



## The Associate Parliamentary Group for Animal Welfare

An all party group for members of both houses at Westminster formed to promote and further the cause of animal welfare by all means available to the Parliaments at Westminster and in Europe

### **MINUTES FOR THE AGM ANIMAL WELFARE IN 2013 Lord de Mauley**

**Parliamentary – Under Secretary of State at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

#### ATTENDEES

**Political Members:** Neil Parish MP, Roger Williams MP, Baroness Gale, Jim Fitzpatrick MP, Sheryl Murray MP, Roger Gale MP, Duke of Montrose, Angela Smith MP, Mark Pritchard MP, Nathan Bennett on behalf of the Rt Hon Ann Clwyd MP

**Associate Members:** Clarissa Baldwin (Dog's Trust), Sheila Crispin (Dog Advisory Council), Ben Myring (Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons), Neil Smith (President RCVS), Jennie Rudd (NatureWatch), Sharon Ife (Dog Breeding), Faye Stacey (People4Ponies), Julia Carr (Canine Action UK), Linda Cattle (Wood Green), Tania McCrea-Steele (IFAW), Jaqi Brown (DAFG/NMA), Tiffany Hemming (AWF), Marc Abraham (Pup Aid), Lady Tabor (DTA), Debbie Matthews (VetsGetScanning), Vicki Craighill (PDSA), Dan o Neil (RVC/Vet Compass), Tania Ledger (Cavalier Matters), Carol Fowler (Cavalier Campaign), David Bowles (RSPCA), Tina Matthews (Four Paws), Josh Kaile (WSPA), Chris Draper (Born Free Foundation), Anna Wade (Born Free Foundation), Sally Burnell (BVA), Robin Hargreaves (BVA), Dimple Patel (AWP), Margaret Donnellan (Dog's Trust), Jacqui Cuff (Cat's Protection), Becky Waites (Blue Cross), Rachel Cunningham (Blue Cross), Denisa Delic (Kennel Club), Jamie Hurst (Battersea Dogs & Cats Home), Paula Sparks (ALAW), Nik Oakley (DogLost), Dee McIntosh (Battersea Dog & Cats Home), Ian Pendleigh (League Against Cruel Sports), David Hughes (RSPCA), Chris Laurence (Dog Advisory Council/AWF), Christina Dodkin (Animal Defenders International), Gareth Gardiner (ADI), Arnot Wrenson (Dog Union), Vanessa Hudson (Animals Count), David Cavill (Animal Care College), Mark Jones (HSI), Ben Williamson (PETA), Sophia Miller (BHA/BHS), Zoe White (BHA/BHS), Claire Robinson (RSPCA), Marisa Heath (APGAW).

#### **AGM Business**

Election of Officers: Neil Parish MP as chairman. Jim Fitzpatrick MP, Caroline Lucas MP, Adrian Saunders MP, Cheryl Murray MP as vice chairmen, Lord Soulsby as Secretary and Mark Pritchard MP and Andrew Rosindell MP as Treasurers.

The financial statement was Balance as of October 2012      £2,912.08

Money paid in £570 (30x19 member subs)

Money paid out £210 report publication, £76.24 (train tickets for Neil for member visit)

Balance as of October 2013      £3,482.08

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**Gareth Gardiner (Animal Defenders International and the National Anti-Vivisection Society)  
Overview of Section 24 Animal (Scientific Procedures) Act (ASPA) 1986**

We have our first opportunity in more than 25 years to sweep away the secrecy surrounding animal experiments in UK labs as the Government has announced a review of the secrecy clause, Section 24, of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA), the law governing the use of animals in experiments, and is set to soon consult the public. If Section 24 is abolished and not replaced, this gives us the opportunity to request access to project licence applications – the documents animal researchers have to submit to the Home Office for assessment of whether the licence is granted – and the possibility to oppose experiments before they occur.

The NAVS wants access to these Project Licence Applications before they are granted to ensure adherence to the Government's 3 'R's policy of replacement, reduction, refinement in animal experiments. Most importantly, this access would provide us with the necessary information to recommend alternatives, identify duplications or other comparable research, thus enabling cancellation of the animal experiment in such cases. We would be able to request that licences are not granted for experiments where research is duplicated, where alternatives exist, or which are inapplicable to or even harmful. It is the current blanket ban on information that may well have contributed to the fact that 2012 saw the highest number of UK animal experiments in over 25 years.

We know that the vivisection industry will seek to retain or even strengthen S24, by citing concerns that personal identification and commercial interests will be jeopardised, concerns that are already protected under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). The FOIA already works for government, courts, the police, local government, the NHS and other bodies. Repeal of Section 24 would not compromise health or safety, protection of confidential information or intellectual property, because the FOIA already provides for the protection of personal information and confidential information. Furthermore, in order to scrutinise the scientific robustness of proposals to use animals in research, only technical details are required and personal information is unnecessary.

There is now broad support for repeal of Section 24 of this Act – it has been noted that both the House of Lords Select Committee and the Animal Procedures Committee have supported such a move. Home Office Minister Lord Taylor of Holbeach said in a Ministerial Statement in July 2013: "The requirements of Section 24 are now out of step with our policy on openness and transparency and with the approach taken in other legislation, such as the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The solution we develop must improve the overall transparency surrounding research using animals, to create an environment which fosters informed debate leading to greater public trust, and also must protect personal identities and intellectual property".

We are working to establish cross-party support for repeal of Section 24 and to convince the three governmental committees which have to be consulted on any change to ASPA, but we need your help. We need you to write to your MP to convince them to take the issue up in Parliament, especially if there is no parliamentary vote, which is a distinct possibility. This will probably be the

ONLY opportunity in many years to change the rules and potentially end the suffering of millions of animals in UK laboratories.

Action Taken: There was some discussion on the issues raised as MPs felt reluctant to give support when they had not heard from the industry what their views were. It was pointed out that a large percentage of the increased use of animals was mice for cancer research and other medical use and the use of larger animals may have actually gone down. However, Gareth stated that recent statistics released by the Home Office show the number of cats and dogs used in research in the UK increased during 2012. During 2012, the number of cats used increased by 32% to 202 cats and the number of dogs used increased by 12% to 3,214. There was general agreement that any decision should be transparent and Neil Parish MP agreed to look into the matter and pointed out he was on one of the Committees that would be consulted. APGAW would alert other members to the ADI briefing.

### **Member's Issues**

Marc Abraham (Pup Aid) –Raised the subject of his E-Petition as a chance for everyone to come together to get action. Wants to get to 100,000 signatures to trigger a debate in Parliament. The aim is to stop puppy and kittens being sold without their dams which then stops pet shops and puppies being imported.

Neil Parish MP - APGAW is happy to support this. Once the petition gets to Parliament we can bring it here to APGAW for preparation before it goes to debate.

Sheila Crispin (Dog Advisory Council) – I would like to endorse Marc's work. We are looking at legislation and regulation through the Council. It now needs to come back in a form that can be looked at in this place so we can come up with suggestions for improvement.

Gavin Grant (RSPCA) – I would like to encourage APGAW to hold another session for horse welfare. We have been working with sister organisations and doing a lot in Wales – Mr Price, one of the key culprits there, is now tried and sentenced. We have taken some 40 horses so far from his farm with worms and salmonella. However, this is not simply a Welsh problem as we are involved in many other cites. 21 years ago the RSPCA had a dozen horses in our care and we now have over 800. There are significant problems arising and people have cut their vet bills and farriers bills. Rehoming horses can take 9 months to a year, and of course many of them are not backed.

Jessica Stark (World Horse Welfare) – I would like to endorse this point. There are around 7,000 horse needing immediate rescue and rehoming. Wales has really grasped the nettle on this as they had major problems with major perpetrators. The announcement of Wales introducing legislation to give Local Authorities the tools to take these horses is positive. What we need to do now is understand that this problem will just move over the border. On the WHW website there is a list of fly grazing incidents coming up to 2,000 so it is a big problem. The response from Defra is that existing legislation is working but it is not which is why Wales has taken action.

Neil Parish MP – There are two sets of people here causing the problem; the people who act illegally and then those who buy a pony with no idea of how much it costs. I do think we need to take this up with Lord de Mauley and pursue it within APGAW as I agree it is a problem.

Angela Smith MP - Would it be possible to do some work around the new powers soon to be made available to police and Local Authorities on dog control. They will soon be able to prosecute dog owners who are out of control on private property – the guidance issued around all of that is not satisfactory and there is a risk that animal welfare standards will suffer as a result of poor training and guidance. It may be helpful to have a look at that. There are different competencies of Local Authorities across the country which will have an impact.

Clarissa Baldwin (Dog's Trust) – The 2012 Greyhound Regulation only deals with welfare at the track setting. It is up for review in 2015 so a wider consultation on that issue would be good for. Thousands of greyhounds are still not being properly cared for.

Chris Draper (Born Free Foundation) – A serious issue is primates being kept as pets. We are talking about a data free area we do not know the numbers out there but we do know there is a diverse range of species. The current code of practice is unworkable and unenforceable.

Angel Murray MP – I brought forward a Private Members Bill in the last session and so did Mark Pritchard on that issue. It is one that needs looking at.

Neil Parish MP– I will raise it as with the EFRA Select Committee and APGAW will look at it in 2014.

David Cavill (Pet Care College)– Can I ask that we consider the registration of Dog Trainers and Behaviourists at some point.

Robin Hargreaves (BVA)– We have concerns about level of enforcement around the importing of puppies. Two puppies came through with rabies in Holland today so it is perfectly possible that can happen here. We need better enforcement. The legislation may work in principle but the enforcement is a concern.

Jacqui Cuff (Cat's Protection) - The same applies for cats and kittens.

Angela Smith MP– Snaring would be a good issue to cover.

Ian Pendleigh (League Against Cruel Sports) –We delivered a manifesto on snaring in the summer and held a reception which Neil sponsored. There is a lack of knowledge about snaring in Parliament including in the report issued by Defra.

Sharon Ife – Can more work be done on uncontrollable breeding in the case of the issues around unwanted dogs and cats. Over the next 2 and half years dog owners may put their dogs on the

streets rather than microchip. Can we not try to have a public education initiative to reduce the numbers of animals being bred?

Chris Laurence (Dog Advisory Council)– There are more cats being bred than never before yet cats are not recognized by the law at all and we should look at reviewing this.

**Lord de Mauley, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, DEFRA**

Thank you Neil for inviting me to address APGAW and for what you do as MP for Tiverton and of course for running this valuable all-party group. Animal Welfare is a close subject to your heart and we are all very aware of that. Thank you too for all the members of this Group, many of us know each other. You perform an enormously valuable role in drawing attention to animal welfare issues and you help this country maintain its reputation of having a high standard of animal welfare.

In February this year we announced a package of measures to encourage more responsible ownership of dogs. A key part of this is that micro-chipping will become compulsory from April 2016. We are in discussion with the charities, industry and vets to ensure that the regulation covers all that it needs to cover. We are also talking to the Welsh Government as there are a number of issues which are cross border. Micro-chipping is not the solution to all problems but it will greatly improve the welfare of many dogs that stray or are lost stolen each year. I am grateful to the charities that have offered help with finance and with micro-chipping. We estimate that charities and Local Authorities between them will save nearly 16 million a year in kenneling costs as a result of this measure.

We committed to extending the offence under Section 3 of the DDA to dog attacks in private places along with making attacks on assistance dogs an aggravated offence. This will make a difference in terms of dealing with dog attacks. The bill is in the House of Lords now. The bill has a number of statutory measures to allow the Local Authority and police to deal with low-level incidents of dog ownership and the draft of a practitioner's manual to accompany that legislation has been processed by us. The document continues to be open to review and we welcome comments from you as to how to make it work better.

In September PAAG launched minimum standards for classified websites that advertise pets and I endorsed those standards. We followed that up with 7 leading websites including GumTree and PreLoved and they are now working closely with PAAG to implement the standards. I was encouraged by their positive attitudes and their want to improve things. We will keep a close eye on progress and I will have a follow up meeting in 6 months time with them. Standards like those are one way we can ensure online advertisements are of a high standard and protect animal welfare but we have to acknowledge the internet is here and it bring problems which we have to address.

Last year we provided funding to help charities to carry out community engagement to target hard to reach groups. Final reports have been submitted on this work and we will decimate the findings

of those projects. We will continue to support those charities in this work which saves Local Authorities and police and the NHS precious resources. I believe education is key to helping the general public understand more responsible pet ownership and safety around animals.

### **Member's Questions**

Paula Sparks (ALAW) - The EU is using CAPS subsidies towards farmers who rear bulls for fighting which does not fit into the animal welfare provision. Many people feel this is unacceptable for UK taxpayers to contribute to this. Will you follow the Dutch parliament to call for stopping of these subsidies?

Lord De Mauley – The EU runs the process of allocating CAP monies and we have to conduct our discussions with 27 members states so we do not have all the power but we do and will continue to proactively engage with them on welfare issues. We are sending delegates next week to the cat and dog welfare conference for example.

Neil Parish MP - I dealt with this bull fighting issue during my time as an MEP. The problem is they get paid a beef premium but then they use them for fighting. I will raise it with George Eustice myself.

Faye Stacey (People4Ponies) - After the East Moor crisis on Bodmin Moor in 2011, where ponies were left dying and emaciated, Defra promised steps would be taken to ensure the situation would not be allowed to happen again. In 2012, despite these promises, at least 20 emaciated ponies died on the same small area of enclosed moorland. What guarantees can Defra give us that there will not be a crisis on Bodmin Moor this winter"? Also what measures are being taken to deal with the practice of hotbranding?

Lord de Mauley –I have seen branding in process and there is a code under preparation which has been prepared by the Breed Associations. I went to see it in practice with some trepidation but I was surprised that in fact the stress inflicted on the animals was considerably greater at being got hold of and restrained than being branded and of course the process was overseen by a vet. Having said that, we are looking carefully at this code and we want to see it implemented. Alternative technologies – remotely readable microchips to replace the need for hotbranding have been looked at but I met the manufacturer of these and saw that it only allows a foot to 18 inches for the mechanism to read the chip and that was the maximum and also it was not entirely accurate. I cannot see technology that can replace the branding fully at this point. When watching the hotbranding, these horses were gathered so that they could be inspected and micro-chipped and wormed so that was positive from a health point of view. On the Bodmin Moor crisis we have been liaising with HAVLA and they are having a meeting next week with all agencies including the police and local authorities on this matter. The responsibility for the animal lies with the owners and we cannot lose sight of that fact. I do think there is scope for the different breed societies to share best practice on how to manage this. It is important that these rare breeds particularly Exmoors, are protected and it would be a shame if Government interfered to such an extent that we threatened the survival of these breeds on the moor.

Neil Parish MP– I disagree on the issue of hotbranding as I think it should be stopped.

David Bowles (RSPCA) – The Welsh Assembly have been discussing fly grazing in Wales but what reassurance can you give us that this problem won't just migrate to England. How will you address this?

Lord de Mauley - I met Alun Davies MP to talk about this. What is interesting is that in Wales they have issued an ASBO to a man who was fly grazing his horses and he has been imprisoned. Last week we did a similar thing for a couple in Bristol so the existing anti-social laws can be used. Indeed the anti-social set of tools coming in under the current bill will make it easier for Local Authorities to use them. I suspect of all the welfare issues this is the biggest one I face so please be assured I will be spending a lot of time addressing it.

Chris Laurence (Dog Advisory Council) – Under this new legislation, if a burglar came into my home and my dog bit her I could end up being prosecuted – could the legislation be amended to take into account a dog protecting its property?

Lord de Mauley – Yes, we have already amended it before it went into the Commons to address this.

Carol Fowler (Cavalier Campaign)- Could the Minister describe the actions being taken to ensure that the health and welfare issues associated with the breeding of dogs remains a high priority in the re-organisation of the companion animal welfare sector? Would the Minister agree to include the protection of the offspring of any mating between dogs under AWA secondary legislation (as the European Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals does)?

Lord de Mauley – We do place a high priority on it and additionally, the contribution of the Dog Advisory Council is very welcome and they have a place on the Feline and Canine Sector Group, trying to provide a unified voice for that sector to Government which gives us an opportunity to find out the real issues and get feedback. My advice is if we introduced this secondary legislation all it would do is extend to incest, there are many other issues. Then even if we did introduce it, it would be difficult to introduce and enforce. Our view is that education is a better way to get the message through to people and signpost them to organisations like the BVA and Kennel Club. Really it is all part of responsible behaviour and educating people on how they should breed and care for a dog. This is likely to achieve more for us than using the blunt instrument of legislation.

Robin Hargreaves (BVA) - We have been working with the Zoological Society on a ban on wild caught reptiles and amphibians for the pet trade. Standards and husbandry need to be improved and we need to set out what level of expertise is needed for different species of animals. We need to stop the import of wild caught animals and look at the standards of keeping of exotic animals.

Lord de Mauley - I can hear officials saying issues with trade rules of the EU. I will come back to you about that.

Chris Draper (Born Free Foundation) – On the use of wild animals in circuses, we are pleased that the Government has rejected the EFRA committee recommendation to limit the ban to certain species and that you are standing firm on banning all animals in circuses. What is the timetable to this?

Lord de Mauley – It is simply a question of finding a slot in the legislative timetable so we are looking at that opportunity now.

Jessica Stark (WHW) – The ASBO you mentioned was successful for that particular perpetrator as we were lucky that one of those horses was micro-chipped but many ponies are dumped and there is a lack of accountability. Will Defra be pressing for mandatory micro-chipping and enforcement of this legislation?

Lord de Mauley – We already have compulsory micro-chipping but how do we enforce it? It is not easy but I am giving a lot of thought to this as well as the other equine issues.

David Cavill (Pet Care College) – Will Defra or the Home Office bring in any sort of legislation for dog trainers groomer and walkers.

Lord de Mauley - I have not had much correspondence on that topic so I do not see any reason for proceeding with it.

Mike Robinson (Petsitter's Alliance) – Will there be any parliamentary space to re-introduce a clause in an Animal Welfare bill exempting Pet Sitters who look after less than 4-6 dogs in their own home from Local Authority Licences under the Animal Welfare Act.

Lord de Mauley – My feeling is that rules are there to ensure animal welfare issues are looked after and they are no less important for small numbers than big numbers. The rules say councils should charge proportionately so the cost is an issue for each council.

Denisa Delic (Kennel Club) – Can the Minister confirm whether his Department has met with electric shock collar manufacturers regarding developing guidance for owners and trainers advising how to use these devices? And what the outcome of this meeting was?

Lord de Mauley - The meeting is taking place later this month and is all about to progress.

(WSPA) -what the Government can do to protect biodiversity overseas.

Lord de Mauley – For the last years I have been the companion animal minister and as of the last 3 weeks I have taken on biodiversity under my portfolio so I am currently being briefed. Overseas biodiversity is a key issue which I recognize but I need a little more time to consider it.



Gavin Grant (RSPCA) – I would like to express my appreciation for the fact you have been a very accessible and open Minister, always willing to listen and act on behalf of the interest of animal. I wanted to put that on record.