

E-MAIL FROM: John F. Robins, Campaigns Consultant, Animal Concern, Post Office Box 5178, Dumbarton G82 5YJ. Tel: 01389-841-639, Mobile: 07721-605521. Fax: 0870-7060327. Animal Concern incorporates the Scottish Anti-Vivisection Society which has been Campaigning for animals since 1876 E-MAIL: animals@jfrobins.force9.co.uk website: <http://www.animalconcern.org/>

Dear Supporter,

As you know Animal Concern likes to get involved in things which other groups are not doing as that's the best way to use our limited resources without duplicating the work of others.

One of our supporters noticed that fish were regularly dying in a tank in the window of her local "Nail Bar" (which turns out to be somewhere you get a pedicure or similar and not the place to go for a pint and a pound of carpet tacks).

Seemingly workers in these places wear masks over their mouth and nose due to the fumes from the nail varnish and varnish remover. Our supporter wondered if the fumes were responsible for the high mortality rate among the fish.

There are many of these nail bars around the country. If you use one or know of one in your area could you discretely check it out to see if it has a tank of fish? If it has can you (again discretely) count the fish and then check on them over two or three weeks to see if numbers fall?

If a pattern emerges I can contact the owners of the nail bars (I think many may be franchises) and ask that they stop keeping fish. If they don't respond to that I'll ask local authority animal welfare officers to take action.

On another matter. Two years ago Karen Hamilton from Fife contacted Animal Concern Advice Line (ACAL) about Fife Animal Park. She had worked there and had collated lots of evidence of animal neglect and cruelty as well as health and safety breaches and other concerns. In 2012 and 2013 she alerted the local authority and other statutory bodies.

Karen did an excellent job in documenting conditions at the Park and she raised her concerns and submitted her evidence to all the right people yet, despite inspections taking place, nothing appeared to be done.

In 2013 Fife Animal Park was put up for sale. As part of the Park was run as a charitable trust I immediately contacted the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). I asked OSCR to ensure that no assets of the charity, including animals sponsored by charitable donations, were sold for commercial gain.

OSCR immediately stepped in, stopped the sale of the park and assets, including the animals, which belonged to the charity. Fife Council then stepped in and performed their statutory duty to take care of the animals. Park bosses then claimed that by stopping the sale of the Park and the animals the authorities were putting the welfare of the animals at risk.

It was after this that numerous charges were brought against the Park owners.

Last week Peter Lockhart joint owner of the Park, plead guilty to a number of charges which totally vindicated the evidence gathered by Karen Hamilton. Amazingly, despite the admitted crimes carrying a possible nine-month prison term, sentence was deferred to allow Mr. Lockhart to take a two-month trip to the Philippines. Personally I would have remanded him in custody and confiscated his passport.

This case raises several questions which I hope to get answers to. Why did Fife Council apparently only take action after OSCR stepped in despite having been given good evidence a year before? Is the expensive cost of caring for confiscated animals deterring the authorities from taking action? Are the authorities properly monitoring zoos and animal parks? Are commercial concerns being given charitable status?

You can find out more about this case here: <http://news.stv.tv/tayside/294469-fife-animal-park-owner-peter-lockhart-admits-animal-welfare-charges/> (Note: External link to STV site)

Believe it or not earlier this week we became involved in an almost identical case concerning another mini-zoo in Scotland. Once again a concerned member of the public has collated lots of damning evidence and submitted it to the relevant local authority. Animal Concern has asked the Council involved too investigate several specific areas of concern. I'll let you know in due course what the outcome is.

My too-smart-for-I phone conked out last weekend (after about 5 years' service) and I'm having difficulty in finding a suitable idiot-proof replacement. Meanwhile I'm using a very basic mobile phone with a tiny screen and limited functions. I've missed lots of calls and text messages so if you are awaiting a reply it would be better to e-mail me. Please also note that I'm off for some medical tests later this morning and will probably be out of commission for two or three days.

Cheers 4 now,

John