



**AGENDA**  
**APGAW Minutes**  
**9<sup>th</sup> February 2016 5-6.30pm**  
**Committee Room 6, House of Commons**

**Opportunities and Challenges from the Changing Demographic of Small & Exotic Pet Ownership**

**Attendees:** Henry Smith MP, Angela Smith MP, Anthony Ridge (Lord Trees), Prof Tim Morris (Defra AHWBE), Hannah Jordan (BVA), Vicki Betton (PDSA), Anna Wade (Blue Cross) Susie Child (BVA), Ben Myring (RCVS), Bradley Viner (RCVS), Dr Daniel Allen, Jo Hinde (RWF/VetPaw), Dr. Anne McBride (Southampton University), Alex Baker (PIF), Stuart Simons (PIF), Nigel Baker (PIF), Chris Newman (REPTA), Be Sundall (Battersea Dogs & Cats Home), Nathalie Ruhs (Hidden-In-Sight), Shakira Free (The SaveABulls/Vet Nurse), Tamara Kartal (HIS UK), Chris Laurence, Pauline Davey (OATA), Keith Davenport (OATA), Marc Abraham (PupAid), Julia Carr (Canine Action UK) Linda Goodman (Cariad), Alexandra Jones (RSPCA), Clifford Warrick (EDF), Elaine Toland (APA), Nicola O'Brien (CAPS), Liz Tyson (Born Free Foundation), Laura McAnea (WAP), Julie Harris (Maitland Consultancy), Sarah Dickinson (World Animal Protection) Emily Wilson (WAP), Drusilla Summers, David Cowdrey (IFAW), Martin Lawton (IAT), Kim Jayne (ADI), Alan Bates (ALAW) Jay Turner (Maitland Consultancy), Debbie Matthews (Vets Get Scanning), Nik Oakley (Dog Lost PR), Richard Jordan (Pet Theft Action), Evie Griffin (RSPCA), Natalie Kitchin (RSPCA), Ruby Sanhu (RS Collaboration), Ian Redmond (Ape Alliance), Misha Buchkowsky, Brian da Cal (Four Paws UK), Kieran Hawkin (Four Paws UK). Laura Critchley (PupAid), Julie Sanders (Four Paws UK), Charley Parsons (OneKind), Sarah Hanson (Wild Futures), Brooke Aldrich (Wild Futures), Helena Cotton (BVA).

**Peter Scott: Companion Animal Sector Council**

Veterinary surgeon for 40 years. RCVS Specialist in Fish Health & Production and Zoo & Wildlife Medicine, Zoo Inspector and led the revision of the Act in 1999/2000, Council member of Companion Animal Welfare Council (CAWC) and Chair of Companion Animal Sector Council (CASC) which Peter set up in 2006 as part of a DEFRA initiative to embed the animal health & welfare strategy in the companion animal sector. Through his practice, Peter is a Veterinary Consultant to Pets at Home. In addition to the veterinary practice he operates two companies in the sector, one which produces specialist supplements and probiotics products for exotic pets and one which is a major animal microchip distributor.

**Overview of Pet Industry and Economy**

The petcare industry has a turnover of more than £4bn, and employs around 50,000 people in about 13,500 businesses. A DICE study in 2012 estimated the value of the reptile sector at £200 million. Pet owners spend £87million per week. This results in nearly £1.6bn per annum in tax. Additional benefits include facts such as owning pets saves the NHS £1.4 bn a year.

A DICE study estimated the value of the reptile sector at £200 million as there are sales of

25,000,000 crickets a week as food and 2000 vivarium/terrariums a week.

Many third world areas rely on income from exotic pet supply, of wild or 'ranching' species. Many habitats only exist because of the species which can be caught or ranching in them. The Amazon rainforests fix >67 Billion tonnes of CO2 in the fish-harvesting areas. Freshwater ornamental fish are collected extensively in a number of countries globally but especially in the rain forest areas of South America. It is a source of significant direct employment in Brazil (8-10,000), Peru (14,000) and Colombia (5,000). Indirect employment would significantly increase this figure.

## Overview of Petowners

EU statistics reveal that in 2011 - 41.5% of the EU population lived in flats. Within the EU, the UK has one of the lowest levels at around 15% but its rising. We have many households with two adults out at work.

The pet population has now reached 58 million. 93% of pet owning Brits who grew up with a pet continue their interest into adulthood. Unsurprisingly dogs are still the most common first pet, despite many believing cat ownership is easier than dog ownership. As our family lives get busier, the study has shown there's been an increase in the ownership of smaller, usually more manageable pets. Goldfish, guinea pigs and hamsters are now more popular than 30 years ago

In 2009 the percentage of the population owning a pet in the UK included:

- ◎ 31 % Dogs (8 million households)
- ◎ 26% Cats (6.7 million households)
- ◎ 14% Fish (4 million households)
- ◎ A wide variety of pets are owned in the UK, at least:
- ◎ 10.5 million dogs (PFMA 2013 8.5M) (DEFRA estimate 9.5M to be microchipped, of which ~5.2M already are)
- ◎ 10.3 million cats (PFMA 2013 8.5M)
- ◎ 100 million fish (including indoor and outdoor fish) (PFMA 2013 45M)
- ◎ >7 million reptiles and amphibians (PFMA have a lower figure)
- ◎ 2.3 million small mammals (including rabbits, guinea pigs and hamsters)
- ◎ (PFMA 2013 1M rabbits, 0.5M guinea pigs and 0.5M hamsters)
- ◎ 1.6 million birds (including aviary, poultry and pigeons)
- ◎ 2.7 million others

## The Key Issues

There are problems with welfare but the problem is not confined to exotic pets. It is a problem of society and has an impact on all pets including dogs and cats. The average age for a first pet is 7 ½, compared to 8½ years old 30 years ago. It would appear we think the children of today are more responsible (under adult supervision) at a younger age, than we were. 28% of children first performed the day-to-day care of a pet aged 5 or under, a big step up from 15%. A report also found that nearly half (49%) of children spend over half an hour with their pets everyday, providing our children with great positive childhood memories.

People have kept fish, birds, reptiles and amphibia for hundreds of years but the trade in wild sources animals has decreased considerably. Healthier (than wild) captive bred animals of many species has increased availability, reptiles are now available meeting customer expectations in the better stores. Increased customer expectations have meant that the poorer petshops have gone, and we are left now with more specialist shops which do things better

Approximately 90% of freshwater tropical fish captive bred, and about 10% of marines. Approximately 90% of reptiles in the UK trade are captive bred/ranched. 6 'species' account for 70% of the reptiles sold in shops.

Where people get their pets from has changed with less getting them from someone they know to more buying from petshops. 25 years ago 33% got a pet from a petshop and now 42% get their pet from a petshop. Reputable trade has a long history of deciding the species that do not do well, and then restricting or stopping sale. i.e. black lists. However, like online sales there have always been 'backchannels' of availability. There are various methods of formalising the decision such as traffic light systems and the EU has looked at white lists. CASC working with the BVZS has recently set up a multidisciplinary review of lists, traffic lights etc to see if it can help.

The Companion Animal Sector Council held a 'big tent' meeting in November 2015 with representatives of the major parts of the sector, plus welfare groups and DEFRA. The key issues identified were: lack of education throughout the supply chain: flagged as a priority issue, issues with current legislation, including the PAA & AWA, advertising and sale of animals over the internet, lack of regulation for rehoming / rescue centres, lack of consistency with the inspection process and lack of licensing / regulation for importers: three groups.

BSAVA, and BVZS have all agreed to work together with CASC to develop a centralised website for the various sectors to make available their industry strategies, good practice guidelines, care sheets for the many species, how to videos, can I keep questionnaires etc. CASC has established working groups with the various veterinary associations and animal sectors looking at a Strategy Group. This will look at lists & lights – indicators for what to keep, illegal animal sales, smuggling of dogs and exotics and ongoing work on minimal standards for shops and owners.

On-line sales are a huge problem and CASC has one suggestion linked to registration of animal establishments. If all pet sales required an Animal Establishment registration on the ad, some would be stopped.

## Summary

We need to address ALL animals, the welfare issues of dogs and cats still dwarf the issues around exotics.

We should use the 5 freedoms/needs for all pets – they are already used for dogs, cats, all farm animals down to fish, and are the basis of zoo legislation. Why do we need something else?

We should let the stakeholders - trade and hobbyists deal with the exotic pets. Let them dedicate their resources towards the real issues rather than the fictional ones generated by those against keeping

Most importantly we need education at ALL levels, free sources of quality information

## Vicki Betton PDSA

Customer education is essential and this involves the absolute necessity of adequate, practical, expert and evidence-based, species-specific advice before anyone takes on a pet.

PDSA works in conjunction with YouGov on the PDSA Animal Wellbeing (PAW) Report to survey thousands of owners about their pets to provide an annual benchmark of pet wellbeing in the UK. With an estimated 52% of UK households owning a pet: 93% of owners we surveyed said that owning a pet made them happy and 88% said it improved their lives. However, 24% said it was harder work than they thought, 12% said it made them stressed and 5% said it was less rewarding than expected.

The results also reflect a worrying lack of pre-acquisition research, which can lead to people getting the wrong pet, in the wrong home, and this often leads to a welfare disaster, no matter what the species. When PAW Report was launched at the end of last year, the accompanying campaign, in the run up to Christmas, asked prospective purchasers to #PawsFirst. PDSA wanted them to stop and understand the 5 welfare needs of that species, and to make an educated choice about if they could meet those needs - the right pets, in the right homes. In fact, in the survey, pet owners rated this as the most important welfare issue facing our pets.

Yet, hundreds of thousands of people are making unwise choices, even if we just look at dogs and cats –animals who have naturally adapted to the UK environment, and whose basic needs are somewhat ‘common knowledge’ in our society, if sometimes mis-understood. Exotic pets, becoming known as Non-Traditional Companion Animals, are, by their very categorisation, something ‘other’ in the UK. To quote the BVA / BSAVA / BVZS / FVS joint position statement on this issue “have exacting husbandry requirements, e.g. for humidity, lighting, nutrition and temperature, others such as birds have complex social, cognitive and nutritional needs, all of which must be fully researched and understood before acquisition. Owners should only take on these animals where they are able to meet their welfare needs.”

The five welfare needs have been mentioned a lot this evening, however, the PAW Report indicates that owners are becoming increasingly unfamiliar with the Animal Welfare Act and their ‘Duty of Care’ - showing owners’ awareness of this legal requirement is down from 45% in 2011 to 31% in 2015.

So if research indicates this negative trend in awareness of their Duty of Care, and yet the most recent statement from the expert veterinary groups states that a high level of understanding is a requirement before acquisition, and according to other sector data heard tonight, the demand for these pets is growing, then the role of customer education becomes even more vital in preventing this situation escalating.

It becomes even more essential when you consider that the vets who do specialise in treating reptiles - and it’s important for owners to understand that a suitably qualified vet may be located some distance away from where they live - suggest that owners don’t always recognise the signs of suffering and ill-health in exotics as readily as they might in the more traditional pet of a cat or a dog, and this can cause a critical delay to them seeking expert help.

Anna from the Blue Cross will talk about the role that internet trade plays in fuelling this impulsive acquisition, and the lack of education that accompanies many online sales, but this is an opportunity to highlight the essential nature of collaborative working when tackling this issue. PDSA works with other animal welfare organisations, trade associations and veterinary bodies on the Pet Advertising Advisory Group, which has witnessed a massive increase in the sale of animals online since its inception in 2001. This is something causing all members of the group grave concern, and this has helped to unite a strong working group to help encourage websites selling pets to establish minimum standards across their adverts, with a robust reporting policy for dealing with non-compliance, and ideally, evidence-based, up-to-date, species specific welfare guidance. Clearly, there are challenges around this type of guidance, the huge number of species available, and their differing, complex welfare needs. However, surely this is a start, as without this basic guidance, new owners may not even be aware that they need to research the specific social, housing, temperature, humidity, lighting, dietary and nutritional requirements of the species they have purchased.

With this greater understanding, as a sector, we can better provide targeted, practical and audience-specific educational opportunities, so that the NTCAs, so reliant on this most expert of care, can have a life worth living.

### **Anna Wade Blue Cross**

#### The On-Line Trade of Exotic Pets

Of the approximately 65 million animals kept as pets in the UK, a substantial proportion are exotic or wild animals such as lizards, snakes, parrots, and primates. Estimates suggest between 1.3 to 7 million reptiles and amphibians are kept as pets and it is currently relatively easy to buy or obtain exotic pets, from pet shops or increasingly by purchasing online. The fundamental understanding of how to meet the needs of exotic animals is frequently lacking, and it is often not possible to meet these needs in a domestic environment.

Internet use has doubled in a decade. In 2015, 86% of households in Great Britain had internet access and the average UK adult will spend over 20 hours online each week. The growth in internet use has directly affected our buying habits and this has affected pet sales. Born Free Foundation and Blue undertook a study entitled One Click Away: An Investigation into the Online Sale of Exotic Animals as Pets to look at how these animals are being sold.

The group looked at adverts over a 12-week period across 6 major classified ad sites. (Didn't look at social media / forums) and found:

- Total of 1,796 unique adverts found to be selling one or more exotic animals.
- Identified 53 'types' of reptile (species, hybrid etc) for sale
- Identified 37 types of bird
- Identified 28 types of mammal
- Identified 28 types of mammal

Some examples of advertisements included a seller advertising a bearded dragon in "poor health," a Boa Constrictor advertised in a broken vivarium, a seller advertising their turtle as they were

going away on holiday who stated their intention to keep the tank in case they decided to buy another on their return, an Iguana being kept in a wardrobe as vivarium was broken and animals offered for “quick sales” or “swaps.”

It is clear that one of the key problems is that one can buy a ‘pet’ online nowadays with little trouble – often with no advice on how to care for the animal, and no check as to whether the buyer has appropriate housing or sufficient knowledge to provide the specialist lifetime care that is essential. Even basic advice on animal care and welfare is almost entirely lacking on most websites, and no checks are made as to whether animals are sold to inexperienced owners. Sellers often provided insufficient information to enable identification of the species of animal for sale.

The recommendations in the report include:

- Review of the exotic pet trade.
- Review of the Pet Animals Act 1951
- Improve enforcement of legislation
- Require more information from sellers

### **Dr Ros Clubb RSPCA**

The RSPCA have dealt with widespread abandonment of small and exotic animals in varying states of health, some found dead/dying in remote areas where they were very lucky to be found.

Recent examples from end Dec 2015 to Jan 2016:

Box 12 royal pythons dumped outside PDSA, Derriford - 23 Dec 2015

Dead royal python dumped in wood Somerset - Dec 2015

6 rabbits dumped in carpark of RSPCA’s Blackberry Farm Animal Centre, Buckinghamshire, 4 Feb 2016. All in poor condition, fur mites, fleas and one with untreated abscess. Apology note left with them.

Bearded dragons dumped in bin, Bridgwater - Dec 2015

4’ snake found in bin in Walsall, 26 Jan 2016

3 rabbits found hiding under a bin in park, Neath - Jan 2016. One died in callers armed, all very thin.

We have encountered some shocking cases where animals have been in an awful state, leading to prosecution under the Animal Welfare Act. The RSPCA always tries to deal with cases through information and advice in first instance, but sometimes further action is required for the benefit of animal welfare.

Some examples of cases include a prosecution of Bearded Dragons in Hampshire kept by a woman who said her kids (12 yrs old) were responsible for their care. One was kept in a vivarium with no UV, dirty, no clean water leading to the animal being dull and lethargic with two hind feet completely missing. Another vivarium had five young bearded dragons. Two had feet missing and others had recent injuries. No vet treatment was given as they had no understanding of how to care for them and had made no attempt to research prior. Three of the animals were euthanized due to infections spreading up legs and the owner had a 5-year ban on keeping reptiles, fined £1,500. Another prosecution saw two rabbits found in very poor condition. One had severely

overgrown teeth, covered in clumps faeces and hay. The teeth were protruding 3.5" from mouth. bottom tooth hanging out, top teeth growing into tongue. Other one had untreated abscesses and was pregnant. The defendants said they should have taken them to a vet but had too many birthday parties to pay for recently. They were disqualified from keeping rabbits for life. £100 fine, £250 costs.

Another example was the prosecution for Mikey a marmoset who had PTS due to his extremely poor condition, including 7 bone fractures owing to MBD. The couple bred baby marmosets at home which they sold via newspaper ad when 4 months old. Both were found guilty of four animal welfare offences including s4, s9 (diet, pain/injury/disease). Both banned from keeping animals for life and ordered to pay full RSPCA costs of £2,713.50 each as well as a court compensation order of £325 each to pay to the lady who purchased Mikey. They were both given a community order to complete 300 hours community payback. A deprivation order was also put in place for the four adult marmoset monkeys they currently own. The court ordered that the couple pay an additional £120 in costs to the charity to reimburse collection and transportation costs of the four primates. The final example was a company called Tropical Inc run by Stephen Rowlands who had carpet pythons, corn snake, pine snake, snapping turtle, Mississippi map turtle, Hermann's tortoise, European spur thigh tortoise, leopard tortoise, bearded dragons, tegu, red tailed boa. He had not provided electricity or any light in the parrot room and no food/water. He pled guilty to 34 AWA offences re:70 exotic animals + 3 CITES offences. Paid £6,000 legal costs and £100,000 boarding costs 12 weeks custodial sentence for each charge, suspended for 2yrs, 200hrs unpaid work.

There are less shocking cases where environments might appear clean and tidy, animals do not have missing limbs/visible ribs, but the needs of the animals are not being provided for.

RSPCA commissioned a Bristol University survey which found that 58% of rabbits were housed without a companion (quarter of those with a companion fought at least occasionally, regular chasing and mounting also indicative of incompatibilities); 59% in a traditional hutch/cage but majority had access to additional exercise areas although access was often sporadic/ill-timed. 43% could access exercise area when they wanted. Those with separate runs - 50% didn't have access in winter.

RSPCA figures on numbers of calls are:

Reptiles: 70% increase from 2005 to 2015 (2,933 to 4,990)

Birds: 24% decrease from 2005 to 2015, likely due to import ban on wild-caught birds in 2005 (7,029-5,337)

Mammals: 15% increase 15% from 2005 to 2015 (529-606)

Amphibians: 24% decrease, although numbers much smaller (128-98)

Fish: 28% decrease (1,614-1,169)

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Bearded dragon: 612% increase from 2005 to 2015 (95 to 677)

Corn snake: 71% increase (359-615)

Terrapin (undefined+European pond terrapin): 150% increase (215-537)

An Allcock survey 2013 of 31 online exotic pet shops found the greatest proportion of adverts listed as wild-caught were invertebrates (47% of adverts), amphibians (26%), fish (13%) and reptiles (11%).

The RSPCA also have concerns around breeding for specific / exaggerated features (exotics and small furies):

- rabbits bred for very long hair, long ears; guinea pigs bred without hair ('skinny pigs'); bearded dragons bred for extremely small scales (leatherback) or absent altogether (silkback)
- makes meeting their needs more difficult, genetic problems, also question about fate of 'surplus' animals from breeding operations
- Trend for increase in reptile keeping, previously a niche hobby, now much more mainstream.
- OATA 2014 FOI data = 47% pet shops sell reptiles, 42% birds, 75% fish, 1% primates
- Various fads for specific species, like African pygmy hedgehogs, meerkats, terrapins, degus....

The key problems which have led to welfare problems are as follows:

**Lack of knowledge / research** on small furies and exotics:

- lack of research by owners before making decision to get a pet (20% owners did no research at all before taking on their pet dogs, cats, rabbits - PDSA 2015);
- lack of available good quality care information from trusted sources.
- lack of knowledge of the species in question: how do we meet their needs? how do we measure their welfare, especially psychological)? more unusual/exotic in particular as for many we know very little about how they live in the wild, let alone how to provide for their needs in captivity.

**Numbers and diversity species/morphs (exotics)** - increasingly people seem to want more unusual pets.

- research project (Suzie Allcock, Moulton college) in 2013 looked at online exotic pet shops in England. 31 online traders sold **1239 species on sale** (reptiles, amphibians, birds, mammals, fish, inverts), **339 reptile species**.
- 128 **morphs** listed for lizards (mainly bearded dragons & leopard geckos) and 1259 for snakes (mainly royal pythons and corn snakes). £61 - £27,000 for a snake morph.

**Availability and accessibility** - want it? You can have it. As highlighted by PDSA, large section of society now wants instant gratification and when it comes to pets, they have have pretty much anything they want at the click of a button.

Research on puppy buying commissioned by RSPCA in 2011 found that many decisions to buy were impulsive + overwhelming 'awww' factor that overrode any rational thinking - suggests pre-purchase education messaging will be ineffective. It also found strong correlation between impulse purchase and early relinquishment - perception vs reality of dog ownership.

Other factors include the perception of easy to keep with some species (e.g. rabbits) perceived as easier to care for as well as being less expensive to afford, and are traditionally thought of as good pets for children, when in actual fact, they have complex needs and are difficult to care for properly. Rabbit study (Bristol Uni): reduced lifespan in rabbits 4yrs cf. 8-9yrs. They are also seen



as disposable as many small mammals have a life expectancy that is far less than dogs and cats. There are very limited insurance products for small animals and the knowledge about their needs lacks behind that for cats and dogs. Together, this may create an image of them being seen as less important to care for properly and almost disposable. Often that animal is out of sight, out of mind e.g. rabbit in a hutch at the bottom of the garden compared with a dog that lives indoors and is constantly around a family.

The problems around sale and trading of these animals are down to inadequate regulation which does not cater for modern methods of pet vending, isn't clear who should and shouldn't be licensed, especially in landscape of internet sales and vendors permitted to sale any 'reptile'. There is inadequate enforcement with very few LAs taken a prosecution under PA and when there are breaches, it is often just quickly amended and added o the licence. (Allcock study).

The key ways it makes improvements are as follows:

**1. Scope:**

Cover internet sales in particular, more traceability needed, allow consumers to make responsible choices.

Define who is a 'business'. Cover whole supply chain, including wholesalers, dealers etc.

FOI data from 2014 show that 24% of responding local authorities do not carry out any checks to determine if pet shops being licensed are a 'business'.

**2. Database of licence holders:**

Central database that public could access to allow them to make more informed judgements about where they buy their animals from. French Government have already put in place.

**3. Information:**

2015 PDSA Animal Wellbeing report found that "the number of pet owners familiar with the Animal Welfare Acts is at an all-time low", with only 31% of pet owners surveyed familiar with the five welfare needs and their responsibilities as a pet owner. Certainly need good quality, trusted care advice to inform potential buyers before they make a decision to make sure they know what they are taking on.

**4. Restriction:**

Not all species are suitable to be kept as pets my general members of the public (e.g. primates). Also, preventative measures would bring legislation in line with EU Regs on invasive species.

Ideally we would like to see a centralised enforcement body such as occurs on farm animals through APHA or on licensing research animal establishments through the Home Office. We need competent inspectors as FOI data from 2014 show that 25% of responding local authorities stated that their pet shop licensing officers have not had any specialist training.

Finally, model conditions must be created with a transparent, robust process that uses the most up-to-date scientific knowledge. FOI data from 2014 revealed that only 28% of councils used the 2013 Pet Model Conditions for Pet Vending Licensing. 40% used the 1998 LGA Guidelines and 12% the 1992 LGA Guidelines.

**Meeting Outcome**

It was pointed out that on-line sales were not only a welfare issue but also an issue for HMRC and tax collection. MPs agreed that it was something that came under the Hidden Economy work and that APGAW should continue to highlight that point to Government.

APGAW was asked to consider Positive List in light of the fact the World Health Organisation had signed up to them.

Peter Egan set out his support for Positive Lists and identification of exotic animals that should not be kept as pets. He felt that there were many exotic animals that should not be kept as pets as it was not a natural environment for them. There was some debate over what constituted an “exotic” pet as a member pointed out that dogs were not an indigenous species to the UK but Peter felt that this was not a relevant argument as dogs and cats live with humans and do not require the same specialist care and knowledge. Pets should be ‘suitable’ for the environment in which they live, comfortable with being in human company and should not have to spend a lifetime engaged or behind glass. There had been a number of concerns over the mortality rates of these animals both in the pet shops before sale and then after sale with owners who did not understand their complex needs. Peter was keen to see any statistics on the mortality rates. There should also be transparency on the pet retail business. Peter also asked about the welfare of exotic animals which were exported into the UK to be sold via Pets at Home and were not naturally suited to the environment.

Angela Smith MP informed the attendees that she was in support of a mechanism that identifies the difficulty in keeping certain exotic pets such as positive lists or traffic light systems but it does not necessarily mean people abide by it even if it is law. A voluntary approach which means establishing positive lists would be the start of a long journey towards making it culturally unacceptable to keep unsuitable pets. It does not need to be legally enforceable to start with. She will be part of the EFRA Select Committee Enquiry which is looking at exotic animal welfare in due course. She felt it was important to educate and improve owner responsibility. Angela wants to see transparency with pet retail as well with figures shared on mortality rates. She pointed out that we have transparency in farming, in the food processing industry and in chemical industry which is ever increasing they are all heavily regulated. It should be the same for the pet industry.

Peter Scott pointed out that there were a lot of concerns over the effectiveness of Positive Lists and that they had not worked very well in other EU countries. He clarified that Pets at Home does not import any animals as they are bred in the UK. Mortality data at Pets at Home can not be released because it is 'confidential' information

Marisa Heath stated that APGAW would look to set up a working group which could design a common framework for consumer welfare advice and standards across the various diverse species, other than dogs and cats, kept as pets. This approach would support what seems to be the suggestions from Defra’s animal establishment licensing reforms for mandatory point of sale advice and also supports the call from all speakers for better education of those buying pets.

AOB: Henry Smith MP stated that APGAW officers supported the National Wildlife Crime Unit and had written to the Home Office and Defra asking for continued funding for the vital work this organisation do. He told members that the letter was on the APGAW website if they wanted to read it and that they would continue raising the issue in Parliament.

