



## Protecting rural communities: Our commitment during coursing season

Dear Roy,

I write as the Constabulary's lead for Rural Crime, as we approach the period in the year where illegal hunting and coursing often reaches its peak in terms of numbers and its impact on rural communities.

Since harvest we have been running an operation embedding lessons learned from this January's unprecedented events in the North and East of the County into our practices: We have been seeking to supplement the valued work of the RCAT by investing in greater training for our Neighbourhood Policing Officers and frontline Response Teams, working to ensure greater visible presence and better capability to respond to rural crime and disorder.

In support, we have been aided by a range of organisations to build a better informed and responsive service from our Force Control Room and call handling functions when help and reassurance is needed.

The level of incidents so far this season have been low compared to previous, with some positive prosecution, disruption, and confiscation outcomes achieved. However, we are anticipating more high stakes coursing events regionally in the coming weeks, attracting greater numbers and a willingness from some to take greater risks.

I want to reassure as to our commitment to protect people, livelihoods, and land from illegal activities. In addition, I want to encourage continued reporting of anything that give rise to concerns about crime, disorder, or anti-social behaviour in your communities, particularly during this peak period.

We know that those involved in illegal hunting and coursing will often visit target locations before an event to identify and facilitate routes and access. This can include "pre-cursor" actions and offences including lock-cutting and damage to protective measures put in place to seek to reduce the opportunity for crime.

Please continue to report any such matters and concerns, with the Constabulary website as the starting point for reporting options for ease and convenience. This in turn will help us build the best picture of risk and provide the right response in the interests of safer communities, working together. As ever, any live incident where there is genuine and immediate threat of harm to anyone, serious damage, or disorder should be reported as an emergency via 999.

For more information about hare coursing and rural crime, visit our [website](#).

