

National Assembly for Wales All Party Group for Animal Welfare (APGAW) Meeting
2 November 2004

In attendance:

Chair, Lorraine Barrett AM (Lab, Cardiff South and Penarth)
Claire Lawson, RSPCA Cymru Wales
Sally Horn, Animal Aid
Rachael Bartlett, Fforest Uchaf Sanctuary
Roy Peckham, Pit Pony Sanctuary
Michael Sharratt, Badger Watch and Rescue Dyfed
Mickey Davenport, Badger Watch and Rescue Dyfed
Phillip Jones, International League for the Protection of Horses
Lionel Ford, The Donkey Sanctuary
Leslie Thomas, Greyhound Rescue Wales
A Williams, Rhondda Animal Aid
M A Oram, Rhondda Animal Aid
Suzanne Campbell, Protection of Wild Animals
John Campbell, Protection of Wild Animals
Secretariat: Rhian Jones and Sara Jones, Morgan Allen Moore Cymru

Matters Arising

Assembly Exhibition

The provisional exhibition date is Tuesday 25th January 2004.
Guidance will be issued by Claire Lawson, RSPCA on exhibition space and materials.
The Chair, Lorraine Barrett AM reminded members that officials from the Assembly's will review all exhibition material for suitability and security reasons prior to the event.

Correspondence

- The Group had written to the Minister for the Environment, Planning and the Countryside, Carwyn Jones AM, in relation to greyhound welfare. A reply was sent by Sue Essex, Minister for Finance, Local Government and Public Services as the welfare of non-farmed animals falls within her portfolio.
- Ms Essex has noted that there has been an increase in funding from licensee and betting authorities which has helped increase funding to the welfare of greyhounds.
- It was stated that small independent tracks are likely to need increased regulation with a vet present at all times.
- Lorraine Barrett will confirm the Minister's remit with regards to her responsibilities in this area.
- A letter has been received from Defra (Ben Bradshaw) following a letter being sent by APGAW inviting Mr. Bradshaw to address the Group on greyhound racing.
- In his letter Mr. Bradshaw acknowledged the Group's report and recognized the need for improving the welfare of greyhounds.
- He noted that it is necessary to give the new chairman of the British Greyhound Racing Board time to see if it is possible to bring about reforms without the need for further legislation.
- In his letter, Ben Bradshaw stated that he would be unable to address the APGAW meeting but would be happy to send an official (Henry Hopp, Administrative Head of the Animal Welfare Bill Team) in his place. The Group agreed that it would be useful to receive information on a range of issues from the official.
- Alternatively, Claire Lawson, RSPCA suggested that it may be useful to invite Mike Redford, a leading independent law expert on animal welfare at Aberdeen University to address the Group. This suggestion was welcomed.

TB Action Group

- Claire Lawson, RSPCA noted that a letter had been received updating the Group that Mike Sharratt would be unable to take a seat on the TB Action Group.
- Lorraine Barrett raised, in the plenary debate on Bovine TB, the issue of Mike Sharratt not gaining representation on the TB Action Group.
- Claire Lawson noted that the RSPCA had been invited to sit on the Group which will be meeting Thursday 4th November.

Animal Welfare Bill Update

- Claire Lawson, RSPCA informed the Group that she had attended the evidence giving sessions at EFRA which has been conducting the pre-legislative scrutiny.
- It is expected that the Bill will be in the Queen's speech this month; this is Defra's key bill.
- The timeline could be disrupted by the forthcoming general election which some believe is likely to fall in May 2004.
- The Bill is unlikely to see many errors due to the high level extensive scrutiny that it has received. The main problem which the Bill is likely to face is through rushing it through the Lords.
- It was noted that if any members of the APGAW had new evidence to submit to the Bill then they should send this information directly to Ben Bradshaw.
- As this is 'enabling legislation' this will apply to England and Wales and the development of the codes of practice will then fall to the Welsh Assembly.
- Claire Lawson stated that the RSPCA does not have any powers and will not gain any further powers under the Bill.
- It was noted that oral transcripts of the EFRA evidence sessions are available electronically.
- The issue of tail docking was raised. The Group expressed concern at the possibility of exemptions, Claire Lawson informed the Group that, as an enabling bill it will come to Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government will have an opportunity to respond.
- Mike Sharratt raised the issue of strengthening the Badger Protection Act and whether it falls under the responsibility of the Animal Welfare Bill. Defra state that the Bill excludes wild animals. Claire Lawson, RSPCA added that currently, if an animal is in your care then the Animal Welfare Bill applies, if the animal is not your care then the Bill does not apply.
- The Group discussed the issue of Police Assisted Community Enforcement (PACE) and the ability of the police to act given the current legislation.
- Claire Lawson, RSPCA stated that the Bill will ensure more clarity as the codes of practice will provide boundaries for how courts currently interpret legislation.
- The Group also noted their discontent at the current 'unfair scenario' which occurs when a person takes an injured animal for veterinary treatment; the individual will then assume responsibility for paying for the injured animal.
- It was agreed that the paper presented by Claire Lawson would be distributed amongst Assembly Members.

AOB

- The Greyhound Leaflet presented at the last meeting has been approved and is currently in print.

Dates for the Diary

APGAW Meeting: 7 December 2004

Sara Jones & Rhian Jones 03.11.04