

Cross-Party Group on Animal Welfare

Friday 11 March at 2pm, virtually via MS Teams

1. Introductions and apologies

Apologies from –

- Tess White MSP
- Rhona O'Malley, Advocates for Rabbit Welfare
- Delly Innes, Scottish racing

Christine Grahame MSP, Alice Palombo, Amro Hussein, John Bruce, Finlay Carson MSP, Maggie Chapman MSP, Claire Wilson-Leary, Colin Sheddon, Ed Hayes, Edna Elliot-McCall, Ioanna Hadjicosta, John Burns, Keith Marley, Kirsty Jenkins, Lauren Wards, Lucy Whitnall, Vivienne Mackinnon, Marie McNair MSP, Mike Flynn, Natalie Harney, Siobhian Brown MSP, Joy Ramsay, Rebecca Knowles, Richard Clare, Richard Woodward, Richard Ackers, Romain Pizzi, Sam Eccles, Colin Smyth MSP, Jane Stirling, Zofia Bekas, Say No to Greyhound Racing, Emma McKenzie (Office

2. Minutes Approved

The previous meeting minutes were approved by members.

3. Presentations

Rebecca Knowles - "Farmers For Stock-Free Farming" followed by a Q&A

Ms Knowles gave a presentation on "Farmers For Stock-Free Farming" argument for livestock free farming, highlighting what they allege are abuses of livestock and issues with land use and environmental impact. Other members put forward contrasting views on this and it was noted a presentation addressing the other side may be helpful in future.

Amro Hussain - Humane League, Fish Stunning followed by Q&A

Mr Hussain highlighted what they believe is a discrepancy where there is clear guidance for avoidance of unnecessary suffering at slaughter for land farm animals but not fish. Whilst they appreciate there is already examples of good industry practice on this, there are examples of it being ineffective. The Humane League is therefore looking for the UK Government to bring in specific legislation on this requiring measures such as proper stunning before slaughter to standardise practice and ensure welfare and is looking for Scottish Government support on this.

Rick Ackers - Justice for Reggie followed by Q&A

Mr Ackers highlighted this campaign to regulate online animal sales, by measures such as requiring both sellers and buyers to provide proof of ID. The campaign is already well underway and has engaged with a number of large websites and the UK Government. This campaign is based on Mr Ackers' own experience of unknowingly

buying a puppy, Reggie, from a puppy farm online and the extensive health issues (parvovirus) Reggie subsequently suffered, having to be put to sleep within a few days of coming home. Christine highlighted her work on the proposed Proposed Welfare of Dogs (Scotland) Bill around this issue and Mike Flynn (SSPCA) gave his perspective on the issue and work currently underway on it.

Natalie Harney - Naturewatch Foundation, Canine Fertility Clinics. Q&A

Ms Harney highlighted concerns about canine fertility clinics, particularly where medical procedures are carried out by people with no veterinary training and basic “online courses” which purport to offer training in this area. Whilst there are positive examples of such clinics, because of the unregulated nature of it some unscrupulous ones often don’t take account of breed health, prioritising certain looks and features ahead of animal welfare. There is also evidence to links with organised crime within the larger puppy breeding market. Naturewatch are calling for better regulation of these businesses and such practices. Romain Pizzi (BVA) and Mike Flynn (SSPCA) gave perspectives on this issue and the issues around trying to prosecute in this area.

4 MSP Reports

Maggie Chapman MSP will circulate her report to members due to having to leave prior to meeting end.

Colin Smyth MSP gave an update on his work, particularly his motion on the seven principles of ethical wildlife management which he hopes to secure a debate on.

Christine Grahame MSP gave an update on her Welfare of Dogs (Scotland) Bill and also her work on the microchipping of cats.

Siobhian Brown MSP gave her thanks to SSPCA for the work they do, having recently had personal experience with them.

There was general discussion of animal welfare issues upcoming in parliament.

5. Future Agenda

Keith Marley of New Arc Charity requested to give a presentation on avian flu Contrasting view of stock farming, possibly facilitated by Finlay Carson MSP One Kind on the seven principles of ethical wildlife management

6. Time & Date of next meeting

Friday 13th May 2022 at 2pm via MS Teams