



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 OF THE MEETING ON 21st February 2012 ANIMAL WELFARE EDUCATION

Attendees: Stacey Frier (RSPCA), Joshua Kaile (LACS), Carol Fowler (Cavalier Campaign), Tania Ledger (Cavalier Matters), Rachel Cunningham (Blue Cross), Steve Goody (Blue Cross), Christina Dixon (Network for Animals), Tim Phillips (Animal Defenders International), Jan Creamer (NAVS/ADI), Gail Williams (ASSVAP), Kaye Martin (Blue Cross), Clarissa Baldwin (Dog's Trust), Chris Laurence (RSPCA/Dog Advisory Council), Samantha Edwards (BASC), Alpesh Patel (Dr Hadwen Trust), Nicola Growcutt (PfMA), David Cavill (Animal Care College/Pet Care Trust), Lord McNair (ECMA), Jessica Stark (World Horse Welfare), Shely Bryan (Humane Society International), Lorraine Platt (Conservatives Against Foxhunting), Michael Bellingham (PfMA), Jacqui Cuff (Cats Protection), Carol McKay (Cats Protection), Vicki Craighill (PDSA), Dave Allen (RSPCA), Emma Goodman Milne (BVA AWF), Sean Wensley (PDSA), Tom Quinn (IFAW), Rob Jervis-Gibbons (Battersea Dogs & Cats Home), Christine MacSween (Lion Aid), Pieter Kat (Lion Aid), Linda Cantle (Wood Green Animal Charity), Sylvia Talbot (Dog Theft Action), Vanessa Hudson (Animals Count), Andrew Knight (Animal Count), Sheila Crispin (Advisory Council on the Welfare Issues of Dog Breeding), Simon Hart MP, Neil Parish MP.

The chairman started the meeting by introducing the subject of animal welfare education by stating that he felt there would be wide agreement that if children are introduced to animal welfare at a young age it could ensure they treat animals better in later life and therefore help to eliminate a number of problems which arise through neglect and misunderstanding.

He introduced the speakers; Vicki Craighill, Youth and Education Manager at PDSA and David Allen, head of public education at RSPCA. Vicki and David presented together as the Animal Welfare Alliance representatives formed of a number of key groups including PFMA, NOAH, SCAS, BVA Animal Welfare Foundation, Guide Dogs, Cats Protection, The Blue Cross, Wood Green, The Kennel Club, Mayhew Animal Home, Battersea Dogs & Cats Home and the Dog's Trust. Their mutual interest is how children are taught about companion animal welfare. They believe many negative issues discussed by APGAW would be prevented by developing the way that children think about animal welfare and that only positives can result.

Education already forms part of the preventative work of a number of organisations. However, they are worried that the on-going Curriculum Review will remove some topics where animal

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welfare education can be taught in schools and wish APGAW to assist in preventing this. It is relevant as the Animal Welfare Act places a *duty of care* on people to look after their animals and they need to understand this. The 5 welfare needs are Environment, Diet, Behaviour, Companionship and Health. These are areas which children can appreciate at an early age..

The key messages from the Alliance are that Animal Welfare Education should be an integral part of formal education. The Alliance sees it as an entitlement for young people. There are opportunities to explore issues within the current curriculum. Hooks where teachers can hang animal welfare topics exist in science, citizenship and PSHE but the current curriculum review could reduce or remove these opportunities. The Alliance wants to see it improved not reduced and feel that anything that limits teachers tackling this subject would be bad and have a negative impact on animal welfare in England and Wales.

It is important because there are over 22 million pets in the UK. Over 10 million are not having their needs met. 47% of households have pets but only 45% of people are aware of the Animal Welfare Act. There have been 11,144 convictions by the RSPCA under the Act since 2006. Poor education leads to poor welfare is the Alliance's belief. 2.8 million dogs are not neutered, 1.9 million are being left alone each day for over 5 hours, 6.4 million cats are not being micro-chipped. Surveys have discovered that 90% of pet owners grossly underestimated the cost of keeping a pet. Many of these problems are caused by a simple lack of education and understanding.

The current curriculum mentions Animal Welfare in 'carrier subjects', primarily: science, Personal, Health, Social and Economic Education (PHSE) and citizenship. Ideally there would be more references to animal welfare education with focus on the 5 welfare needs building knowledge and understanding as children move through the Key Stages. If citizenship/PSHE became non-statutory that would be a drastic reduction in the avenues teachers have to teach about animals. Yet 53% of the public think animal welfare should be taught as part of the Curriculum. We feel it should be a thread running through the Curriculum with continuous learning and reinforcement through formal education, revisiting the same messages, focused on the Five Welfare Needs and with signposting for educators to the Alliance's new website which provides engaging lesson plans, activities and events. Members of the Alliance produce a vast array of lesson plans and digital interactives available through each individual organisation's websites but there is a lack of formal signposting for these valuable resources. The Department for Education could help us do this and working with PFMA, a new website has now been developed which allows teachers to click on one link which will direct them to all the resources available. This will hopefully encourage teachers to plan exciting and informative lessons on animal welfare.

Collectively it is believed that teaching children about animal welfare is essential in reducing problems further up the line which is why it is so important. Issues in society such a status dogs, increased dog attacks, behaviour issues, shows a real need for increased education on responsible pet ownership but the review may hinder this work. The members of the Alliance have submitted their own submissions to the public consultation on the Curriculum but we want APGAW to put the case for animal welfare education to the Minister. Everyone in this room needs to lobby to protect the places where animal welfare is mentioned. Ultimately the Alliance would like to see

informed, responsible, active and compassionate pupils who understand the needs of animals and 22 million healthy and happy pets in the UK who are all having their needs met by owners who are enjoying the experience.

Neil Parish MP - How much time at the moment is devoted in schools to animal welfare and pet ownership at the moment? Is it a case where charities and organisations go into schools?

Vicki Craighill (PDSA) - The majority of the charities we represent have education officers who go into schools. An RSPCA questionnaire answered by 564 schools showed that 92% of them currently provide 1 lesson on animal welfare but the concern is that teachers don't build on this understanding and see it more as a 'tick in the box' exercise. The focus may not be on what the animal needs and ethical issues. For many charities valuable resource is spent on marketing to schools- trying to entice teachers to use our tools.

Peter Jinman (RCVS) - Many vet surgeons have interaction with education particularly at primary level and some excellent work is done by veterinary nurses going into schools. Have you reviewed the psychology benefits to children of the interaction with animals and behaviours of those children, especially in schools where they have a pet owning programme? I would urge you to look for the added value here.

Dave Allen (RSPCA) – It is a good point and also there are health benefits to pet ownership too which can be further explored.

Vicki Craighill (PDSA)– Whilst the psychological and health benefits are good points, it was an agreement for our alliance that we concentrate on the 5 welfare needs. Our organisations have differing views on pets in the classroom. Some take dogs in on a visiting programme but some don't like to do this. The 5 welfare needs was the common ground that we built the alliance around which is why we have concentrated on this. For this discussion we are keeping the focus around the Act and then if we want to develop it to talk to education ministers about the next steps which may include the other benefits, of which the psychological benefit of pet ownership should definitely be one.

Sheila Crispin (Dog Breeding Advisory Council) – When you say pets that can include a lot of animals which are kept as pets including chickens, sheep and so forth. Also does the education focus encompass the farm animal aspect? That can involve young children addressing ethical and philosophical issues which brings in animal welfare issues. I would like all species to be considered and how they are used in society.

Vicky Craighill (PDSA) – We have talked about wild and farmed animals but the focus of the Alliance has been on companion animals. However, it does not have to be limited, as all animals have Five Needs, which is why it is an excellent starting point for a Curriculum objective.

Emma Milne (Animal Welfare Foundation) There is a lot of evidence that children are good at disseminating information on to parents and adults if they are enthused by a subject. You are not

just aiming to inform children as they can also go and show the adults what they are doing wrong. In disadvantaged areas you can tackle the welfare problems with animals now too by using this tool.

Sylvia Tabor (Dog Theft Action) - I am a music teacher and all the head teachers at schools I have asked are keen for animal welfare education as long as it can be fitted into the Curriculum. That is a small but interesting survey that I sure relates to many other head teachers.

Neil Parish MP - I have no problems contacting Ministers to ask them to keep it as part of the Curriculum. Lots of you here this evening should contact your own MPs too. If the Minister gets a lot of letters from a number of MPs he will feel under more pressure to consider our views.

Currently we hear a lot about status dogs that are not a big percentage of animals in the country but they get the publicity. The educational issue is part of how we develop pets into holding a positive role in society whereas at the moment we only hear about the negative side. There can be a large number of benefits if we get it right.

2. Closed Season for Hare Shooting

The chairman introduced the next item on the agenda and stated that at the moment the hare does not have a closed season to allow breeding. This could be a throw back to the time when hares were dealt with like rabbits as vermin. However, the number of hares has reduced significantly so they need to be looked after. They are born above ground and are vulnerable to predators so have difficult surviving.

He introduced the speakers Lorraine Platt from Conservatives Against Foxhunting and Shely Bryan from HSI.

Lorraine Platt – I would like to thank APGAW for including this important issue on the agenda. We also want to thank Neil for supporting our proposal following a member surgery in 2011.

The brown hare population has declined by 80% in 100 years. A Government target Species Action Plan set to double numbers by 2010 but this was not met. Defra confirmed the target had not been met in response to a PQ from Neil Parish. Lots of leverets starve to death when their mothers are shot. Scotland has recently introduced a closed season from 1st February to 30th September. This would be entirely reasonable and would bring England in line with much of Europe and would help us meet the Species Action Plan. We urge MPs to support the EDM 2531 A Closed Season for Hares to show the Government that there is support for this request.

Shely Bryan– As just mentioned in 1995 the Government added brown hares to the first tranche of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. This was to double hare numbers by 2010 but that has not been achieved. The Tracking Mammals Partnership with its ten year trend has shown there have been no significant changes to number of hares listed in 1995 so it is clear that more action is needed to help vulnerable hares and to conserve numbers. One conservation measure which was identified was to

increase leveret survival numbers but by not having any protection during their breeding season this is not possible. The new legislation in Scotland makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take hares during their breeding season. Such measures also exist in Northern Ireland and in many European countries. Hares suffer great persecution. We would like to see additional measures put in place within England to achieve the 1995 target.

Neil Parish MP – How many hares are there now?

Lorraine Platt- There are approximately 750,000 hares at the moment in comparison to 40 million wild rabbits.

Neil Parish MP - How many leverets are usually born and what is their survival rate?

Lorraine Platt – There are about 2-4 leverets born to each female hare. The survival rate is very low. Some 37,000 leverets starve to death annually when their nursing mothers are killed and it could be double that figure as that was a conservative estimate.

Shely Bryan - 40% of hares are pregnant during February. They breed through early spring which is why the Scottish legislation of a closed season from February to September works.

Lorraine Platt – As closed season operates over much of Europe, people are coming from other countries to shoot our hares when their close seasons are in force which means even more of a threat to their survival and decimates their populations even further.

Dr. Peiter Kat (Lion Aid) – Do you have an estimate of percentage killed by hunting as opposed to other deaths? It would be interesting to know if it is just shooting which is the problem.

Lorraine Platt – Hares do have to contend with other problems too not just shooting. Agricultural changes with loss of hay meadows etc has also impacted on them. For example; silage production means the grass is cut more frequently, so many concealed leverets in the grass are killed by that process too.

Neil Parish MP – If you look at this logically even if you want to shoot a hare during its breeding season you are reducing the amount of hares to be shot in the future so it doesn't make sense from a shooting perspective either not to have a closed season.

Shely Bryan - Hares have suffered since 1880 and there are few games species that don't have a closed season. Hares have missed out on this protection. In 1880 there were 4 million hares where now there are 700,00/800,000 which is a big fall. There was a piece of legislation which stopped the sale of hare meat during the closed season but it is not enough.

Simon Hart MP – Can I start by saying there would be plenty of people who are not adverse to closed seasons for many good reasons. But I do think as legislators it is important we legislate on the basis of evidence. The point I take issue with here is there are parts of the UK where the hare

population is healthy and expanding compared to other parts where there aren't any. A closed season won't have any impact on agricultural practice or preying foxes and we need to make sure what we are doing is about conservation. English Nature has said this may have a welfare benefit but it doesn't necessarily have conservation benefits. So we need to be careful not to impose more legislation and if we do to know that the impact will be effective in increasing numbers. We have all seen where we have passed legislation for animals in the past but five years later it has had the opposite effect to that what was intended.

Neil Parish MP - Where I would disagree it I think hares have been caught out where there should actually already be legislation. If for instance they were included in 1880 Act there would be no drive to take away a closed season from hares.

Lorraine Platt – Figures on hare numbers are certainly larger in the East of the country because that is where shooting estates are. Game-keepers destroy natural predators to protect grouse so the hares are free from these. So figures may be distorted on where there are lots of hares and where there aren't many.

Simon Hart MP- The existence of 'sport' has sometimes a restraining affect on local populations meaning that shooting is controlled.

Neil Parish MP– The letter I received back from Minister on this issue was not as supportive as I would have liked it to have been. I will go back following this meeting and evidence may be compiled from the Scottish legislation which we can use in due course.

EU Directive on Animals Used for Scientific Purposes

The chairman asked for Any Other Business. Tim Phillips from Animal Defenders International (ADI) updated the Group on the progress of the EU Directive on Animals Used for Scientific Purposes.

Tim Phillips (ADI) –We will have new legislation in November 2012. At the moment we are still waiting on the Home Office analysis of responses to the public consultation, but the Home Office still believe they can get proposals ready for March to go before Parliament in the summer term. We worked closely on this during the European Parliament stage. It is broad directive which is limiting in some ways but also means interpretation allows potential of improving animal welfare so this is a significant moment – the first time in 25 years that British law on animal experiments has been overhauled.

We have put forward 7 core political demands which have been backed by ADI, Animal Aid, People for the Ethical treatment of Animals, Humane Society International, Four PAWS, Uncaged, the National Anti-Vivisection Society, and Lord Dowding Fund for Humane Research. These are all within the scope of the Directive and are reasonable and attainable.

1. No current UK laboratory animal protection to be downgraded (Article 2).

There should be a very clear commitment that current UK standards will not be downgraded, the Directive allows for existing higher standards to be retained.

2. Greater transparency, accountability, and mechanisms to challenge animal research (Articles 34, 36, 37, 38, 39, 42, 43):

- *More information about animal experimentation to be made public;*
- *Licensing process to be open*
- *Mechanisms for stakeholders to challenge animal experiments on scientific or ethical grounds;*
- *Retrospective review of all animal experiments – conducted by the Home Office – to determine their scientific value and the true suffering of animals;*
- *No blanket secrecy (repeal of ASPA Sect. 24) concerning animal experiments.*
- *Greater accountability for those conducting and policing animal experiments.*

We want to see more information in public about animal experimentation for the licensing process to be open, for there to be mechanisms for stakeholders to challenge animal experiments and for retrospective reviews of experiments and no blanket secrecy with a repeal of the ASPA Sect.24.

Currently all animal experiments are covered by the notorious Secrecy Clause – section 24. Earlier this year, the Home Office, acknowledged that there was a universal view that this should go but had indicated that they planned to leave it in place and resolve this later. However, they appear to believe now that this will need to be resolved during the passage of the legislation. We believe the clause should be abandoned entirely and that the protections already in place under the Freedom of Information Act be employed.

3. Increase in requirements for the justification of proposed animal experiments

- **An increase in the detail required in applications** to experiment on animals – a critical and meaningful assessment of the proposed work is vital.
- **Central review of licence applications** by the Home Office with increased input from stakeholders during decision making.

The third area is an increase in requirements for the justification of proposed animal experiments and a central review of licence applications,

4. Establish mechanisms for the implementation of Alternatives (Article 47)

- *The licensing process must drive forward the implementation of alternatives – if a non-animal method is available in the UK for all or part of the research it must be used;*
- *Measures to increase the availability of alternatives (eg centres of excellence).*
- *UK to actively drive EU strategy to replace animal experiments*

5. Mechanisms to ensure that guidance can be regularly updated.

6. Thematic review of areas of animal experimentation to set targets for replacement (Article 58)

The fourth and sixth proposals really focus on improving the implementation of Alternatives and ensuring the licensing process drives forward the implementation of alternatives. Thematic Review was an amended draft by ADI which was backed by Mr Parish when he was an MEP. It was adopted in Environment Committee, of which he was chair, and subsequently passed by the European Parliament with strong support from the European Commission. This is the first mechanism that would allow areas of animal experimentation to be reviewed, the alternatives available assessed and for timetables to be set for the phase out of such tests. It is potentially a really important step forward.

7. Restrictions the use of Non Human Primates in research and ending the wild capture of primates for research (Articles 8 & 10)

- **Clear restrictions on the use of primates** to “potentially life-threatening conditions in humans or in relation to cases having a substantial impact on a person’s day-to-day functioning, i.e. debilitating conditions” with proscribed uses.
- **Early implementation of the prohibition of use of F1 monkeys** (born of wild-caught parents – Article 10)

We need to ensure that the restrictions on the use of Non Human Primates in research are meaningful and that there are no delays implementing the bans on F1 Monkeys. The F1 bans will prevent Asian dealers from restocking farms from the wild.

So, although what can be done is limited to what is in the Directive, and some of that wording is open to positive or negative interpretation, we have a real opportunity here to make improvement to the law governing the use of animals for scientific purposes.

Neil Parish MP - We need proper scrutiny in this House so I am going to try to get a Backbench debate which will give MPs a chance to raise issues. Failing that I will at least try to get a Westminster Hall debate. There are lots of things which need to be answered. When research institutes are doing their research they don't share the data, they may argue this is down to their intellectual property right but information needs to be shared more. I started off as a person who believed no animal experimentation should take place but when going through the whole report, and visiting the research centres as part of the process through the European Parliament, I was convinced there are some causes where there is a need but it does need to be reduced, replaced and refined. We need to concentrate on these aspects as we do this legislation.

Duncan McNair (World Institute for Natural Health Sciences) Anyone who is concerned about number of experiments it is worth looking at the science of natural health as many things have been solved by the science of natural health. You could do away with a large number of these experiments by using that.

Tim Phillips (ADI) – The devil will be in the detail in the Codes of Practice and the new law. The Directive is open to a great deal of interpretation, so what the House can do is establish the real principles of this Act so that there is a greater duty of accountability, establish we are going to set higher standards, and certainly not lower existing standards, and that this law must be focussed on

looking for alternatives, with mechanisms to ensure that alternatives are actually used instead of animals. **END OF MEETING**