

PROTOCOL
BETWEEN
THE WARWICKSHIRE HUNT LIMITED
AND
THE WARWICKSHIRE POLICE

Introduction

1. The Warwickshire Hunt is a 'recognised hunt' - that means:
 - (i) It has been officially accredited and licenced by The British Hound Sport Association (BHSA), its governing body;
 - (ii) It has paid each year the current Registration Fee of the BHSA together with such sums as the Board shall decide from time to time;
 - (iii) Its Master(s) chairman, secretary and huntsman or kennel huntsman are members of the BHSA; and
 - (iv) Its rules/constitution have been lodged at the office of the BHSA and approved by the BHSA Office.

2. The Hunt is also governed by an independent hound sport regulatory body chaired by Sir Gerald Barling, a retired High Court Judge. The Hunt cares for approximately 120 hounds, which it looks after according to the BHSA code of practice which includes following a Hound Health programme, as devised for each hunt with their vet.

3. Warwickshire Police provides policing services to the county of Warwickshire. The police force area covers 763 square miles in the west midlands of England. Its Chief Constable is Debbie Tedds. The Officer primarily responsible for the relationship with the Warwickshire Hunt is Chief Inspector [REDACTED] who supervises the Rural Crime Team. The Rural Crime Team was established in 2019.

Background

4. On 14 December 2022, the Warwickshire Police issued a Community Protection Notice ("CPN") to the Warwickshire Hunt Limited contrary to Part 4 of the Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 ("the Act"). On 16 December 2022, the Hunt gave notice of its intention to appeal against the issuing of the CPN.
5. On 9 August 2023 it was agreed that the CPN and the Warning letter that preceded it would be withdrawn and that the parties would instead create this Protocol to improve lines of communication between the Warwickshire Hunt and the Warwickshire Police, thereby better protecting road users, members of the public and members of the Hunt.
6. The Protocol does not preclude the Police from issuing a Community Protection Warning or Notice in the future if the legal requirements are satisfied and it does not prevent the Hunt from challenging such an issue, where there are grounds for doing so. It is, however, designed to avoid the need to have recourse to the legislation by creating a better, contemporaneous dialogue and by the provision of additional material or information from the Hunt to the Police. At paragraphs 17 to 20 below, this Protocol identifies the procedure in the event of any material breach.

Objectives

7. Hunting activity is hundreds of years old and is deep rooted in British rural culture. This Protocol relates to Trail Hunting. The aim of Trail Hunting is to simulate traditional hunting as practised before the Hunting Act came into force. During the Autumn and Winter months, packs of hounds and their followers (mounted and on foot) meet and go hunting - the general conduct of the day remains as it was prior to the Hunting Act and keeps the traditions and practises alive.
8. Saboteur groups around the country continue to attend events held by hunting organisations, in order to either disrupt what they believe to be illegal activity, or to gather evidence to support police investigations into allegations of illegal hunting - the latter is quite rare. Just as the hunting community is diverse and varied, so are those who are opposed to it. There is a range of conduct and behaviour, from measured, mild, and peaceful at one end of the spectrum to menacing, violent and threatening at the other.

9. This Protocol has three main objectives.
10. **First**, it is designed to improve the quality and frequency of the communications between the Warwickshire Police and the Warwickshire Hunt and thereby ensure that any issues are dealt with quickly and contemporaneously.
11. **Second**, it is intended, by its agreed terms, to reduce allegations of disruption and anti-social behaviour on highways occurring on hunting days and to encourage high standards of hound management and control of hounds especially upon the highway.
12. **Third**, it is designed to increase public confidence in the activities of the Hunt and Warwickshire Police, and to provide greater transparency in respect of the procedure in place for governing the relationship. In short, it will demonstrate to the public how the traditions of lawful hunting will be upheld and maintained, whilst ensuring that legitimate complaints about Hunt activity are addressed quickly and appropriately.

Terms

13. Under the terms of this Protocol, the **Warwickshire Hunt Limited** will take the following steps:
 - (A) It will provide to the Warwickshire Police details of the Hunt's hunting meetings. It should be noted that these are often arranged on a weekly or fortnightly basis, i.e. they are not all arranged for a whole season. Any material changes to the meetings as originally notified to the Police will be communicated to the Police as soon as reasonably practicable after being altered.
 - (B) It will provide the Police with the contact details of two points of contact for each hunting day. It will provide both points of contact with the detail of the Hunt meets, in A above; any amendments to those points of contact will be notified as soon as reasonably practicable. Those individuals will themselves be in contact with key members of the Hunt throughout the day, including at the front and back of the field. Urgent issues can thereby be raised straight away. In the event of a crossing that the Hunt considers to be particularly difficult, one of those individuals will endeavour to contact the police to seek assistance, if such assistance is required.

- (C) It will provide a central 'complaints' email address, to which any credible complaints made by members of the public can be sent by the Police, subject to Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act or operational need. At the end of each calendar month, the Hunt will set out by email what steps it has taken in respect of the complaints made.
- (D) It will confirm the nature of each day's activities.
- (E) It will report any inappropriate and/or unlawful activity as soon as reasonably practicable to 101 or 999 if it is an emergency. The Hunt will consider whether it can safely obtain video footage of such activities, i.e. by body worn or helmet mounted cameras.
- (F) It will meet remotely with Chief Inspector [REDACTED] or another colleague identified by [REDACTED], on a monthly basis across the hunting season, to discuss any issues which have arisen and what agreement has been reached in respect of those issues. These matters will be documented in an agreed minute. The frequency of such meetings can be reduced by agreement. Outside of the hunting season, such meeting can be arranged if necessary.
- (G) The Hunt will arrange refresher training in respect of the management of dogs on or near highways, including refresher training in respect of the Highways Code and the Road Traffic Act.
- (H) It will make the joint training material referred to below available to all members of the Hunt.
- (I) The Hunt will deliver short briefings before the start of each Hunting Day. An outline form of words will be shared with the Police for any constructive feedback.

14. Under the terms of this Protocol, **Warwickshire Police** will agree to the following:

- (A) That material provided pursuant to this protocol will remain confidential to Warwickshire Police, unless it is required to be provided by law, or in the event of any legal proceedings being commenced or with the agreement of all parties.

(B) In respect of each Hunting Day, it will supply to the Warwickshire Hunt the details of a police point of contact for that day, to address any immediate issues.

(C) If the Police intend to join all or part of a hunting day, they will arrange to meet with a member of the Hunt management at least one hour before the start of the Hunt to discuss the intended routes/trails.

(D) It will make an email address available to which the Hunt can communicate with the Warwickshire Police single point of contact about the running of the Hunt or the operation of this protocol. Any criminal allegations or urgent issues which require immediate police attention should, however, be notified to 101 or 999 if an emergency.

(E) As far as the law permits it will relay any credible complaints made by members of the public to the email address supplied by the Hunt as soon as reasonably practicable after the complaints have been received.

(F) It will meet with the Warwickshire Hunt (remotely) on a monthly basis during the Hunting season to discuss any issues which have arisen and what agreement has been reached in respect of those issues. These matters will be documented in an agreed minute. The frequency of such meetings can be reduced by agreement. Outside of the hunting season, such meetings can be arranged if necessary.

(G) It will work with the Hunt to produce training literature which can be supplied to members of the Hunt and which will supplement the existing training already supplied.

15. The parties to this Protocol undertake to work together constructively to allow for the continuation of lawful hunting, and the enjoyment and benefit that it brings to the wider community, whilst improving the Hunt's behaviour on roads and hound management, where required.

16. This Protocol is designed to cover the 2023/4 hunting season and will be reviewed by the Hunt and the Police at the end of the season with a view to being repeated for future seasons with such changes if any as the parties agree are necessary.

Consequences of Breach

17. In the event that the Warwickshire Police considers there to have been a material breach, it will in the first instance bring that suspected breach to the attention of [REDACTED]. They will be permitted 14 days to respond.
18. In the event that the response is not considered to be satisfactory, the Police can, at their discretion, report the breach to the Hunt's regulatory body, the BHSA. If the BHSA considers any breach to have been proved, it can at its discretion report the matter to the independent hound sport regulatory body chaired by Sir Gerald Barling, which body has the power to:
- (a) fine the Hunt;
 - (b) suspend the Hunt's licence; or
 - (c) revoke its licence altogether.
19. In the event of a breach by the Hunt, it is open to Warwickshire Police to seek to revise the terms of the Protocol or to terminate it altogether. Nothing in this Protocol prevents the Police from issuing a Warning letter or a CPN if a breach of this Protocol satisfies the requirements for doing so.
20. In the event the Hunt wishes to complain about Warwickshire Police, such complaint will be notified to Chief Inspector [REDACTED]. They will respond within 14 days and take corrective action where necessary.

Signed on behalf of **Warwickshire Police**

Signed on behalf of **Warwickshire Hunt**

Dated 9th August 2023