

From: Alyson Garrett <aly.garrett@hotmail.co.uk>
Subject: Fw: Health & Safety of the People of Chard [Hunt Proposals]
Date: 25 November 2025 at 08:42
To: Pip Action Against Foxhunting <info@actionagainstfoxhunting.org>

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Here is my email to his response

From: Alyson Garrett <aly.garrett@hotmail.co.uk>
Sent: Tuesday, November 04, 2025 12:47
To: David Bell <david.bell@chard.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: Health & Safety of the People of Chard [Hunt Proposals]

Dear David,

The Council isn't being asked to consider any matter that is politically or ethically divisive. The Council is being asked to consider the public good.

It was Town Council (the Mayor) that originally invited the Hunt into Town. It seems within scope, then, to 'uninvite them'. I would ask that this point be put on the Agenda at the next Town Council Meeting for Councillors to vote on.

I shall be putting forward the same concerns to Somerset Council, who I have no doubt will pass me from one department to another.

I have raised very serious issues that someone in Council needs to take responsibility for.

Below is a recent outbreak at a petting zoo where numerous children (their immune systems are not fully developed) became ill. As these illnesses take time to develop, this may already be happening at Boxing Day Meets.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cz9y44q59w4o>

I look forward to your reply

Best Regards
Alyson Garrett

From: David Bell <david.bell@chard.gov.uk>
Sent: Thursday, October 30, 2025 15:59
To: Alyson Garrett <aly.garrett@hotmail.co.uk>
Subject: RE: Health & Safety of the People of Chard [Hunt Proposals]

Dear Alyson,

Thank you for your email, excellent research and advice.

Clearly, the Town Council (as a corporate body) can neither support nor oppose the hunt per se. This reflects the need to remain neutral where it lacks statutory authority to intervene or where the issue (not just this one) is politically or ethically divisive and not directly related to our functions.

In this case, or similar activities, the Town Council has no specific legal mandate or responsibility, as perhaps it would if our land were being used. Whilst individual Councillors and Officers are at liberty to express personal views (and in doing so make it very clear that they are acting as individuals) the body corporate must avoid adopting a position that could be seen as outside our remit.

Our corporate interest would be to seek compliance with any matters under our statutory or non-statutory obligations.

I am sure you are aware (as demonstrated in your excellent summary) that Statutory Obligations are legal requirements imposed by legislation and Non-Statutory are voluntary or other standards such as codes of practice.

Our main Statutory Obligations include meetings, civic functions, cemetery, etc.

After investigation, the points you make are vested in the statutory powers of the next level of council up from Chard, which is Somerset Council.

They are legally responsible for (for examples only) traffic regulation orders re road closures, public health matters, control of dogs on the public highway, street cleaning and similar matters. Road related matters usually come under the various paragraphs of the Highways Act. This Act is not capable of devolvement to our level of authority, as matters stand.

Whilst (technically) we could use TPCA, I agree that it is outdated, and it is more appropriate to civic and mayoral very short-term processional events but even these are now routinely covered by the Highway Authority (Somerset Council) by a TTRO.

Whilst this response seems to be passing matters on to another authority, I am keen to point you in that direction as it would be the appropriate course of action.

Regards,

David

David Bell
Chief Executive & Town Clerk
Chard Town Council
01460 239567

From: Alyson Garrett <aly.garrett@hotmail.co.uk>

Sent: 27 October 2025 16:05

To: David Bell <david.bell@chard.gov.uk>

Subject: Health & Safety of the People of Chard

Dear Mr Bell,

As the Hunts will again be using our towns and villages to hold their Boxing Day/New Year's Day Meets and Parades this year, it is hoped that councils will take seriously and act upon their duties in ensuring these are using our towns and villages safely. Bringing the amount of horses and hunting hounds that they do, in the manner in which they do, into populated, sometimes enclosed, public spaces carries a number of risks and dangers to the public's health and safety.

Schedule 1 of The Health and Safety (Enforcing Authority) Regulations 1998—legislation determining which activities are enforced by local authorities—includes, at Paragraph 9, 'the practice or presentation of the arts, sports, games, entertainment or other cultural or recreational activities'. Accordingly, it is incumbent upon councils to ensure that the Hunts apply all controls necessary to limit risk to the public attending these events. Hunts should produce risk assessments for receipt by councils detailing how they intend to apply these controls.

Councils should ensure that any Hunts intending to hold their Boxing Day/New Year's Day Meet and Parade in any of our towns and villages put in place the following measures:

1) Hounds

Hounds should be cordoned off at these meets. If there is occasion where hounds and public may mingle, handwashing facilities should be provided and signposted. Instruction to wash hands must be given. This means liquid soap and running water. Children on the day mix with the hounds. They touch them, are licked by them, and then touch their own mouths, their eyes and noses. Hounds put their heads into buggies.

Unlike domestic dogs, hunting hounds are fed on raw fallen stock—farm animals which have died in the fields, often of no known cause. The bodies, or ABPs (animal body parts) collected on 'flesh rounds' and fed to hounds are generally classed as Category 2 by Defra's Animal and Plant Health Agency. Category 2 is 'high risk', and includes: animals rejected from abattoirs due to having infectious diseases; carcasses containing residues from authorised treatments; unhatched poultry that has died in its shell; carcasses of animals killed for disease control purposes; carcasses of dead livestock; manure; digestive tract content. (Be reminded, too, that APHA rarely runs checks unless individual concerns are raised.) None of this is considered fit for the pet food market.

This diet, and the close proximity of dogs in kennels, means that hounds may pass on a multitude of pathogens and zoonoses known to be carried by farm animals and transmissible to humans; diseases such as bTB, Campylobacteriosis, Cryptosporidiosis, E. Coli 0157 and Verotoxigenic E. coli, Leptospirosis, Salmonella. On Boxing Day 2024, a faecal sample from a hound was collected using all appropriate sterile equipment and sent for testing. A local councillor for that town reported back to council that this sample returned a finding of Salmonella.

Handwipes or gels are not effective for the removal of disease-causing micro-organisms. Liquid soap and running water are. Councils should know that the Hunts' insurers,

Lycetts, exclude cover for the transmission of communicable diseases.

Supporting links:

[Action Against Fox Hunting - Insurance](#)

[Dogs for Good - Zoonoses](#)

[Horse and Hound - bTB confirmed](#)

[Protect the Wild - Hunt Kennels Risk](#)

[The Ecologist - Foxhounds & bTB](#)

[Gov.uk - ABP Categories](#)

[Gov.uk - Approved Premises](#)

[HSE - Visitor Attractions](#)

[HSE - Zoonoses](#)

[Daily Mail - Petting Farm Outbreak](#)

[Mirror - Parasite Infection](#)

2) Horses

Horses should be cordoned off at the Meet. Any equestrian activity is high risk. Horses are known to be unpredictable animals, often skittish. Being herd animals, one skittish horse can affect others. Horses can be spooked by noise or other stimuli. Even the most highly trained horses, accustomed to city life and familiar with their riders, can take fright, as borne out by the spooked cavalry horses that took flight in London on 24/04/24 and 01/07/24, causing damage to themselves, to persons, to vehicles, and to street furniture.

Horses ridden on Boxing/New Year's Day are far more likely to present risk because: these horses are unused to towns and groups of people; these Meets attract riders who may not often hunt, whose horses are unused to these surroundings; hirelings are often used, meaning horse and rider may be unfamiliar with each other; horses may be unfamiliar with other horses; organisers do not vet horses or rider competency; organisers expect each rider to have their own insurance, but it is unknown whether this is checked.

Hunts are known to bring horses with ribbons tied in their tails. The public is generally unaware of the significance of these: red signifies a kicker, yellow a stallion, green an inexperienced horse, blue a stallion or aggressive gelding. No horse with such risk indicators should be in close proximity to the public.

On Boxing Day 2025, in a square where the public mingled freely with horses and hounds, a lady attempting to prevent a child approaching a horse spooked it, causing it to kick out. Had anyone been standing directly behind, this could have resulted in serious injury. Such incidents highlight the necessity of proper risk assessments and visible enforcement.

Supporting links:

[Psychology Today - Horse Sports Risks](#)

[Just Horse Riders - Horse Riding Risks](#)

[Pembrokeshire Herald - Boxing Day Incident](#)

[The Bolton News - Hunt Drama](#)

[Independent - Hunts Boxing Day](#)

3) Traffic and Public Safety

The Hunts must not stop or obstruct traffic without a TTRO. There must be no risk that emergency services could be hindered. Any marshal must be trained personnel. Where horses and hounds use roads past the public, cordons/barriers should be in place. Where Hunts are likely to obstruct vehicles, official road closures should be secured. Proper road closures allow emergency services to plan alternative routes, potentially saving lives.

Road closures should be secured using TTROs to ensure councils are covered if an accident occurs. Insurers expect traffic management under lawful powers; Section 21 of TCPA 1847 is too antiquated to meet these requirements. Closing roads without legal authority exposes organisers and councils to liability, and insurers may refuse claims, risking financial loss. Councils owe a duty of care to road users and pedestrians.

4) Insurance

As stated above, the organiser's insurance does not cover transmission of disease or accidents caused by visiting riders and horses. It may be invalidated if there is either no road closure, or an inadequate road closure. This may leave the council liable to 'foot the bill' if there is an incident with no other financial recourse.

5) Public Order

Hunting is a controversial activity that can attract protesters, creating a foreseeable risk of confrontation and disorder.

As these events take place on public land, a council may expose itself to poor public regard and financial liability where it has taken no action to avoid this risk.

6) Actions for the Council

We have provided a detailed assessment of the risks associated with any Boxing Day or New Year's Day meet. This assessment was submitted in advance to support the prevention of sickness or injury to the public, particularly children. The Council's focus should be on preventing incidents rather than disputing accountability before or after an incident. We have discharged our responsibility by advising you of these risks. We will attend the meet ourselves to monitor safety and record any incidents. The next steps now rest with the Council. It is for you to decide what mitigating actions should be taken.

Please let me know what measures this Council will be taking to address and enforce the above.

Alyson Garrett

