

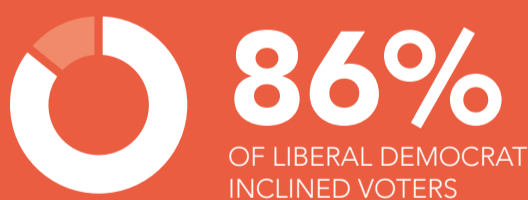
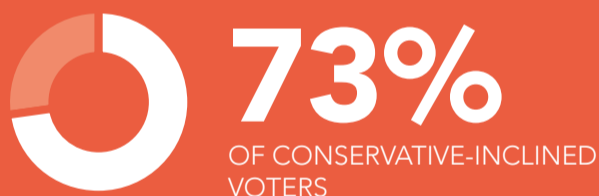
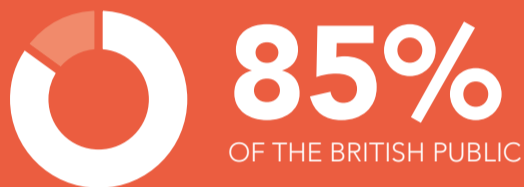
SECURING AND STRENGTHENING THE HUNTING BAN

The Hunting Act 2004 bans hunting wild mammals with dogs in England and Wales. The hunting ban has huge public support but has faced many threats of being weakened or repealed.

In the last election, these threats were overcome, with voters sending a 'clear message' that the hunting ban should stay. Plans to repeal the ban became one of the most discussed policies during the election and the powerful public response led to these plans being dropped.

It's time to put any threat of repeal behind us and confirm in this election that the ban is here to stay.

KEEPING FOX HUNTING ILLEGAL IS SUPPORTED BY:



(Ipsos Mori, 2017)

WHY THE HUNTING BAN NEEDS STRENGTHENING

Animals are still chased and killed by hunts across the country, enabled by the exploitation of loopholes and exemptions in the law. More than 10,696 hunt days take place every year.

Many hunts now claim they are 'trail' hunting, instead of hunting animals. Tellingly, trail hunting was invented after the hunting ban and looks very similar to traditional hunting. Foxes are still being chased and killed – prosecution can be avoided by saying this was accidental rather than intentional. A judge has even described the claims of a hunt to be trail hunting as a "cynical subterfuge". The law needs to be strengthened to allow people to be prosecuted if it can be proven they were reckless in not preventing their dogs from hunting a wild mammal.

A 'recklessness' clause is needed to prevent trail hunting being used as a cover for illegal hunting.

Hunts can also exploit exemptions to the hunting ban to justify chasing and killing animals. This includes the use of dogs below ground 'to protect birds for shooting', also known as terrier work, and hunting with dogs for so-called 'research and observation', similar to the excuse used by Japanese whalers. Terrier work can cause great suffering to both the wild mammal and terrier, and no genuine scientific research is known to involve the pursuit of an animal across miles of countryside with dogs.

These exemptions to the hunting ban must be removed.

Even when hunters are caught and convicted, they can't be jailed for this illegal hunting. Only fines are available, with the average over a ten-year period only amounting to a mere £267.

Prison sentences should be introduced to properly reflect the seriousness of hunting animals with dogs.

POLLING OF THE BRITISH PUBLIC SHOWS:

74% OF THOSE WHO EXPRESSED A VIEW SUPPORT PRISON SENTENCES FOR ILLEGAL HUNTING

79% OF THOSE WHO EXPRESSED A VIEW SUPPORT MAKING RECKLESS HUNTING ILLEGAL, INCLUDING THE MAJORITY INTENDING TO VOTE FOR THE FOUR MAIN PARTIES

(YouGov, 2019)

WHAT ARE WE CALLING FOR?

There are two simple things we are asking parties and candidates to support, which will go a long way to creating a future in which animals can live free from the cruelty of hunting with dogs:

- 1. Secure the hunting ban by committing to keep the Hunting Act 2004 and ruling out weakening it in any way.**
- 2. Strengthen the hunting ban by removing loopholes and exemptions in the Hunting Act and introducing custodial sentences. This includes the introduction a 'recklessness' clause to tackle trail hunting, ending the use of dogs below ground and removing the 'research and observation' exemption.**

For more information on the League's proposals to strengthen the Hunting Act, visit our website or contact willmorton@league.org.uk