

COMBATTING HARE COURSING

THE CLA'S ACTION PLAN

Aug 2025

Hare coursing is an organised criminal activity which continues to blight the lives of farmers and landowners who regularly have to deal with unsavory individuals who trespass on their land to participate in the 'sport'. It is not simply an incident of unlawful poaching but a conduit to high-stakes illegal betting. Criminal damage occurs as gates and fences are broken to gain access to land, and crops are destroyed by the pursuit which is often filmed from a vehicle moving across the land. The powers to prosecute those involved have been strengthened but there is still more that could be done. Coursing is linked to Serious Organised Crime and needs to be reported.

The CLA has developed the following action plan for farmers, landowners, the police and Government to work together to bring those involved to justice.

THE CLA'S ACTION PLAN TO COMBAT HARE COURSING

- 1. Introduce specific sentencing guidelines for hare coursing** – The Sentencing Council ran a consultation on sentencing guidelines for hare coursing offences in April 2025. This would mean sentences being tailored to have maximum impact on hare coursers especially in scenarios where violence and threatening behaviour were used.
- 2. Issue a standard Rural Crime Equipment Pack to every rural force** – Local police units are often at a disadvantage through lack of equipment. The vast differences in the equipment provided on a force-by-force basis hinder cross-county operations and effective policing.
- 3. Ensure that the National Wildlife Crime Unit and its team of analysts are adequately resourced** - ensuring that they can continue to identify repeat offenders and trends in polycriminality linked to poaching offences.
- 4. Keep poaching legislation under review** – CLA lobbying secured changes to the law in 2022 with the Police Crime & Sentencing Act. The new poaching offences and the ability for police forces to reclaim kennelling costs for confiscated dogs upon conviction have proved to be useful tools. However, we can't become complacent and we will continue to liaise with law enforcement and direct our lobbying efforts appropriately.
- 5. Make additional training regularly available for 101 & 999 call handlers** – ensuring those tasked with recording incidents fully understand the crime will help police prioritise investigations.

LANDOWNERS' VIEWS

"We live in fear of being targeted as we know how vicious the people that take part in hare coursing can be. We've got the scars to show for it."

CLA East member

"Hare coursers cause thousands of pounds worth of damage to land and crops. This leads to losses within our business and we have no mechanism of recovery. More needs to be done to tackle this criminal form of vandalism."

CLA East Yorkshire member

REPORTING INCIDENTS

Landowners and the public should report any hare coursing incidents from a safe location to the police by calling 101 (or 999 if a crime is in progress) quoting **OPERATION GALILEO**.

Sharing a What3Words location, description of the vehicle and direction of travel will also assist the call handler.

Signs to encourage the reporting of hare coursing are available to CLA members via their regional office.



WARNING - Farmers and landowners who challenge hare coursers can face violence from those involved.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information please contact the CLA.

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