



Ministry
of Defence

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
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JAMES CARTLIDGE MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE PROCUREMENT

MSU/4/6/4/6/is

19 October 2023

Dear Andy,

Trail Hunting on the Defence estate

Thank you for your letter of 5 September 2023 concerning trail hunting on the Defence estate.

In your letter you raise several concerns relating to the alleged offences that have occurred on the estate. The Defence Infrastructure Organisation administers all external use of the Defence estate by third parties, but enforcement of the Hunting Act is an operational matter for the Police. There is a close working relationship between the Defence estate, MOD Police and local constabularies, and those suspected of criminal activity will be investigated and prosecuted where the evidence exists to do so.

I also note your comments regarding my predecessor's termination of the long-standing Memorandum of Understanding that was in place between your organisation and the MOD. As this matter is subject to a decision by the ICO it would be inappropriate for me to comment further, but I reiterate that it is MOD policy to allow public access to the Defence Estate, wherever this is compatible with operational and military training uses, public safety, security, conservation and the interest of any tenant or licensee. This policy remains extant and thus the ability of League monitors to access and peacefully observe hunts also endures.

Whilst I note your concerns around trail hunting on the Defence estate, provided it is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Act, it remains a legal activity.

I appreciate your time in writing to me and hope this will go some way to assuring you that Defence remains committed to ensuring that hunting is conducted in compliance with the law.

Yours sincerely,

JAMES CARTLIDGE MP

Andy Knott MBE
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