

## **Hunting with dogs on Council land**

Council is alarmed at the evidence that hundreds of foxes up and down the country, and here in Gloucestershire, are being illegally killed as a result of hunting with dogs.

We note the Council decision of 27 October 1993 to prohibit access to any Council land by hounds for the purpose of hunting animals and that, following legal proceedings in relation to other authorities, this was rescinded on 1 November 1995.

We welcome that, subsequently, the hunting of wild mammals with a dog, as defined in Section 1 of the Hunting Act 2004, has been made illegal, except where an exemption applies.

We are, however, alarmed that Gloucestershire has recently been identified as the top county in England and Wales for suspected illegal hunting, with reports that illegal hunting with dogs by organised hunts is common, while there are few prosecutions.

We note that most registered hunts now claim to be 'trail' hunting. This has proven to be a loophole in the Hunting Act 2004 and in effect allows hunts to claim that any chase of a wild animal is an accident rather than intentional.

We note that there have been distressing local incidents reported in the media which have caused widespread public concern. We are ashamed that Gloucestershire has been identified nationally as having the largest number of suspected illegal hunts and incidents of 'hunt havoc' in the recent hunting season.

Council is opposed to the use of Gloucestershire County Council land for trail hunting, exempt hunting, as defined in Section 2 and Schedule 1 of the Hunting Act 2004, hound exercise and hunt meets and asks Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to establish a cross party working group to consider, and make recommendations to Council, on any actions that could be taken in respect of this matter.

*(version dated 7 September 2023)*