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Animal Concern is a pressure group registered as a non-profit making Limited Company (Co. No.
SC109126) established in 1988 as Animal Concern (Scotland) Ltd.

It incorporates the Scottish Anti-Vivisection Society which was founded in 1876.

To supporters of Animal Concern, Animal Concern Advice Line and Save Our Seals Fund.

Dear Friends,

I've got a lot of things for you today. I hope you will find them interesting and that you will do your bit to tell the people we employ through the public purse that we expect them to do their utmost to protect animals and, for those wild creatures we haven't yet managed to wipe out or imprison, their natural habitat.

This morning The Sunday Post newspaper is running a story on plans for yet another puppy farm. You should be able to read the story here:

<https://www.sundaypost.com/fp/plan-for-scotlands-first-industrial-puppy-farm-in-ayrshire-spar-k-outrage/>

In addition to what's in the article you should know that in 2004, Stephen Hamilton – husband of Hazel Hamilton who is applying for permission to breed dogs at New Intax Farm - was charged with animal cruelty and illegal importation of dogs after he was arrested behind the wheel of a truck containing 102 puppies. Hamilton walked free from Kilmarnock Sheriff Court after the charges against him were found not proven.

The worst thing about this application is that puppy farming is perfectly legal in Scotland and you cannot oppose licence applications on moral grounds. However it is important to let the Council know that there is a great deal of opposition to puppy farming and I'd appreciate it if you would take a few minutes and send the same short e-mail to both:

licensing@east-ayrshire.gov.uk and to submittoplanning@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

My suggested e-mail is (remember to add your details):

“Dear Sirs,

Some of the relevant links on your website are not working so I hope this e-mail reaches the correct departments and that you can accept my objections without the full details of the Licence and Planning application reference numbers.

I wish to lodge objections to the applications from Mrs. Hazel Hamilton for a Dog Breeders Licence and a change of use Planning Application in respect of converting an outbuilding at New Intax Farm, Galston, East Ayrshire into a dog breeding establishment.

My main objection is that to breed dogs as household pets they should be bred in a household environment and breeding them in pens in a converted barn is not fit for purpose. I understand that Mrs. Hamilton intends to have 40 breeding dogs on the premises thus, assuming each bitch has no more than two litters per year, her business will have the capacity to produce circa 500 pups per annum. If this is the case and as the pups should be sold from the farm to allow buyers to see the mother dog and where the pup was bred, I also object on the grounds of noise pollution, smell from accumulated dog urine and faeces and problems created by increased road traffic in a rural area.

I would be grateful if you would acknowledge safe receipt of my objections.

Yours faithfully,”

It is also vitally important that you send a short e-mail to your MSPs:

<https://www.writetothem.com/>

My suggested draft is below. Remember to add your details and if you agree with it please include the PS I've tagged on at the end.

“Dear Member of the Scottish Parliament,

At the foot of my e-mail is a link to an article in the Sunday Post concerning plans for yet another puppy farm in Scotland.

I have lodged objections to the proposals but I am not hopeful of stopping this enterprise because intensive puppy farming is perfectly legal in Scotland.

As you are no doubt aware dogs bred in canine factory farms are often sickly and weak and have painful physical genetic defects caused by close breeding to produce fashionable pedigree traits. They also make poor pets as their very important first few weeks of life are spent in a setting which is totally different from a family environment.

I urge you to do what you can to have the law changed to ban puppy farming in Scotland. People should not be allowed to own more than 2 breeding bitches and they should not be permitted to rear dogs in barns and other outhouses.

I would be grateful if you would ask Cabinet Secretary Roseanna Cunningham, who has responsibility for animal welfare within her remit, if she intends to instigate new legislation to make puppy farming illegal in Scotland.

Link to Sunday Post article:

<https://www.sundaypost.com/fp/plan-for-scotlands-first-industrial-puppy-farm-in-ayrshire-spar-k-outrage/>

Yours sincerely,

PS: There's another dog horror story in the Sunday papers: The following article in the Scottish Sun illustrates the need to licence and inspect all animal rescue centres and sanctuaries to bring them up to a very high minimum standard for animal welfare:
<https://www.thescottishsun.co.uk/news/scottish-news/259434/sickening-images-show-dead-dog-with-its-ribs-showing-through-fur-at-squalid-ayrshire-ark-kennels/>

A couple of days ago I received an e-mail advertising the Cairngorms National Park (CNP) as a tourist destination. If you live in or near a National Park in Scotland you will know what they are like. They are run more like theme parks than conservation areas. The e-mail I received didn't dwell on the boring old mountains, rivers, forests, lochs and native wildlife of the Cairngorms but proclaimed the CNP as one of the best places to see "Santa and his Reindeer".

Last month it emerged that Eleanor Mackintosh, convenor of the Planning Committee of the Cairngorms National Park Authority's (CNPA), had said at a meeting with the Scottish Gamekeepers Association (SGA) that to avoid controversy over the mass culling of mountain hares the shooters should chuck a tarpaulin over their truckloads of dead hares so that no-one would see them. Reminds me of the guest speaker at a Government sponsored meeting on seals – he was brought all the way from Australia to tell shooters to do their shooting when there was no-one around to witness it.

What is it with public authorities and SGA? It's not that long ago since another person on the public payroll (then Environment Minister Dr. Aileen McLeod) made a totally farce of herself at another event with the SGA when she thanked them profusely for advising the Government on wildlife matters!

I went onto the CNPA website to give Santa my wish list and I found a form where you can leave messages for the authority. The form is here: <http://visitcairngorms.com/contact> . Please visit the visitcairngorms contact page. In the Please Select a Category drop box you will find the heading "Wildlife". Click on that and then leave a message telling the Cairngorms National Park Authority that rather than meeting Santa and Rudolph you would prefer to see mountain hare and the harriers, hawks and eagles which prey on them. Ask them why Eleanor Mackintosh, convenor of their Planning Committee, told the Scottish Gamekeepers Association that they should hide the evidence of their mass culling of hares from the public? Suggest that instead of colluding to hide hare culling they should ban it within the Park boundaries.

Some more Christmas related info. If you go to the Cairngorms this month you may not see as many reindeer as you would during the summer. That's because the owners of the

reindeer rent them out to shopping malls all around the UK where the reindeer pull sleighs and pose for publicity photos. Joining in this festive fiasco this year have been the usual donkeys and sheep and the not so commonplace camels and even penguins. Years ago a horsebox full of reindeer spent the night parked up a street in Partick before being paraded the next day down Buchan Street in Glasgow City Centre. If a shopping centre, store or local authority in your area has exploited animals in their Christmas publicity stunts please write to them and ask them how far the animals had to be transported to and from the event, where were they kept if they had to stay overnight and would they please not do it again next year.

Don't waste those stamps on your Xmas cards this year. Cut them out leaving a 5mm margin and, when you've collected say a Jiffy bag full, send them to: ACAL Stamp Appeal, FREEPOST RTKX - RZCC - ZSCR, Stromness, Orkney KW16 3EL. Ironically you will not need a stamp to send them. Please don't send them to our PO Box. ACAL will receive at least £2.50 per kilo for the used stamps and a bit more if you sort them out into "foreign", "festive", "commemorative" etc.

Be careful when buying clothes this winter. Sadly the furry look is coming back in and fur is so cheap that it may be used on garments with faux fur labels. Best avoid anything that resembles fur. The new anti-fur group in Aberdeen is going from strength to strength and is looking for more activists to attend pickets and demos. If you're in the area and can help contact saynofur@gmail.com

Some supporters sent me the link (below) to an article in the Daily Record. It's about a snake that came into Aberdeen Harbour on a cargo vessel from Africa. At the time it was reported that the Scottish SPCA identified it as a deadly Green Mamba and they humanely destroyed it rather than risk it biting someone. At the time I thought it a stupid thing for the SSPCA to do as there are expert snake handlers in this country and they could at least have tried to find it a home in a zoo or serpentarium. Turns out it was a VERY stupid thing to do and that the harmless snake was not destroyed humanely at all. I'll be asking Police Scotland to investigate the incident.

http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/scottish-sPCA-kill-harmless-snake-9380018#ICID=sharebar_facebook

A petition to sign:

<https://www.change.org/p/the-mauritian-government-stop-the-capture-and-killing-of-dogs-in-mauritius>

I don't remember if I told you about this but a couple of months ago it was reported that soldiers do the beating at Royal Family private grouse shoots on the Balmoral Estate. I used FOI to find out who pays their wages. Turns out they do it as volunteers when they are off duty. No public money wasted but it also kills the myth that grouse shooting enriches the local economy through the wages paid to local beaters. I hope Mrs W at least gives the troops a cucumber sandwich or two.

That's about it for now. I'm off to try and catch up on some meeting minutes and to get prepared for the end of year accounts and reports.

Thanks to all of you who have sent in information in the last few weeks.

Cheers 4 now,