

1. Introduction

1.1 The following overview report provides details in relation to several questions posed by DCC Mills with regards to the Boxing day hunt which took place in Lacock, Wiltshire. The report has been collated from information supplied by Superintendent Steve Cox, Chief Inspector Matt Armstrong, DI [REDACTED] and PC [REDACTED] and from the information contained within numerous email that have been circulated in the days following the Lacock hunt.

2. Known information [REDACTED] prior to the hunt

2.1 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

2.2 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] A request was made to Ops planning to identify the available PLO's on the day.

2.3 On the 23rd December [REDACTED] be part of a continuous review and developments brought to the attention of the FIM and Duty Supt for consideration and escalation. The email included that there was no request for a

dedicated response and if the threat were to escalate then the route through the FIM and Duty Supt should be utilised.

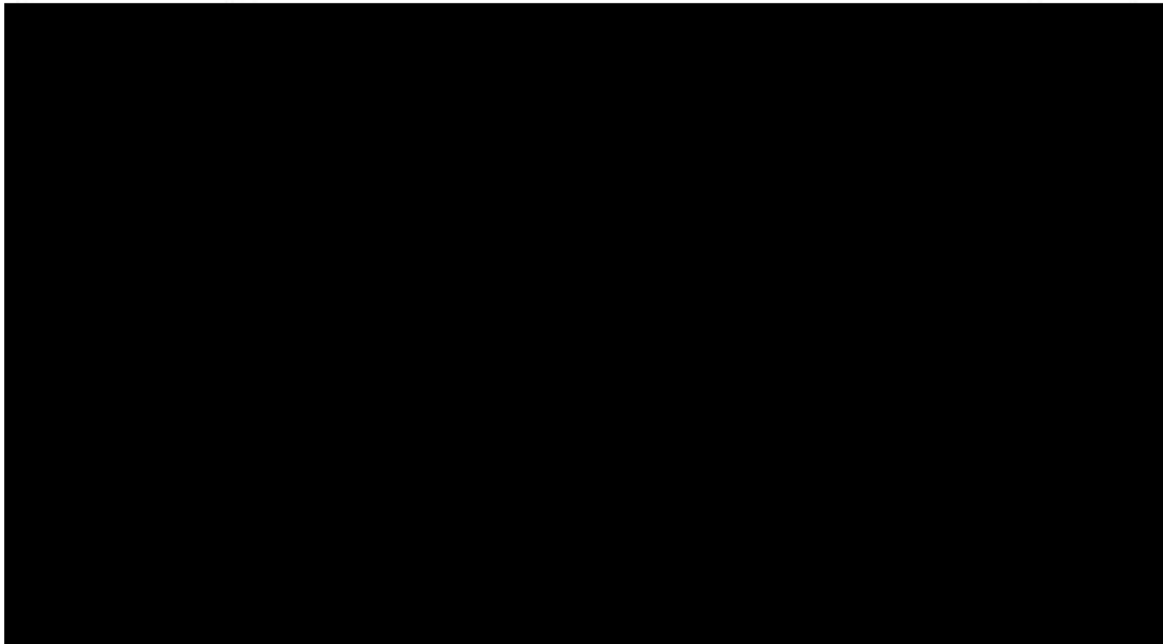
3. How we prepared for it? Resourcing /Op order? What happened on the day and how is this different to previous years? Policing response and how this unfolded?

3.1 An admin NICHE [REDACTED] was created and pinned [REDACTED] to the DMM document on the 23rd December. Superintendent Ben Mant was the DMM chair and no specific action was tasked out of DMM other than to [REDACTED] over the next few days. [REDACTED]

It should be noted that there was not continuity in the DMM chair due to it being the festive period and this was shared between Superintendent's Mant, Duncan and Hanson between the 23rd and the 27th.

3.2 It is not clear exactly when at this stage, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] and that a POPSA Tac, PLO's and local CPT resources should be available to the FIM and Superintendent in order to police the event. No additional specific resources were put to the event and no Operational Order was created based upon the assessment of the [REDACTED] prior to the hunt.

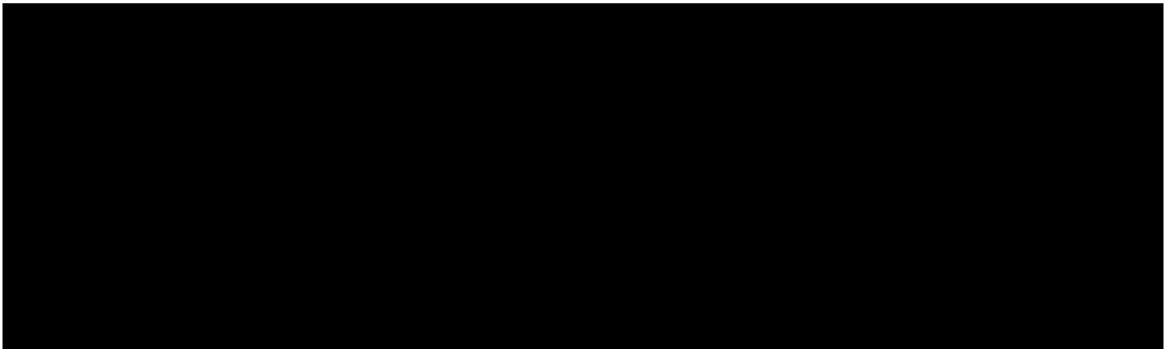
DMM – 23/12/2021



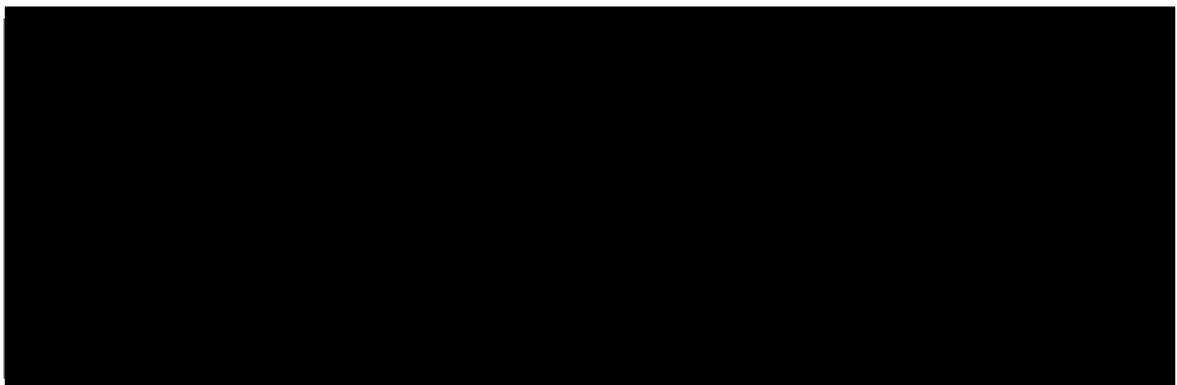
DMM – 24/12/2021



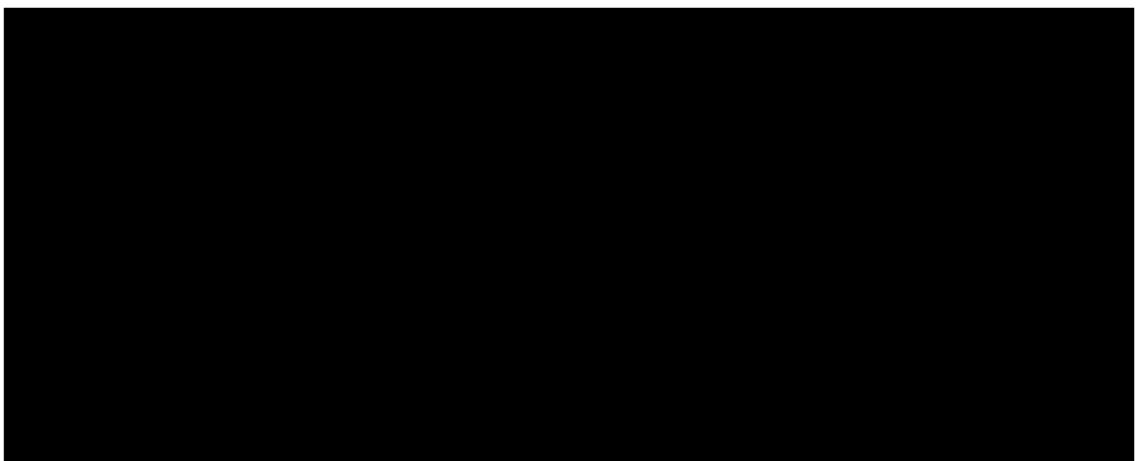
DMM – 25/12/2021



DMM – 26/12/2021



DMM - 27th December 2021



- 3.3 On the morning of the hunt a double crewed unit was deployed to attend the location to provide a policing presence. The following details the activity documented on Log [REDACTED] in response to the Lacock Hunt meet:

10:19hrs	Log [REDACTED] was created by [REDACTED] (double crewed) at the location in Lacock reporting a couple of dozen protesters already in the area and the log was created in case of any issues.
10:23	WP11, duty Sgt EP aware of the event [REDACTED].
10:24	WA05, Duty Inspector updated.
11:03	[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
11:08	2 units from EP mobilised to Lacock.
11:25	units arrive at scene
11:29	units arrive at scene
11:46	[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
12:06	WP45 and WP41 units diverted to logs [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]
12:11	[REDACTED] diverted to log [REDACTED]
12:24	All units resumed – all thinned out now.

- 3.4 It is evident from information gathered by Chief Inspector Armstrong and Superintendent Cox that officers at the scene were alerted to disorder between individuals and intervened. There is no detail of the resulting disorder within the log. [REDACTED] and what then followed was a number of complaints into the OPCC and releases on Social media showing recordings of the disorder which took place in Lacock.
- 3.5 It should be noted that Superintendent Ben Mant was the duty Superintendent on the 27th of December and at no point was the disorder flagged to him, nor the postings on social media. He did have a conversation with the FIM and the issues falling out of the hunt were not raised to him.
- 3.6 Superintendent Sarah Robbins chaired DMM on the 28th of December and, as can be seen from the DMM document, the Admin NICHE was removed from the DMM document with an update that the 'Event took place yesterday.'
- 3.7 The fallout from the social media and subsequent media reporting occurred throughout the day on the 28th causing this matter to be further discussed at DMM on the 29th December (two days post event).

4. Actions taken post identification of the issues arising from the Lacock Hunt.

- 4.1 [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

4.2 [REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

DMM 29th December 2021

[REDACTED]

4.3 Following DMM on the 29th December, Superintendent Cox had further conversations with County Duty Inspector Sparrow and Chief Inspector Armstrong and due to the low staffing levels in County caused by Covid-19 and annual leave, it was evident that CPT did not have the capacity to deal with the investigation as well as the community impact matters arising from the incident.

4.4 As a result, Superintendent Cox tasked the following actions out of DMM:

- 1) CID (Central) to pick up investigation. DI [REDACTED] nominated DS [REDACTED] to take the initial lead. *This has remained as a priority since being allocated and as such DS [REDACTED], DS [REDACTED] and DS [REDACTED] have all managed the ongoing enq's and as a result robust prompt and effective action has been taken.*
- 2) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- 3) Community Impact assessment tasked to CPT Sgt [REDACTED]. Sgt [REDACTED] completed this and continued to own and monitor from that point.
- 4) CPTN unit tasked to attend Lacock for reassurance and to identify CCTV opportunities.
- 5) Corp Comms (force and OPCC) fully sighted on all aspects to ensure meaningful and accurate responses could be provided.
- 6) OPCC updated due to vast numbers of complaint correspondence being received into the OPCC Complaint Handling team.

7) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

5. Onward investigation

5.1 Representations were made by PS [REDACTED] of the CIT at DMM on the 29th December that the offences under investigation amounted to violent disorder. Central CID were asked to review the footage and identify what offences may have been committed and who might have been involved. Having done so, the CID assessment made was that this was not a violent disorder within the legal definition of that offence, but in reality was a series of individual assaults, scuffles, pushing, shoving, and bad tempered and foul mouthed verbal exchanges within a crowd containing two antagonistic groups who clearly have strong feelings about each other.

5.2 Given the now large media interest, CID were tasked by Superintendent Cox to manage the investigation over the holiday period, or at least until more resources become available upon the return from Christmas and Covid isolation.

5.3 DI [REDACTED] has oversight of the investigation and has instructed his team, in the first instance, to focus on the more serious and arrestable offences of violence that have been identified. These are all common assault or at the most very low level ABH offences. This was to demonstrate that Wiltshire Police are taking strong and swift action, and without fear or favour. This is particularly important given DI [REDACTED] assessment that accusations of pro-hunt bias have been unfairly levelled at the Police response by some of the anti-hunt supporters. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

5.4 There are a number of other potential offences / offenders, but these are more ambiguous. As stated above, this generally encompasses unpleasantness in terms of words and behaviour or low level pushing and shoving, as well as drink throwing. Should a decision be made to pursue these, DI [REDACTED] has requested that these be dealt with by CPT as this investigation has already been very resource intensive at a period of very high demand for CID.

5.5 [REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

6. Complaint position/IOPC

6.1 As at 1730 hours on the 31st December, 125 dissatisfaction matters had been logged of which only 7 have been logged as complaints in their own right as the complainants were eligible for this to happen.

6.2 As an estimate PC [REDACTED] assessed that there were still somewhere between 180 and 200 emails left to deal with and they were still trickling in at this point.

7. View of Head of Professional Standards re complaints/conduct

- 7.1 Superintendent Cox does not anticipate those being eligible to complain is likely to increase, the majority of the complaints have stemmed from a 'call to arms' by the Bath Hunt Saboteur Group via social media, as a result as supporters are viewing this, complaints are being submitted. Unless people are adversely affected by police action/inaction they cannot complain.
- 7.2 Regarding the IOPC element, if officers had been biased to the hunt as referred in the press, then Superintendent Cox would refer any complaints to the IOPC. From his initial review officers have done absolutely nothing wrong and certainly not at the level of misconduct. There may well be some Reflective Practice [REDACTED], and potentially declaring a conflict to the CCC or their Sgt when tasked to Lacock [REDACTED]. There is no evidence of any bias, turning a blind eye or targeting a specific group. From his initial review, Superintendent Cox is not expecting any of the complaints to result in a misconduct investigation. He anticipates R&P Complaint Handling letters (dealt with otherwise than by investigation) or RPRP as referred above.

8. Preventative Action taken for the New Years Day Hunt

- 8.1 Following the issues arising from the Lacock Hunt, Superintendent Cox and Chief Inspector Armstrong worked together in preparing for the NYD hunt. The following actions were undertaken:

- 1) Staff were nominated to be dedicated to the Avon Vale Hunt
- 2) [REDACTED]
- 3) Rural Crime Team tasked with preventative actions
- 4) [REDACTED]
- 5) [REDACTED]
- 6) All tasked officers supplied photographs of outstanding suspects for Boxing Day event
- 7) Specialist Operations tasked with providing High Vis patrols of hunting area
- 8) Supt Cox as Duty Supt on 01.01.2022 maintaining strategic oversight, tactical oversight by Insp McCoy

- 8.2 [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

9. Strategic Issues

- 9.1 A full operational debrief has been commissioned by Superintendent Duncan and this is being completed by inspector Whitby who is a trained POPSA and debrief officer. Learning and recommendations will undoubtedly fall out of this debrief and these will be brought to ELT once the debrief report has been completed.
- 9.2 Without wishing to pre-empt what the debrief will recommend, it is clear that learning will be drawn out [REDACTED], whether the policing response was resourced correctly [REDACTED], [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

- 9.3 Much of the social media and media fallout has focused around information that is not true, namely the allegations that PC [REDACTED] is a member of the Avon Valley hunt and recently rode with them and that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are also members of the same hunt. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

- 9.4 Nationally, there is an increase in public protest in response to numerous societal issues. It is evident that this level of activity that was seen in Lacock on the 27th December is not dissimilar to disorder seen nationally in response to other societal issues in the past 18 months. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

This report is submitted into ELT as a high level overview in advance of the operational debrief which will follow.

ACC Deb SMITH
3rd January 2022