

I write in connection with your request for information dated 7 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:

1. Are you a member of any hunting or shooting group, club, or organisation?
2. Are you withholding evidence of hunt saboteurs committing public order offences by "screaming at children on ponies? Or is this evidence currently part of an ongoing investigation therefore you can't reveal it? Please confirm.
3. If you were attended meets as a completely independent local member of the public, then presumably the meets were on public land? Where and when were these held please?
4. If not, how did you know about the meet and how were you able to attend if you weren't a member of the hunt?
5. How did you keep up with the hunt whilst they were out hunting?
6. How did you manage to witness the 'offences' you say you saw? Where were you positioned? Did you wear a mask or disguise, so you weren't recognised – is that what you meant by 'covert'?

Response:

Question One

Please see below which can be found on the OPCC website:

[declaration-of-interests.pdf \(wiltshire-pcc.gov.uk\)](https://www.wiltshire-pcc.gov.uk/declaration-of-interests.pdf)

Questions Two to Six

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.