

**Hunting**  
*forward*  
**not back**

**An Outline Strategy  
For The Repeal Of  
The Hunting Act**

Published By The Countryside Alliance  
And The Council Of Hunting Associations



**COUNTRYSIDE ALLIANCE®**

# Introduction

## Dear Supporter

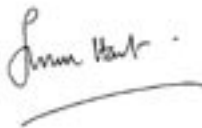
As the General Election becomes a dim and distant memory, many MPs across the country will have cleared their desks and wished that they had never made hunting an election issue. Former Rural Affairs Minister Alun Michael suggested that the ballot box was the place where hunt supporters should make their feelings known. Many of you did just that, taking a first step on a difficult but ultimately rewarding journey towards the repeal of the Hunting Act.

What follows is a succinct outline of the next strategic steps that we all need to take in order to move closer to overturning this unjust and unworkable piece of legislation. The three strands – legal, political and practical – are developing well and you can read more overleaf. However, the legal challenges need to be fully funded in order to continue – the money must be raised or they will fail. We know we are right but imagine never having that confirmed by law.

The Countryside Alliance will continue to engage in the political process through robust campaigning and intelligent dialogue. Never forget, also, that we are not alone in thinking that this ill-conceived Act is doomed to failure. Over the past six years, public opinion polling has shown a 16% fall in support for a ban on hunting. The majority of those people outside the hunting community are sick and tired of politicians who have wasted day after day trying to get hunting banned. Prejudiced MPs think that hunting has been removed from the agenda for good – it is our job to ensure this does not happen. Please remember that public and media opinion is with us – and we must never forget this or do anything that may jeopardise this relationship.

A new season is on the horizon for many forms of hunting. In order to achieve our collective aim, everyone must be aware that this is a time for unity as never before and not a time for fair weather friends. All last season's hunt subscribers must return to the field and bring new faces to bolster hunts and boost morale. It is imperative that our numbers grow, not diminish.

We have already begun our work to dismantle the Hunting Act. Its very existence threatens democracy and sets a dangerous precedent for the future – it is the duty of all of us to fight for repeal. Now we must all stand together, show real strength of character and emerge stronger than ever before. We must win. There is no other alternative.



Simon Hart  
Chief Executive, Countryside Alliance



Stephen Lambert  
Chairman, Council of Hunting Associations

# The Hunting Act is doomed...

## But don't just take our word for it...

“We admit to delight that the law is clearly unenforceable and that hunting has so far proceeded undisturbed. If parliament intended to protect animals, it fell at the first fence.”

***The Observer***

“A total ban on hunting with dogs will bring us into conflict with parts of the rural community and shake confidence in the police in these areas.”

***Chris Fox, President of the Association of Chief Police Officers***

“You don't have to be a tallyho supporter of the chase, and this newspaper certainly isn't, to recognise a bad and unenforceable law when you see it.”

***The Daily Mail***

“If there is no proof that people were chasing a fox or a deer, then that will be difficult for the police. Without some sort of independent evidence whether that is an affidavit from a witness, electronic, video or photographic evidence, I don't see how they could bring a prosecution.”

***Courtenay Griffiths QC, public affairs spokesman for the Bar Council***

“An outbreak of sanity is now needed. It would be a final madness for my parliamentary colleagues to prefer to die in the ditch for an unenforceable ban than to secure an achievable, if partial, victory. Having had a good run, it is time for this issue to go to ground.”

***Tony Wright, Labour MP for Cannock Chase and chair of the public administration select committee***

“I find wry amusement at the government's dilemma - how to enforce unenforceable legislation foisted on it by a free vote in the Commons.”

***Robert Jackson, The New Statesman***

“Police resources could be far better spent elsewhere. We don't want to end up as piggies in the middle.”

***Alastair McWhirter, Chief Constable of Suffolk and the spokesman for rural affairs for the Association of Chief Police Officers***

# The Hunting Act is doomed...

## But don't just take our word for it...

“The Government ought to be running the country in the best interests of us all, not just a few Labour backbenchers for whom foxhunting is a “class issue”. Pandering to this tiny minority is a gross dereliction of responsibilities.”

***The Daily Express***

“As to the consequences of having an unworkable law on the statute book, which will in theory criminalise hundreds of thousands of the most law-abiding people in the country - this government has always believed in letting the future take care of itself. The Blairites would not be any use in the hunting field. They are incapable of seeing beyond the next patch of long grass.”

***Bruce Anderson, The Independent***

“Enforcement is not going to be easy.”

***Peter Neyroud, Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police and Vice-President of the Association of Chief Police Officers***

“But I reserve my real contempt for those who claim the hunting ban as a victory for the Left. The Left that I came from wanted to change the world, not to outlaw pastimes and methods of pest control.”

***Mick Hume, The Times***

“Chief Constables have told Blair repeatedly that this is a bad law which they have no enthusiasm for enforcing. How many burglaries and muggings were there on the unpatrolled streets of London while hundreds of officers were on duty outside the Commons protecting MPs from a demonstration that needn't have happened?”

***Richard Littlejohn, The Sun***

“The commitment of hunting people is stronger than almost any other social/sporting/service-providing activity in this country, and it is as strong as it has ever been.”

***Charles Moore, The Daily Telegraph***

# Good people will change bad law

# Hunting: Forward Not Back

## The Countryside Alliance & Council of Hunting Associations' Joint Strategy Paper

### **Objective**

To repeal (or amend in a way which secures all forms of recognised hunting) the Hunting Act and work towards replacing the ban with practical wildlife management legislation that will improve animal welfare and is supported by the public.

### **Timescale**

The strategy extends from now until the end of the 2005/6 season although parts are ongoing. Elements may change to reflect legal and political developments. The strategy must remain flexible to account for changing political circumstances.

### **Strategy**

The three strand strategy remains. That is:

- Legal – To pursue all available legal avenues
- Practical – To demonstrate that the Hunting Act will not stand the test of time and to illustrate its failures
- Political – To continue to campaign for a more tolerant and balanced House of Commons and to repeal or amend the Hunting Act so as to improve wildlife management and animal welfare

The pre-requisites for repealing the ban are:

1. Ensuring the Legal Challenges are fully funded
2. A Government willing to introduce sensible and coherent wildlife management legislation
3. Strengthening public and media opposition to the ban
4. Maintenance of hunting's infrastructure
5. Growth in confidence of hunting's public image and ability to be fully accountable
6. Evidence that the ban is ineffective, unworkable and costly to police
7. Evidence that the ban is detrimental to the management and welfare of wildlife
8. Continued support for hunting from farmers, landowners and their organisations

# Actions

## 1. The Legal Challenges

We cannot afford to leave any stone unturned and are pursuing every legal avenue in order to overturn the Hunting Act. It is impossible to predict our chances of success but the best legal advice in the country says we have got a strong case.

- £3 million is required to cover all potential costs including a sum should costs be awarded against us – this is ring fenced just for the legal challenges and will not be used for other purposes
- **If we are unable to raise this money the legal challenges will fail**

## 2. Engaging in the political process

Never before has any one issue led to so many people taking an active part in a General Election campaign. Therefore it is essential that supporters build on the experiences and successes of this election. This will involve ongoing dialogue with MPs – especially the new intake. Political activity now needs to look forward to the next election and also activity at local council level. Exact detail will be released in due course through the Alliance's regional network.

## 3. Public and media opposition to the ban will be further enhanced by:

- The continued media campaign ridiculing the ban and those behind it
- The continuation of legal hunting activities
- Evidence that the ban is detrimental to wildlife management and animal welfare
- Explaining and promoting alternative legislation on hunting
- Explaining that the ban does not meet its objective and that its terms are illogical
- Even greater public support for the hunting community
- Exposing the agenda of the animal rights movement and its threats to other rural activities

## 4. Maintaining hunting's infrastructure by:

- Meetings for hunt leadership and staff with Hunting Associations and the Alliance
- Communicating the belief that hunting has a future and the ban will be repealed or amended in such a way as to enable recognised hunting to take place
- Maintaining hunt members' confidence in the leadership of their hunts and Associations
- Encouraging supporters to continue participating in their hunt's legal hunting activities and thus safeguarding hunt finances
- The Alliance will publish a revised edition of the Hunting Handbook which will take account of any legal or practical developments
- Hunting Associations working with hunts to identify problems before they occur

## **5. Ensuring the recognition of hunting's value and support as well as opposition to a ban**

- Development of major initiatives to ensure that the issue remains in the public eye
- Sustained interaction with the public through a range of appropriate "Hunting and the Community" activities such as Kennel Open Days, the "Countryside to Town" initiative and parading hounds at public events
- Launch of "Next Generation" type initiatives such as the Council of Hunting Associations Hunt Staff development scheme
- Evidence that hunting activity is continuing to evolve into a form that will encourage even greater public support during the interim period

## **6. Evidence that the ban is unworkable**

- Continuation of hunting activities involving foxes, hare, deer and mink
- Further demonstration of unworkability of the law for already overstretched police forces
- Evidence that the ban is detrimental to animal welfare and wildlife management

## **7. Assessing past evidence and future research to show that the ban is detrimental to the management and welfare of wildlife**

- Long term research will be commissioned to prove the argument that the Hunting Act increases unnecessary suffering and is detrimental to wildlife management
- Research will be commissioned to assess public attitudes to the quarry species in a post ban environment
- Evidence is being gathered that the quarry species and other wildlife are suffering as a direct result of the Hunting Act and that the Hunting Act decreases population levels in some areas and makes population management impossible in others
- Explanation of research conclusions to media and public

## **8. Continued support for hunting from farmers, landowners and other associated organisations**

- Continuous liaison with other farmers' and landowners' organisations and other natural allies
- Encouraging hunts to ensure they visit all their farmers and landowners over the summer to discuss next season's hunting activities
- Even greater involvement of farmers in hunts' social activities
- Further explanation that Single Farm Payments cannot be affected by hunting activities

# **It's the beginning of the end for the Hunting Act**

# **Keep Hunting Keep Fighting**

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