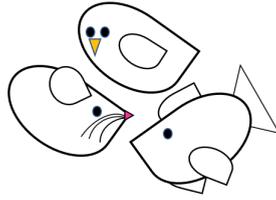


ANIMAL CONCERN



LEGISLATE TO LIBERATE

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Animal Concern Ltd is a Registered Scottish Charity (No. SC050422) and a registered non-profit making Limited Company (Co. No. SC109126)

Established in 1988 as Animal Concern (Scotland) Limited we changed our name to Animal Concern in 1992 as several of our campaigns were international.

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

FTAO Andrew Watters Esq.,
SCD Fire and Rescue Unit,
Scottish Government.

Dear Mr. Watters,

Thank you for your reply reference 202200315223 (attached) in response to my email of 10th August, on the subject of sky lanterns, to the First Minister and other cabinet members with relevant portfolios. There's no indication in your reply that you have copied it to the Ministers on whose behalf you have replied.

I find your reply very interesting but not very helpful. You obviously agree that sky lanterns are a fire risk which could cause damage to land and property and injury to animals and people. You also admit that, unlike other fire hazards, an incendiary device falling from the sky is not something farmers or others can prepare for or guard against.

That's why Animal Concern is asking for a ban on these devices and why we are puzzled as to why the Scottish Government will not consider such a ban. I would really like to know what our elected politicians have to say on the issue.

In your reply you mention the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006. If I remember correctly that Act started life as two separate Bills, The Animal Health Bill and The Animal Welfare Bill. Due to pressure of Parliamentary time they were

truncated, watered down and amalgamated so that at least something got on the statute books by way of fulfilling a pre-election commitment.

As it turned out the most substantial welfare change brought about by the 2006 Act was the banning of giving goldfish as prizes. This was only included due to a discussion I had with one of the people drafting the Bill who thought it was already illegal to give goldfish as prizes. Turned out he lived in an area where we had persuaded the local council to insert a "No Animals as Prizes" clause in their leasing agreements with visiting fun fairs. I explained the situation to him and told him how fairs were now booking private land where they could give goldfish as prizes. When the legislation came into force Ross Finnie launched it by highlighting the goldfish as prizes ban.

Although the ban on animal prizes achieved something Animal Concern had been working for over many years, I was disappointed that several other very important issues were ignored. This included banning circuses with animal acts. We had persuaded most Councils to ban such circuses from Council land but, like the fun fairs, circuses just leased private land and it was business as usual. It was another 12 years before we helped persuade our politicians to vote through a new law banning exotic animal acts throughout Scotland.

Wales is currently in a similar situation with sky lanterns as Scotland was with circuses and goldfish as prizes before we obtained laws to ban those forms of animal cruelty and exploitation. Every local authority in Wales bans the release of sky lanterns from their land but there's nothing to stop people setting them off from their back gardens or other private land. It needs legislation to stop the use of sky lanterns.

You do recognise in your letter that the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 cannot be used to combat the release of sky lanterns. That's why Animal Concern will continue campaigning and lobbying our politicians for a law which does ban them throughout Scotland.

Yours sincerely,

John F. Robins,
For Animal Concern