstfoxhunting.org

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