



SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

REQUEST NUMBER: FOI Request 001381-17

REQUEST DETAILS:

1. *"How much money did the police force raise by selling lost property / goods seized from criminals in 2014? 2015? 2016?"*
2. *If possible (and within cost limit), can I have a list of the goods sold, broken down by each year, and the price they fetched? Or, if this is not possible (or it runs over the cost limit), can I have a description of the top three items which fetched the highest amount of money each year, and the amount they each fetched?"*

RESPONSE:

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

This response is correct as of 27 January 2017

A search has been undertaken of the Constabularies property auction records, financial data and seized vehicle data, for all income from the sale and auction of good seized from criminals. The Constabularies have specifically looked at Property that is recorded as Property Subject to Enquiry (PSE). PSE is property which has come into the possession of the police in relation to an enquiry or an investigation. The person from whom property is seized may not be investigated, charged or convicted of any offence once the investigation is completed.

Found Property

Found property is that which has been handed into the Police by members of the public. If Found Property is not a prohibited item and is not claimed by the owner or finder, we will dispose of it. Disposal may include return to an issuing authority or a governing body or disposal via waste. If the item has a value which can be realised we will put that item into Auction. The amounts held in the balance account roll over each year and transfers are made each year to the Police Property Act fund, from which donations are made to support charitable causes as approved by the Chief Constable and the Norfolk Community Foundation. The amounts held will also include cash which is identified as found property, i.e. monies which may be found in a purse or wallet.

Seized Property

Property Subject to Enquiry (PSE) is that which has come into the possession of the police in relation to an enquiry or an investigation. The person from



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whom property is seized may not be convicted of any offence once the investigation is completed. We only dispose of property once authorisation from a Court or the Officer in the Case is given to do so, or where legislation or case outcome dictates. Provided the item of property is not prohibited, property may be returned to the owner (if identified), the person it was seized from or some other person as directed (for example Next of Kin), donated to charity, returned to an issuing authority or disposed of as waste. Property may have to be disposed of in order to satisfy a Court Order. If property is not to be destroyed and it is not collected by an owner or other nominated person and we consider it has a value we will put the items into Auction.

Unless property is sold in accordance with a Court Order, the proceeds from the sale of these items are held in the Police Property Act fund and the totals roll over each year. The lists of the property sent to auction show the actual hammer prices before the 15% commission is deducted.

A spreadsheet of auction items from the three main property stores in Suffolk (Bury St Edmunds, Lowestoft and Ipswich) has been attached for reference.

Suffolk Constabulary utilised Bumblebee auctions until the start of the 2016/17 financial year. This income relates to both found and seized property and is held in financial years only.

Financial year	Income
2013/14	£5,860
2014/15	£7,425
2015/16	£4,820
2016/17	£95

Periodically amounts from these accounts are transferred into the Police Property Act Fund, from which donations are made to support charitable causes as approved by the Force Chief Constable and the relevant Norfolk/Suffolk Community foundation.

Generally jewellery, tools and specialist bikes tend to fetch the highest prices, however due to the nature of property coming into police possession items can be very varied and can fetch high prices at auction e.g. photographic equipment, Apple products, marine equipment and tyres.

Vehicles

Vehicles and other large items such as boats may also be seized subject to an investigation, or seized in relation to Road Traffic Offences, for example Section 165 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 allows for a vehicle to be seized if it is being driven other than in accordance with a licence, has no valid insurance or both. Section 99 of the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 allows the recovery of a vehicle which has been abandoned/stolen, left as an obstruction



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or involved in a road traffic collision.

If these vehicles/other items are disclaimed, not collected by owners/insurance companies and are not directed to be destroyed, or dealt with as per any Court Order direction, they may also be disposed of via auction. When vehicles/other items are sold at auction, auction fees, the statutory recovery and storage charges, incurred by the Recovery Operators, are deducted from the sale price. The Constabulary receive any balance left.

Funds must be retained in the event there are any subsequent claims by vehicle owners and any auction monies have to be repaid. All proceeds from scrap value of vehicles go directly to the Recovery Operator to offset their recovery and storage charges.

Year	No. to auction	Income
2012	7	£2,552.87
2013	28	£29,373.76
2014	6	£2,858.00
2015	16	£2,379.20
2016	56	£20,036.63

Suffolk can **neither confirm nor deny** that it holds any other information relevant to the whole of your request by virtue of the following exemption:

Section 23(5) – Information supplied by, or concerning, certain security bodies

The duty to confirm or deny does not arise if, or to the extent that, compliance with section 1(1)(a) would involve the disclosure of any information (whether or not already recorded), which was directly or indirectly supplied to the public authority by, or relates to, any bodies specified in subsection (3).

This is an absolute exemption and I am therefore not required to complete a public interest test.

This cannot be taken as confirmation or otherwise that further information does or does not exist.