

FOI 2022-303

I write in connection with your request for information dated 5 April 2022 concerning hunts.

I am required by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to handle all requests in a manner that is blind as to the identity and motives of the requestor. Any information released as a response to a request is regarded as being published and therefore in the public domain without caveat.

**You wrote:**

Q1. 6 week consultation. How many Wiltshire residents responded to your 6 week consultation on priorities?

Q2. How many of those responding mentioned concern about illegal fox hunting (Trail hunting).

Q3. How many complained or mentioned concern about anti hunt groups?

Q4. If a communication on messenger Philip Wilkinson informed me that only 15 (0.58%) had mentioned illegal hunting in his consultation on priorities, if that figure correct?

Q5. Why have so many police been deployed to Hunts, if so few are concerned about illegal hunting?

Q6. I understand that a member of public was informed that Philip Wilkinson attended a hunt covertly. Which hunt was this and on what date?

Q7. What was the location of the hunt that was attended covertly?

Q8. Were any other Wiltshire police officers present at that hunt ?

Q9. Were any offences witnessed by Philip Wilkinson and reported? If so what was the offence & crime number.

Q10. Were there any other offences reported by any of those present at the hunt, if so what offences and the crime numbers?

Q11. How many other instances are recorded of covert activities by our PCC?

**Response:**

**Question One**

Please see the below document, which can be found on the OPCC website: [Item 6 -](#)

[PC Engagement report - PCP March 10 2022.pdf \(wiltshire.gov.uk\)](#)

**Questions Two to Eleven**

No Information Held.

Under our Section 16 obligation to provide advice and assistance, please see the press release from the Police and Crime Commissioner which relates to your request:

Statement from Philip Wilkinson, Police and Crime Commissioner.

The subject of hunting is divisive and people on both sides of the argument defend their position with passion, I understand this and respect each viewpoint.

Much has been made of my use of language in the context of attending a hunt. I have attended hunt meetings in my personal capacity, as a resident, a few times to witness, first-hand, what happens. I used to make it clear that I was not attending in an official capacity and was not recognised as such when doing so. The use of word 'covert' in this instance was loose terminology. I should have made that clearer.

Strong campaigning by each side of the argument means that often my true aim is overlooked. I would like to make it clear: Wiltshire's countryside is open for all to enjoy lawfully and legitimately – and my role as PCC is to ensure this happens.

As I have made clear on many occasions my job is to ensure Wiltshire Police enforces the law impartially, without fear or favour, against whomsoever should break it, from whatever background or whichever side of the hunting argument they sit – and I continue to work with the Chief Constable on this.

I will not allow undue influence or pressure from any private or protest group to affect the operational independence of Wiltshire Police.