



Freedom of Information Request Reference N°: FOI 000042-19

I write in connection with your request for information received by Suffolk Constabulary on the 2 January 2019 in which you sought access to the following information:

“The response Suffolk Police has had in relation to the murder inquiry into the death of Karen Hales following the Constabulary’s 25th anniversary appeal on 21 November 2018.

1. *The number of calls, emails and messages the force has received to date.*
2. *What information came to light as a result of the responses received?”*

Response to your Request

The response provided below is correct as of 11 January 2019

Suffolk Constabulary has considered your request for information and the response is below.

Suffolk Constabulary has received a total of 18 responses to the 25 year anniversary appeal, consisting of a mixture of email, social media and calls.

This is an ongoing investigation and as such the Constabulary will not disclose the specifics of information provided by the public, for reasons of protecting sources and maintaining the integrity of our investigation.

Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) places two duties on public authorities. Unless exemptions apply, the first duty at s1(1)(a) is to confirm or deny whether the information specified in a request is held. The second duty at s1(1)(b) is to disclose information that has been confirmed as being held.

Where exemptions are relied upon s17 of FOIA requires that we provide the applicant with a notice which:

- a) States that fact,
- b) Specifies the exemption(s) in question and
- c) States (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

The information you have requested is exempt, by virtue of the following exemption:

Section 30(1) – Investigations



Section 30 is a class based qualified exemption and requires the consideration of a public interest test.

Public Interest Test

(When applying a qualified exemption a public authority is required to consider whether ‘in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information’)

Favouring Disclosure

The provision of information concerning the success of investigation appeals will demonstrate whether there have been any positive lines of enquiry and that the Constabulary has taken such matters seriously.

Investigations are expensive; provision of information relating to any investigation will ensure the public are well informed as to the way in which finances are being distributed. This is particularly pertinent in cold cases such as this, where the Constabulary continue to review the cases in order to establish a resolve for the victim’s family.

It is recognised that the investigation remains live and therefore there is a public interest in the police confirming to the public that the case continues to be reviewed and all new leads thoroughly investigated. Disclosure of information may encourage members of the public to provide intelligence to the Constabulary by raising awareness of the progress of the investigation.

Favouring Non-Disclosure

Information concerning live investigations will seldom be disclosed as any disclosure may jeopardise the investigation process and impact on any future investigative leads and outcomes.

The disclosure of additional information concerning the investigation and the outcome of the anniversary appeal, other than that already proactively disclosed by the Constabulary, will jeopardise the ongoing investigation. Other than that which has already been disclosed, information concerning a live investigation should only be share within the public in exceptional circumstances, where there is a policing requirement to do so.

Information concerning cold case murders will be disclosed by the Constabulary in a controlled fashion and in the event public awareness is necessary to assist in any potential developments in establishing a finalisation to the investigation. The appeal was undertaken to establish any new lines of enquiry and to positively assist with any new investigative leads. Disclosure of this information would have the opposite effect, as sensitive information may be disclosed that could jeopardise the investigation process.



With the advancement in investigative techniques and as additional information becomes available, cases no matter how old, may now become solvable. Any information placed in the public domain whilst there is an active investigation ongoing to establish a resolve to the case, would jeopardise ongoing work actively being undertaken by the cold case team.

Such disclosures may be available once the investigation has been finalised, however this would only be in a controlled manner and not in a format that would undermine future like operations.

This provision of the information may identify information that a potential suspect would only be aware of. It would be irresponsible of the police force to disclose information under FOI and lose control of information being exchanged within the public domain, whilst an investigation is still very much ongoing.

Balancing Test

It is recognised that there is a great deal of information in the public domain concerning this case and the very fact that the case has been ongoing for a lengthily time frame, may now only be assisted by the public being presented with more detailed information than what has previously been proactively disclosed by the Constabulary.

However, the case remains live and the Constabulary continues to actively investigate leads presented by witnesses, especially in response to appeals. It would not be within the best interests of the investigation to publish any information that may negatively impact on the comprehensive work continually being undertaken by the review team.

It is imperative that public disclosure is controlled otherwise we would set dangerous precedence for other like investigations.

Having weighed up the factors favouring disclosure and those favouring non-disclosure, I have decided that the balance lies with non-disclosure.

Should you have any further queries concerning this request, please contact Clair Pack, FOI Decision Maker, quoting the reference number shown above.

A full copy of the Freedom of Information Act (2000) can be viewed on the 'Office of Public Sector Information' web-site;
<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/>



Suffolk Constabulary is not responsible for the content, or the reliability, of the website referenced. The Constabulary cannot guarantee that this link will work all of the time, and we have no control over the availability of the linked pages.



Your Right to Request a Review of Decisions Made Under the Terms of the
Freedom of Information Act (2000).

If you are unhappy with how your request has been handled, or if you think the decision is incorrect, you have the right to ask Suffolk Constabulary to review their decision.

Ask Suffolk Constabulary to look at the decision again.

If you are dissatisfied with the decision made by Suffolk Constabulary under the Freedom of Information Act (2000), regarding access to information, you must notify Suffolk Constabulary that you are requesting a review within 40 working days of the date of its response to your Freedom of Information request. Requests for a review should be made in writing and addressed to:

*Freedom of Information Decision Maker
Information Management Department
Suffolk Constabulary
Police Headquarters
Martlesham Heath
Ipswich
Suffolk
IP5 3QS
OR
Email: information@suffolk.pnn.police.uk*

In all possible circumstances Suffolk Constabulary will aim to respond to your request for us to look at our decision again within 20 working days of receipt of your request for an internal review.

The Information Commissioner.

After lodging a request for a review with Suffolk Constabulary, if you are still dissatisfied with the decision, you can apply to the Information Commissioner for a decision on whether the request for information has been dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

For information on how to make application to the Information Commissioner please visit their website at www.ico.org.uk or contact them at the address shown below:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Telephone: 01625 545 700