

**Cross Party Group on Animal Welfare in the Scottish Parliament**  
**56<sup>th</sup> meeting**  
**Committee Room 1**  
**6.00pm Tuesday 24 September 2013**

**MSPs:** Christine Grahame MSP (Convener)  
Claudia Beamish MSP (vice-Convener)  
Alison Johnstone MSP (vice-Convener)

**Associate Members:** Mike Flynn, Scottish SPCA  
Patricia Saluja, University of Aberdeen  
Margaret Donnellan, Dogs Trust  
Adam Reed, University of St Andrews  
John Burns, World Horse Welfare  
David Craig, World Horse Welfare  
John Robins, Animal Concern Advice Line  
Brian Hosie, SAC Consulting: Vet Services and British Veterinary Association  
John Brady, OneKind  
Libby Anderson, OneKind (Secretary)  
Laura Macleod, West Lothian Council  
Jean Fairlie, Independent Weimaraner Rescue & Re-Homing Service  
Karen Gray, Rabbits Require Rights  
Natalie Constance, Buddies Bunny Rescue  
Nicolle Hamilton, British Association for Shooting and Conservation  
Sophie Arnold, British Horse Society  
Jennifer Dunn, League Against Cruel Sports  
Lorraine Currie, Campaign Against the Sale of Cats Online  
Stuart Moir, Campaign Against the Sale of Cats Online  
Patricia Neeson  
Patricia Colville, BSAVA  
Brian Robinson, Horse Rescue Scotland  
Fraser Henderson, Glo-Wild  
David Cochrane, Cats Protection

**In attendance:** Jim Wilson, Scottish Government Justice Department  
Charlotte Hay, University of Leicester, Politics Department

**Apologies:** George Leslie, Canine Concern Scotland Trust  
Victoria Brown, The Kennel Club  
Denis Hearsum, Perth and Kinross Council  
Jamie Stewart, Scottish Countryside Alliance  
Mauvis Gore, Marine Conservation International  
Tracy Shiells, Cats Protection  
Jacqui Cuff, Cats Protection  
Morton Houston, COSLA Animal Health and Welfare  
David Craig, World Horse Welfare  
Helene Mauchlen, British Horse Society  
Edna Elliot McColl  
Andrew Blake, West Lothian Council  
Alan Morrison, Argyll and Bute Council  
Charlie Everitt, National Wildlife Crime Unit

## **1. Welcome and introductions**

Introductions had already been made at the preceding Annual General Meeting.

## **2. Apologies**

As per the attendance list.

## **3. Minutes of previous meetings**

The minutes of the meeting on 5 February 2013 were considered. A new draft of the Matters arising section was read out. John Robins (Animal Concern) (JR) agreed that the matter he had raised was covered. The minutes of 5 February were approved.

The minutes of the meeting on 21 May 2013 were considered. Amendments requested by Scotland for Animals (SfA) had been shown verbatim for the Group to consider. The second sentence in the proposed SfA amendment at item 3 was not agreed and the whole amendment at item 5 was not agreed.

There was concern that compulsory CCTV could have been introduced to abattoirs in Scotland as a measure under Regulation 1099/2009.

JR asked why proceedings could not be recorded to avoid many of the problems the Group had recently experienced and this led to a discussion. While recording could be used as a back up to notes, provided that all members consented to this, most speakers wished to encourage open and free discussion and felt that recording would stifle this.

## **4. Matters arising**

**Control of Dogs:** Jim Wilson (Scottish Government) (JW) mentioned the UK government's Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill. The Bill would introduce an aggravated offence regarding attacks on assistance dogs and a measure allowing the courts to take the character of an owner into account when assessing the risk posed by a particular dog. The Scottish Government supported extending these measures to Scotland.

There had also been a question to the Justice Minister by the Convener regarding the number of investigations under the Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010 and the number of Dog Control Notices (DCNs) issued. There had been over 2,000 investigations [conducted during year 2 \(Parliamentary Question refers\)](#) and 235 DCNs since the Act came into force in 2011.

JW, Laura McLeod (West Lothian Council) (LM) and Police Scotland had met to discuss enforcement. Local authorities were taking different approaches: for example, West Lothian was serving a large number of DCNs, while others served none. City of Edinburgh Council preferred to use Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) with dog owners. The Scottish SPCA was to be consulted about its concerns over destruction of dogs. There was not yet appropriate case reporting or complete understanding of the Act. Only certain cases, such as "dog-on-dog" attacks, could be reported by police, meaning that an increased burden was carried by local authorities.

It was suggested that responsible ownership and micro-chipping could be covered in a Christmas message.

Extracts from comments supplied by dog trainers about application of DCNs were circulated and would be emailed to members.

**CCTV in slaughterhouses:** Alison Johnstone MSP (AJ) had lodged questions for the SG view on different approaches to the use of CCTV. SG responded that the position was under review and mandatory CCTV remained an option if proportionate and effective. It was continuing to collect information and once a clear picture had been reached, would decide what further action was appropriate.

It was suggested that supplementary questions be asked regarding timescales for further action.

The CCTV subgroup was still in existence and another meeting could be arranged.

The low rate of return to the sub-group's survey of abattoirs, despite being sent out twice, was noted. The issue of costs should be examined.

**Action: LA to circulate survey report to whole group for information. Members interested in attending a sub-group meeting to inform LA. LA to seek date for sub-group to meet in the new year.**

#### **4. Pet vending in Scotland – discussion**

JB/OK referred to reports produced by OneKind including the major *Caged to Sell* report in 2003. This had shown animals exhibiting abnormal behaviour and animals in enclosures that were too small. Three-quarters of the abnormal behaviour was observed in “exotic” species (excluding fish). Recent examples included reptiles burned by heatlamps; snakes in small containers unable to fully extend themselves; a retailer boasting of being able to supply an endangered species; a customer walking into a pet shop and selling a snake; fish supplied in crates containing over 2,000 animals; exotic animals still being captured in the wild for the pet trade.

Online examples recently highlighted by the Pet Advertising Advisory Group (PAAG) included a puppy offered for swap with a mobile phone; an Arctic fox for sale; an underage Staffie puppy; and a Golden Retriever wanted for swap with a Chihuahua.

OneKind was lobbying for a wholesale review of the Pet Animals Act 1951 JB/OK commended the approach of countries such as Belgium, which was now taking a “positive list” approach to identifying which species might be kept privately as pets.

Karen Gray (Rabbits Require Rights) (KG) highlighted the lack of care advice, and the misleading advice, given by pet shops.

One pet shop in Edinburgh had been warned not to house rabbits with guinea pigs but persisted in doing so. Wrong diets were fed, leading to stomach problems that could swiftly prove fatal. Poor diet meant that teeth were not worn down properly.

Quality of staff in large stores was variable, while adoption schemes were often a way of disposing of old stock. Inappropriate store layout allowed dogs and children to get far too close to rabbits, which were a prey species.

Natalie Constance (Buddies Bunny Rescue) (NC) added that an estimated 67,000 unwanted rabbits passed through rescue centres. Some rabbits would be “set free” or passed on through classified advertising. Rabbits were also frequent victims of neglect, stuck in cages at the bottom of the garden.

The code of welfare for rabbits had been discarded by SG although it was questioned whether a code would make a difference. JR said that local authorities could help regulate pet shops through their licensing or trading standards departments.

Lorraine Currie (Campaign Against The Sale of Cats Online) (LC) highlighted cat welfare problems and the difficulty of getting enforcement action against pet shops by local authorities.

Cats had become disposable, like rabbits, and rescues were overwhelmed. Children were influenced by seeing animals treated like this – for example, the sale of the kitten Harvey, advertised for sale with two “broken” legs, was conducted in the presence of the owner’s children.

CG suggested the MSPs collaborate on a motion for a Member’s Debate.

Jennifer Dunn (League Against Cruel Sports) (JD) as a Glasgow councillor offered to help groups resolve difficulties.

Margaret Donnellan (Dogs Trust) MD referred to the work of PAAG with reputable sites and the new Minimum Standards. A report was requested for the next meeting.

Mike Flynn (Scottish SPCA) (MF) said that Inspectors would investigate any complaint received. The Scottish SPCA currently had 475 cats in care, all maltreated – it could not take in additional healthy cats which would use up places needed for these victims. Currently the Scottish SPCA had 260 animals in its care, awaiting court proceedings. CG asked for a note on this for the next meeting so that MSPs could raise the issue with the Justice Secretary. Scottish SPCA had had three pet shop prosecutions in the last 18 months and further issues to do with internet sales.

Cats Protection had been able to have advertisements withdrawn on Gumtree, for example repeat sellers who appeared to be breeding from the same female.

Patricia Colville (BSAVA)(PC) suggested that a Member’s Debate should be focussed on one aspect of what was a massive area, such as pet shop licensing (currently under review by the BVA and BSAVA); care information at the point of sale: or online vending.

It was agreed that pet vending be the main item for discussion and the next meeting and a representative of the Scottish Government would be invited.

**Action: Dogs Trust and Scottish SPCA to provide notes for next meeting. Secretary to contact SG.**

## **6. Any other business**

There was no further competent business.

## **7. Date of next meeting**

**10 December 2013** (please note change from originally proposed date of 3 December)