



Your reference: n/a

Our reference: FOI_24_0287

E-mail: FOI
@gloucestershire.police.uk

Direct dial: 01452 754304

Postal Address: As above

Date: 05/06/2024

Dear

Gloucestershire Constabulary Freedom of Information request FOI_24_0287

On 06/03/2024 you sent an email constituting a request under the Freedom of Information Act asking the following:

I am writing to make a formal request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 for information held by Gloucestershire Constabulary regarding police activities relating to fox hunting and any details of deals made between hunting groups and the police.

I am seeking specific information on the following:

1. Details of police activities and interventions in relation to fox hunting within the jurisdiction of Gloucestershire Constabulary for the past three years.
2. Any documents, memos, or correspondence between Gloucestershire Constabulary and fox hunting groups or representatives, including any agreements or understandings reached between the parties.
3. Information on the resources allocated by Gloucestershire Constabulary to monitor and address fox hunting incidents, including the number of officers involved, hours dedicated, and any associated costs.
4. Records of arrests, charges, or warnings issued by Gloucestershire Constabulary in connection with fox hunting activities, including details of outcomes.
5. Any policies, guidelines, or standard operating procedures that Gloucestershire Constabulary has in place regarding their response to fox hunting incidents and interactions with hunting groups.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 s1, I can confirm that Gloucestershire Constabulary holds some relevant information.

Unfortunately, it's not possible to electronically retrieve the information you have requested.

There is no central register for all the information you have requested. In order to retrieve all relevant information relating to correspondence between the Constabulary and fox hunting groups or their representatives would involve canvassing all Local Policing Areas (LPA). This would clearly take far longer than the 18 hours prescribed by Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act.

With regard to arrests, charges or warnings in connection to fox hunting activities, there is no tag or marker on the arrest recording system nor crime recording system that might denote that the arrest or offence related to fox hunting activities. As such, in order to ascertain this information a manual review of all arrests and crimes would be required, which again would take far longer than the 18 hours prescribed by Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act.

Section 17(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Gloucestershire Constabulary, when refusing to provide information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which: (a) states the fact, (b) specifies the exemption in question and (c) states (if not otherwise apparent) why the exemption applies.

In relation to your request Section 12 applies.

Section 12(1) – Fee Regulations states:

Section 1(1) of the Act does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit. (As detailed in the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Fees Regulations of 2004)

The appropriate limit at the moment is £450 calculated at an hourly rate of £25 per hour for all staff time incurred in:

- i. Determining whether information is held
- ii. Locating it
- iii. Retrieving it
- iv. Extracting the information to be disclosed from the other information.

In accordance with the Act, this letter represents a Refusal Notice for your request.

Providing Information Outside of the Act

By way of assistance and although excess cost removes the Force's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, I can confirm the following information relevant to your request which has already been retrieved. We trust this is helpful but it does not affect our legal right to rely on the fees regulations for the remainder of your request.

The Rural Crime Sergeant has confirmed the following information. Please note that this is not specific recorded information, but from their knowledge and experience on this subject:

1. Gloucestershire Constabulary's focus shifts throughout the year depending on the priority and activities being conducted in the seasonal calendar and rural events.

Officers regularly attend meets both as part of proactive patrols as well as following reports from members of the public or those involved. They attend neutrally and in the process of maintaining the peace and evidence gathering.

Historically, meetings have been conducted between Gloucestershire Constabulary and separately both Hunt Supporters and Hunt Monitors. These are used to encourage dialogue, support the raising of concerns and for police to ensure their expectations are clearly explained.

2. Notwithstanding the above exemptions for retrieving correspondence, the Sgt has confirmed that there are no agreements or understandings in place other than Gloucestershire Constabulary has expressed that we expect lawful activity on both sides and will support each side where any wrong doing has occurred.
3. The Constabulary has a team of Rural Crime Officers consisting of 1 x Sergeant, 4 x Constables and 1 x PCSO. There is no information held relating to hours worked specifically regarding fox hunting.
4. In a bid to try and assist with this question, a search has been conducted of the crime recording system from 01/01/2020 to 31/12/2023 for the offence of HA04001 - Hunting a wild mammal with dogs - Hunting Act 2004. The result was 5 cases.

A search has been conducted of Incidents recorded for the same time period whereby the result code was recorded as 'animals/wildlife'. Unfortunately, this result was 4764 records, which would need to be manually reviewed as per the details above in order to ascertain if they related to fox hunting.

5. The Sgt has confirmed that there is a Hunting with Dogs Policy. If this would still be useful, please submit a new FOI Request to foi@gloucestershire.police.uk

If you are not satisfied with this response or any actions taken in dealing with your request, you have the right to ask that we review your case under our internal procedure. Please note that a request for an internal review must be made within 20 working days of the response to your original request.

If you decide to request that such a review is undertaken and following this process you are still unsatisfied, you then have the right to direct your complaint to the Information Commissioner for consideration.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted via the following means:

Website - <https://ico.org.uk/>

Call their helpline - 0303 123 1113

Email - casework@ico.org.uk

Post –

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow

Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

Disclosure Officer
Gloucestershire Constabulary