

## Strange times

Once these strange times have ended, we're all wondering what will change and what will stay the same? Something that was already due to change was that fox hunting was to be really banned in Scotland before the next election in May 2021. But recently the Government announced that their Bill to strengthen the law has been put on hold, as has a slew of other legislation. This was clearly the right thing to do at a time when the Government needs to put all its efforts into the health and safety of everyone in Scotland.

Those who enjoy the prospect of encouraging a pack of hounds to chase and kill foxes across the countryside will be relieved by this news. It looks like they will have another two or three years before new legislation can really ban fox hunting in Scotland.

Scottish hunts say that they use a pack of hounds to flush foxes from cover towards people who are waiting with guns to shoot the foxes. Using a pack of hounds bred and trained to chase and kill foxes to flush foxes out of cover seems a highly dubious activity as it isn't clear how the hounds would be stopped from killing foxes. And, sure enough, when we look at our footage of the hunts, our suspicions deepen.

Time and again, and as recently as last month, we have filmed what looked like traditional hunting activity. Huntsmen in their distinctive red jackets encouraged packs of hounds to search through gorse and hedgerows for foxes – without a single gun being present. We also regularly saw long lines of hounds following a scent across open countryside. And we saw foxes being chased and killed by the hounds. But the law was so confusing to Police Scotland, the Procurator Fiscal and the Sheriffs courts that there has been only one successful prosecution of a Scottish hunt.

Against this background the Government announced that they were satisfied that something needed to be done. They announced that their plan was to ban the use of packs of hounds by allowing only the use of two dogs. They also said they would stop the introduction of English trail hunting.

The popularity of these plans was reflected in the thousand people who marched "For the Foxes" in 2018, the 25,000 people who signed our petition for an effective ban and the 84% who told pollsters that they wanted fox hunting totally banned in Scotland.



So, what now? Between now and the next election the Government is going to be busy dealing with the impact of the Coronavirus on individuals and businesses. Like many charities the League Against Cruel Sports suddenly faces an uncertain financial future. Our work is funded entirely through the generosity of the public. Their continued support will allow us to maintain pressure to ensure that every Scottish political party goes into the next election with a clear Manifesto pledge to really ban fox hunting within one year of getting into power. This will be an easy commitment for the SNP, Labour and the Scottish Greens. The Liberal Democrats have sat on the fence on this issue and such a commitment might be a challenge to the Conservatives but the real question is, can any party seriously go into the next election with a policy to continue fox hunting?

**Your help is vital in ensuring that Governmental promises of strengthen the law are upheld and that the new legislation meets the desires of the Scottish people who wish to see fox hunting illegal once and for all.**

**Your signature will communicate to the Government that the time to 'really' ban hunting is now.**

**Sign the petition**