

Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP
Secretary of State for Defence

By email

13 March 2023

Dear Secretary of State,

Memorandum of Understanding Between the League Against Cruel Sports and the Ministry of Defence

Thank you for your personal response to our letter of the 13 January. We agree that the MOD estate should be used for (a) its primary purpose of defence training, (b) that all organisations are treated equally, and (c) the law should be upheld.

The organisations signed onto this letter do not recognise the picture you paint of Link member, the League Against Cruel Sports (LACS).

- 1) You reference 'masked hunt saboteurs', yet you have removed your Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to monitor hunts from an unrelated organisation. LACS is a registered charity regulated by the Charity Commission and it conforms to and assists in, enforcing the law. Its staff do not wear masks or participate in threatening behaviour. We understand that it has never received a complaint or been sanctioned by the police, courts or any regulatory body regarding the behaviour of its staff towards hunts. The MOD has confirmed in writing that it has no record of any such incident.
- 2) We agree the law should be upheld. LACS trains the police and Crown Prosecution Service on the Hunting Act and other animal welfare offences and has received plaudits from senior police officers regarding its work. To assist the police, the League has monitored hunts and provided information on hunt activity, as well as professional advice to law enforcement and witness testimony in court. LACS has also chaired this Wildlife Crime Group for several years.

You state you do not support law breaking on MOD land, which we welcome. However, LACS has concerns that illegal hunting may be taking place on MOD land. The police often rely on monitoring to help detect and evidence potential breaches of the law; to remove monitors rather than the hunt's MOU would put the MOD in a unique position amongst the country's major landowners.

We request an urgent meeting with you to discuss the process and evidence you relied upon to revoke the MOU, and to hear precisely what action you are going to take to 'maintain the land for the primary purpose of defence training,' as you have stated.

Yours sincerely,

Dominic Dyer
Chair, Wildlife Crime Working Group

Replies can be sent to matt@wcl.org.uk

This letter is supported by the following organisations belonging to the Wildlife Crime Working Group:

Badger Trust

Born Free

FOUR PAWS UK

Humane Society International UK

IFAW (International Fund for Animal Welfare)

Institute of Fisheries Management

League Against Cruel Sports

RSPCA

Wild Justice