



APGAW was created is to keep MPs and Peers informed about animal welfare issues and to act as a discussion forum for policy development which may then lead to legislation improving welfare standards. Regular meetings and events in Parliament provide an opportunity for those with a common interest in animal welfare to meet and debate their views and the views of others. APGAW also sets up working groups to investigate and report on areas of concern to the group led by MPs.

The members of APGAW have gathered because they share the belief that animals have a huge role within our society and we have a duty to protect them. Members include animal welfare organisations such as the RSPCA, IFAW, Blue Cross, PDSA, Animals Asia, Born Free Foundation, Battersea and more but it also includes those who work with animals or use them for their business so that we can ensure a fully informed debate about all areas relating to their welfare. This includes food producers, pharmaceuticals, sport organisations and supermarkets.

In the last Parliament, APGAW was chaired by Neil Parish MP who formerly chaired the EU Agricultural & Rural Committee and having also been a farmer was very well informed on animal welfare issues. Neil has since gone onto the chair the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs Select Committee. APGAW now has three cross-party chairs who are well –placed to represent animal welfare in Parliament: Henry Smith MP who has been a strong advocate for animals and as a vegetarian has made his position clear on humane slaughter and CCTV in all abattoirs. Rebecca Smith MP who sits on the EFRA Select Committee and has a specific interest in farming and wildlife. Angela Smith MP who was the Shadow Minister for Animal Welfare and sits on the EFRA Select Committee. Additionally, APGAW has a number of political members who are well placed to influence Government and support animal welfare organisations with their campaigns.

Over the last year, APGAW has held an Animal Welfare Question Time challenging political parties to set out their animal welfare policies, debated the Hunting Act and whether it is effective and questioned the use of animals in experimentation. The key issues which the Group has been working on for the last 12 months are as follow:

- i) The need for effective enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 – what would make it better and how can the resources be found to make it more of a priority. The discussions have included Local Government licensing officers, RSPCA inspectors, the police and MPs and are on-going.
- ii) Updated and improved legislation around pet breeding, dealing and trading. This has assisted in leading the Government’s Licensing Review.
- iii) The sale of exotic pets, improving their welfare standards through public education, the consideration of Positive Lists, a ban on primates as pets. The EFRA Select Committee will be scrutinizing this issue soon.
- iv) Continuing to push for CCTV in slaughterhouses, humane slaughter and more transparent meat labelling.
- v) The groups also supports international animal welfare campaigns including stopping the illegal trade in wildlife, the dog meat trade and whaling.

It is vital animals have a voice in Parliament and that decision-makers realize the need to consider their welfare when making laws and ensuring a strong and civilized society. Any voter can join that voice and hold their MP to account in animal welfare issues. APGAW is a group that involves the expertise of vets, scientists, academics and welfare professionals but we welcome support from anyone who cares about animals and wants to see them protected by law.

See [www.apgaw.org](http://www.apgaw.org) for more information.

