

Dear Councillor,

I am writing with regard to the forthcoming motion regarding the annual “Festival of Hunting” held at the East of England Arena in Peterborough.

It is commonly stated as a defence of the festival that of course no hunting takes place at the festival, and that it is claimed that the event is a celebration of legal activity.

I disagree with this view and would like to take a moment to explain to you why I see the “Festival Of Hunting” as more of a “Festival of Criminality”!

The centrepiece of the Festival of Hunting is the Royal Foxhound Show. This event sees hunts from across the country, compete in a dog show as to the quality and breeding of their foxhounds.

Looking at the list of the winners of this show for 2021, this seems to be more of a roll-call of criminal hunts than a simple dog show.

In the “*modern english hounds*” class (the larger of the two classes) there were 36 competitions (dog and bitch) alone. Of these 36 classes, 32 were won by hunts with either a criminal conviction to their name, or where they have committed an egregious act such as the killing of a young kitten by the Badsworth and Bramham Moor Hunt (admitted to by the hunt, but no criminal charges lodged).

In the “*old english hounds*” class, each of the eight competitions was won by a hunt with a criminal connection. In total across both classes, 40 out of 44 classes were won by criminal and/or violent hunts, which makes 91% of the total prizes.

MODERN ENGLISH HOUNDS (main class) [1]

Class 2 (open) best couple of unentered hounds, winner – Heythrop Hunt (winners of 4 classes)

The Heythrop Hunt were **found guilty**, as a corporate body along with the masters and huntsman, of unlawful foxhunting in 2012 after being prosecuted by the RSPCA [2].

Special (3) – Special Gratuity, winner – Fitzwilliam (Milton) Hunt (of Peterborough!)

The Fitzwilliam Hunt have been **found guilty** of unlawful hunting, appealed, and had their appeal lead to a further guilty verdict [3]. Their professional terrierman was also found guilty under the

hunting act and animal welfare act after being found to be keeping a fox captive in a plastic barrel on the hunt estate [4].

Special (5) The Earl Fitzwilliam Memorial Award, Special (5) – Special Prize, Special (6) Naylor Leyland Challenge Cup – winners of all three classes, Vale of White Horse (VWH) Hunt. (winners of 14 classes in total)

The Vale of White Horse Hunt were **found guilty** in May 1996 of interfering with badger setts in connection with fox hunting, in breach of the Protection of Badgers Act. Even prior to the hunting ban, this was **already illegal**. [5]

Class 3 (restricted) best couple of entered hounds, winner – Cottesmore Hunt

In 2015 an employee of the Cottesmore Hunt was **convicted** of unlawfully obstructing a badger sett, this is a tactic used in foxhunting to prolong the chase as the fox is prevented from escaping underground, which of course is more than ample evidence of continued illegal fox hunting a decade after the hunting ban. [6]

Special (7) – Special Gratuity, winner – Hampshire Hunt

In 1991 and 1992 the (then) master of the Hampshire Hunt was **found guilty** of smashing windows on three sides of an anti-hunting monitors car. [7]

Special (9), Special Gratuity, winner – Fernie Hunt

In 2011 the huntsman and terrierman of the Fernie Hunt lost their appeal and were **found guilty** again, of hunting a wild mammal with dogs and also interfering with a badger sett during an incident which took place in 2010. The judge Michael Pert QC described the defendants as “shifty and evasive” and the description of trail hunting given by them to be a “cynical subterfuge”. [8].

It is worth noting that the master in charge of the Fernie Hunt (and who would have given orders and instruction to the huntsman and terrierman to hunt illegally) on the day of this offence back in 2010, Philip Cowen, was photographed attending the Festival of Hunting on 21st July 2021.

Special (10) – Special Gratuity, winner – Sir Watkins WW Hunt

In March 2020 a member of the Sir Watkins Hunt (also known as the Wynnstay) was filmed **kicking** their horse in an incident covered by the national press at the time [9]. In addition, employees of the Wynnstay Hunt have been convicted for illegal use of quad bikes while following hunts [10].

Class 7 (restricted) best unentered hound, winner – Cotswold Hunt

In 2011 the Cotswold Huntsman was **convicted** of racially aggravated abuse of an anti-hunting monitor [11], making him the 296th individual connected with an organised hunt in the UK to have received a conviction and the 39th huntsman at that time (ten years ago...).

Special (15) – Special Gratuity, winner – Badsworth and Bramham Moor Hunt

On Christmas Eve 2019, hounds from the Badsworth and Bramham Moor Hunt ripped to pieces a seven-month-old ginger kitten while illegally hunting foxes, [12] the incident was not disputed by the hunt.

Special (22) – Special Gratuity, winner – Bicester with Whaddon Chase Hunt

The Bicester Hunt have a huge list of violent **criminal convictions** to their name, including criminal damage, affray, assault, ABH and disorderly conduct. [13].

For the second, smaller class (old english hounds), there is a 100% record (8 out of a total of 8 classes) of winning hunts being associated with criminal behaviour:

OLD ENGLISH HOUNDS (smaller class) [14].

Class 13 – Best unentered Hound, winner – Shropshire North Hunt (winners of 6 classes)

The current huntsman for the North Shropshire Hunt, who will have collected his prize from the festival, is a **convicted badger baiter**. [15]

Class 15 – Best stallion hound, winner – Percy Hunt

The Percy Hunt Huntsman was **convicted** in 2007 under the Protection of Badgers Act, after attacking an occupied badger sett with spades. [16]

Class 16 – Best unentered hound, winner – Warwickshire Hunt

The Warwickshire Hunt have recently admitted to **criminal trespass** (on Network Rail land while hunting) [17], while their former hunt director admitted assault and was handed a **police caution** [18]

IN SUMMARY I think you will agree that, even while it would not be claimed that any specific criminal activity takes place during the Festival of Hunting itself, its existence acts as a magnet for attracting criminal organisations and individuals into the Peterborough area each year. This is not representative of Peterborough's progressive vote in 2020 to not allow hunting activity on council owned land and is a stain on our good city's reputation.

Yours sincerely,

XXXXX XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Sources:

- [1] <https://eefohtest.files.wordpress.com/2021/07/results-sheets-modern-foxhounds-2021.pdf>
- [1] <https://eefohtest.files.wordpress.com/2021/07/old-english-results-2021.pdf>
- [2] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hunting_Act_2004#RSPCA_vs_Heythrop_Hunt:_2012
- [3] <https://www.huntingact.org/news/former-huntsman-of-fitzwilliam-hunt-found-guilty-of-illegal-hunting/>
- [4] <https://www.wildlifeguardian.co.uk/news/hunting/hunt-terrier-man-fined-over-fox-in-a-barrel/>
- [5] <https://www.wildlifeguardian.co.uk/hunting/hunt-convictions/> (scroll to 'V')
- [6] <https://martinbrookes.blogspot.com/2015/11/cottesmore-hunt-employee-conviction-for.html>
- [7] <https://www.huntsabs.org.uk/2decadesviolence/> (search for 'Momber')
- [8] <https://www.huntingact.org/news/fernie-hunt-appeal-dismissed/>
- [9] <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8070583/Groom-caught-KICKING-horse-animal-rights-protesters.html>
- [10] <https://nwlsa.wordpress.com/2020/06/18/success-3-up-on-quad-bikes-is-not-legal/>
- [11] <https://www.wildlifeguardian.co.uk/news/hunting/cotswold-huntsman-convicted-racial-abuse/>
- [12] <https://metro.co.uk/2020/01/01/kitten-ripped-pieces-hounds-illegal-fox-hunt-11966915/>
- [13] <https://www.wildlifeguardian.co.uk/hunting/hunt-convictions/> (scroll to 'Bicester')
- [14] <https://eefohtest.files.wordpress.com/2021/07/old-english-results-2021.pdf>
- [15] <https://nwlsa.wordpress.com/2019/01/01/badger-baiters-d/> (search for 'McColgan')
- [16] <https://www.wildlifeguardian.co.uk/news/hunting/huntsman-guilty-interference-badger-sett/>
- [17] <https://www.facebook.com/WestMidsHuntSabs/posts/warwickshire-hunt-criminal-trespass-updateon-the-1st-january-2020-the-warwickshi/2048088802002850/>
- [18] <https://network23.org/westmidshuntsabs/2017/11/24/former-warwickshire-hunt-director-given-caution-after-assaulting-female-saboteur/>