

**No Time To  
Waste**

**ANP**  
Animal Welfare Party

**Animal Welfare Party 2024**  
General Election **Manifesto**

*Towards a Fairer, Healthier,  
More Sustainable Future For All*

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## **Animal Welfare Party Key Policies for the 2024 General Election:**

- **Prioritise the climate & biodiversity in all decision-making**
- **Improve human & planet health and save NHS funds by leading on an urgent transition to healthy and sustainable plant-based diets**
- **End farming & fishing practices, systems and subsidies which are harmful to animals, biodiversity and our planet**
- **Establish a separate Government Department for Animal Protection**
- **End all animal slaughter without prior stunning and high concentration CO2 gassing**
- **Better protect companion animals with compulsory licensing, tightening breeding regulations & ending breed-specific legislation**
- **End the exotic pet trade and the sale of animals online & in retail stores**
- **End all animal testing, with binding targets for reduction combined with proper funding & real support for non-animal methods**
- **End the commercial racing of horses & dogs**
- **End the badger cull, ban trail hunting & strengthen the fox-hunting ban**
- **Close all UK ports & airports to the import & transit of live animals inc. monkeys & other primates to supply the animal research & testing industries**
- **Improve product labelling to allow consumers to make more informed choices in line with their principles**
- **Increase penalties for those convicted of animal abuse, raising the maximum custodial sentence to 10 years**
- **Include Animal Protection in education & end school egg hatching projects**

- **Take tough action on wildlife crime**
- **Introduce independently monitored CCTV for all slaughterhouses**
- **Prioritise protection of the New Forest's unique wildlife and animals, working to reduce traffic speed and animal conflicts**
- **Support all calls for an immediate ceasefire in the Israel Gaza conflict, the free flow of aid into Gaza, the protection of all civilians and the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages**

## 1. Introduction

Animal Welfare Party is part of an international network of over 20 political parties striving to create fairer societies in which the needs of people, animals and the environment are balanced.

Our movement takes in Australia, Asia, Europe, North and South America and is one of the fastest growing political movements in the world. We have a shared belief that the interests of animals, the planet and people must be equally included in our political debates and decision-making processes.

2024 sees the world in the midst of worsening crises of climate and biodiversity. At the same time we face mounting health and healthcare challenges and continue to see a rise in preventable diseases, while the 2019 Covid 19 pandemic has laid bare our global vulnerability to zoonotic pandemics which our growing intensive animal agriculture industries have exposed us to. In the UK, as with many nations, the aftershocks are still being felt and are palpable in the cost of living crisis currently being experienced by so many of us.

But, in the midst of such chaos and challenge, opportunities to forge a new way forwards and to create fairer, healthier, more sustainable societies have and continue to present themselves.

AWP has every belief that we can rise and adapt to the challenges that present themselves, that bold, honest and compassionate leadership can and will see us re-set ourselves onto a path towards a brighter, fairer, liveable future for all.

**We hope you'll join us.**

**The Time Is Now. Vote for Animal Welfare Party.**

## **Rethink, redirect, reward ...**

Animal Welfare Party believes that the time has arrived for us to rethink how we treat each other, the natural world and other non-human animals. We need to adjust our value system and adopt a fair and just society, with equal chances and opportunities for all but not at the expense of other sentient beings.

It's time to redirect resources and efforts away from unsustainable, inefficient, inhumane or exploitative industries to systems that show respect for others, and that will still be here for our children and grandchildren. Farming subsidies, for example, where used, should be redirected to sectors that, over the long term, are more environmentally sustainable and beneficial to human health. Funds should be redirected to preserve and expand our forests, woodlands and other important ecological systems such as wetlands and marshes, which increase biodiversity.

And we need to reward and invest in initiatives that are in line with a sustainable, low carbon, humane and fair society. For example, making renewable energy the norm and not the exception; making all trade fair, improving public transport; making recycling, re-using and reducing waste a normal habit; increasing the production of locally-produced items and encouraging local or domestic tourism; reducing production and consumption of animal products and rewarding sustainable plant-based agriculture.

This manifesto sets out our policies and the steps that the UK's government and communities can take together to overcome our challenges in ways that benefit everyone.

## **Our Vision**

Treating people, animals, and the environment with respect is our key priority. To halt the degradation of the environment and the infringement of the rights of other sentient beings, we need to begin by re-thinking our culture, like previous social movements which ended the oppression of women, children and other races, to the benefit of society as a whole. Animal Welfare Party represents a shift in political thinking and action, away from the short-term interests of the few, to one in which the interests of the weakest are protected, along with what is truly for the long-term good of people and our planet.

Animal Welfare Party aims to raise the bar for animals across politics. We are dedicated to advancing the rights of all non-human

animals, our environment and ecosystems, to demonstrating that resolving such challenges represents a major opportunity to push back on global warming and climate catastrophe and halt the biodiversity crisis, reduce global hunger and to reverse the crises of preventable health conditions such as obesity, coronary heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

The UK must set the example to the world by leading on animal protection and changing our agricultural practices. Many policies and regulations need to be strengthened, and new, sustainable and compassionate legislation must be introduced.

As the UK continues to strike new trade deals internationally, existing animal, environmental and human rights protections must be safeguarded.

### **Advancing Animal Protection Issues Politically**

Animal Welfare Party is opposed to all forms of speciesism - the assignment of different values, rights, or giving special consideration to individuals solely on the basis of their species membership.

Our first and most fundamental principle is that animal abuse must end and that animals are no longer regarded as property.

AWP has long called for an end to the false perception that prosperity should be associated with the consumption of meat, dairy and eggs. The livestock industry is a major contributor to environmental destruction, resource consumption and global warming. Animal Welfare Party promotes healthy and sustainable plant-based diets for the benefit of animals, human health and the protection of the environment.

Our second fundamental principle is that, until the majority recognise the need for plant-based diets, whilst millions of animals are exploited every day and their interests are violated, the very least animals deserve is appropriate species-specific husbandry and care. This does not in any way detract from our eventual aim to end all animal exploitation; it simply recognizes that in the meantime any improvement is better than none.

Animal Welfare Party's General Election manifesto includes four strategies to advance our aims politically:

- (a) Ending harmful animal use
- (b) Implementing direct animal welfare improvements
- (c) Encouraging sustainable development activities that benefit the environment, animals and people
- (d) Supporting socially progressive policies on non-animal related issues

## **The Moral and Legal Status of Animals**

In the year 2024, our party still finds itself having to assert that animals are living creatures, not toys or accessories or a means of entertainment. Animals deserve protection. We believe this starts with the recognition of their intrinsic value, which is independent of the value that people place upon them, and respect for their own needs. Such recognition should apply to all animals and define the limits of the purposes for which animals may be used.

Non-human animals are not property, but sentient beings. Although this is recognised in UK Law (The Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022), which should place a duty upon the state to protect their welfare, the everyday reality is that cultural and religious traditions and economic interests are frequently placed above the interests of animals. In everyday life, animals in the UK are primarily given the status of a commodity and protection is limited.

An estimated 1.2 billion land animals are farmed and killed for food in the UK animal farming industry every year. This includes around 1 billion chickens, 15 million sheep and lambs, 15 million turkeys, 14 million sheep, 2.8 million cattle, and over 10 million pigs. (1)

An estimated 85% of these animals are farmed in intensive or 'factory' farms. (2)

Each year around 3 million animals are used in research and testing, an estimated 40 million 'game' birds are shot, while an estimated 18 million wild animals are shot, snared and trapped. Animal suffering in the UK remains large-scale and serious.

Alongside the continuous need for improving human rights across the world, it is time to recognise other animals as beings in their own right. Animal Welfare Party rejects the notion that animals can be used for any purpose humans see fit. Culture, entertainment, sport and fashion are not justifiable reasons for causing harm to or negatively affecting the welfare of animals. We believe that before animals are



used for a purpose, the legitimacy of that purpose should be assessed. Better awareness of and protection against neglect, abuse and misuse is needed. The UK should support that protection to a greater degree, both inside and outside its borders.

Given the above, Animal Welfare Party calls for the establishment of a separate Government Department for Animal Protection.

## **Animal Sentience**

Central to our philosophy at Animal Welfare Party is animal sentience, and our belief that, as sentient beings, all animals should be afforded the respect and dignity they deserve as the individuals that they are. We believe that where animals are affected by human legislation, sentience should be taken fully into account, regardless of species.

Although animal sentience is now recognised in UK law (The Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022), AWP calls for all recognised sentient animals including decapod crustaceans and cephalopods molluscs to be added to the Animal Welfare Act (2006).

We also recognise that evidence of the likely sentience of additional animals such as arthropods is expected in the future. When this occurs, we maintain that such animals should also become protected in law.

## **The Moral & Legal Status of Animals and The Media**

The media has a huge role to play in influencing how animals are perceived. Animal lives and animal suffering is still frequently trivialised in advertising campaigns and editorial content in the UK. Animal Welfare Party intends to push for bodies regulating advertising, broadcast and press content to view such issues with the seriousness they deserve and for these bodies to be better funded and supported, where the latter have been factors in their inaction.

## 2. Animals in Farms (Farmed Animals)

### Animals Kept for Meat and Other Products

The UK's farmed animal population is huge - and growing. Over the course of a year, an estimated 1.2 billion animals are bred and killed for food - an estimated 85% of these within intensive or 'factory' farming systems. At the same time, the number of US style 'mega' farms also continues to rise. (3)

At any given time, an estimated 80 million animals are being kept on UK factory farms - a population that many will recognise is larger than our human population of around 67.5 million. (4)

When it comes to the animals spending their short lives within such intensive farming systems, the most useful question for human society to ask may not be 'Do they have rights?', but 'Can they suffer?'. As science has progressed, we now know that animals do suffer in much the same way as humans. Those of us who have companion animals will know animals can experience profound joy and suffering. Yet having grown up with fairy-tale images of farmyard animals in books, media and marketing, many people never come to question the things done to animals that they have never known as individuals.

AWP believes we can no more justify keeping animals in cramped, windowless sheds without stimulation and the freedom to express behaviour normal for that species, any more than we could justify doing the same things to other human beings.

Animal Welfare Party believes in a UK where all animal exploitation is brought to an end. In the interim, we are supportive of animal welfare improvements whilst always recognising that the ultimate aim of a civilised society must be a complete end to animal exploitation.

### Ending Animal Farm Systems which are Harmful to Animals & Our Planet

- Large scale, intensive farms have the worst animal welfare potential. The establishment and development of new intensive farms must cease.

- Farming systems with the worst welfare consequences should be brought to an end, for example by replacing intensive farming by small-scale, regionally-bound, higher welfare farming systems in which animals are able to express appropriate species specific behaviour.
- Farmers who are front-runners in making these changes should receive incentives.
- Companies that do not comply with the present legislation on animal welfare should be sanctioned through fines and other penalties.
- Best husbandry practice should become the norm, rather than a niche in the market.
- Following the UK's departure from the EU, as new trade deals are negotiated, British farming must be protected against low-welfare imports.
- Foie gras (goose/duck liver) production is banned in the UK. AWP seeks an immediate ban on both the import and trade of this product here.
- Labelling of all food products should be mandatory, and should include information about animal welfare, method of slaughter, use of natural resources, social conditions, impact on the natural environment and food miles. This would allow consumers to make choices in line with their own principles on the environment, health, animal welfare and the social circumstances in which a product is produced. Many consumers are unaware of the reality of how the food products they buy are produced and are shocked when they find out the truth. Labels must, therefore, provide honest and clear information on the above. For example, eggs and egg products which involve the killing of new-born male chicks as part of the production process must indicate this. Meat and poultry products must indicate whether the animal was stunned before slaughter. Misleading pictures such as laughing pigs on pork steaks and laughing cows on packets of cheese must become a thing of the past.

It is important that we reform agriculture into a high quality sector in accordance with ecological principles. Conditions for farmed animals must be continually raised and husbandry standards must, at least, include the following minimums:

- No farmed animal may be kept in a cage.

- Chickens should have access to free range outdoor runs which include naturalistic shelters. Beak trimming should be prohibited.
- Poultry farming should only use non-aggressive laying hen breeds, such as Columbian Blacktails, kept in small flocks.
- Pigs should not be tail-docked, teeth-clipped or castrated, especially without painkillers or anaesthetics. They should be kept on straw bedding and have access to enriched, outdoor areas, with the opportunity to root and access to a wallow.
- Dairy cows should have access to outdoor areas, should be able to graze on pastures, have access to adequate shelter and to comfortable bedding indoors.
- Calves should be kept with their mothers until they separate naturally.
- Breeding policies that focus on increasing production despite negative consequences for animal welfare (e.g. the extreme and unhealthy growth speed of broiler chickens and pigs; double-muscling beef cows who cannot give birth naturally, requiring caesarean sections) should be banned. Breeding policies should focus on improving welfare.
- Unnatural and often painful methods to increase reproduction in cows, such as embryo lavage, embryo transfer and hormonal fertility treatments, should be banned. Development of such methods should not be allowed if the integrity and the welfare of animals are adversely affected.
- Cloning of animals for production purposes should be prohibited. (See also Chapter 4 'Animals in laboratories').

### **Laying Hens and Male Chicks**

As a 'by-product' of the egg production industry, an estimated 40 to 45 million new born male chicks are killed each year in the UK alone, usually by being gassed, although live maceration by machine is also permitted. (5)

AWP finds such a huge waste of life impossible to justify and believes that all egg production methods which involve the killing of newly

hatched male chicks must be urgently ended. In the meantime, urgent measures must be taken to ensure that all surplus newly hatched chicks destined for disposal are treated as humanely as those not destined for disposal.

- The practice of 'disposing' of newly hatched male chicks before they are dead, in waste sacks and vats, where they frequently die from crushing or suffocation must end immediately.
- New-born chicks must not be thrown or tossed while alive.
- Since many consumers are not aware of the above realities of egg production, packaging on all eggs and egg products should provide consumers with adequate information on whether newly hatched male chicks were killed in the making of the product and, if so, by which method. This would allow consumers to make informed purchasing choices in line with their own principles on animal welfare.

### **Reducing Live Animal Journeys**

- After decades of campaigning by many animal protection organisations, AWP welcomes the recently introduced ban on the export of certain live animals overseas for slaughter and fattening (the Animal Welfare (Livestock Exports) Act 2024). AWP will continue to monitor that the ban is implemented effectively. However, the ban is not without loopholes. Whilst it covers cows, sheep, goats, pigs and horses, it does not cover poultry exports, affecting millions of chicks every year, or decapod exports (crabs, lobsters, crayfish, shrimp, and prawns) and exports for other reasons, such as for breeding and competition and, crucially, it does not apply to Northern Ireland, from where unweaned calves continue to be exported. AWP will continue to argue that all animals, including poultry and decapods, should be protected from the horrors of live export and should be included in the ban.
- Animal journeys within the UK should be minimised, and limited to a maximum of two hours. Farms unable to meet this time limit due to, for example, geographical position and location of slaughterhouses must apply for an exemption with full supporting documentation. No exemption longer than a maximum period of eight hours should be granted. Exemptions must not be available to those transporting calves under 6 weeks of age (see below).
- We must immediately acknowledge the inability of calves under six weeks of age to cope with transport, due to their inability to regulate body temperature and immature immune systems. We must legislate now to prevent undue suffering to these vulnerable

young animals and impose a time limit of two hours, beyond which no calf under six weeks of age can be transported for any reason.

- Existing transport rules should be strictly monitored and enforced.

## **Curtailing Animal Disease**

Three out of every four new infectious disease outbreaks come from animals (zoonotic diseases). (6)

The Covid 19 Pandemic should have altered us to the devastating possibility and consequences of zoonotic disease spread. Large-scale, intensive or 'factory' farming establishments are now recognised as problematic on several fronts, not only because of serious animal welfare concerns but because they substantially increase transmission risks and susceptibility to diseases, some of which, like bird flu, may also be dangerous for people.

AWP believes intensive farming systems must be urgently brought to an end. Instead, farmers should be encouraged to transition to small-scale, well-managed farming systems, which are more conducive to the development of disease resistance.

Large-scale destruction of healthy animals during disease outbreaks should end and, where applicable, be replaced by a targeted vaccination strategy and other appropriate preventative health and welfare measures. Any non-vaccination policy (which disallows preventative vaccinations for major diseases such as foot and mouth, bluetongue, etc.) should be abolished.

During outbreaks of non-fatal diseases, infected animals should be isolated from those not infected, and appropriately treated, unless their suffering is sufficiently severe, and prognosis for recovery sufficiently poor, as to justify humane euthanasia.

To counter the very serious and growing problem of antibiotic resistance in humans and animals, administration of antibiotics in animals should be limited to genuine treatment of animal patients. The use of antibiotics as growth promoters and prophylactically (preventatively) for long periods must be brought to an end.

## **An End to Badger Culling**

AWP believes the badger cull, which was introduced by the UK government in 2013 to combat the spread of bovine TB, has been a failure in terms of science, economics, biodiversity and humaneness.

Although in 2022 the government announced the badger cull would be phased out, current licences for killing badgers run until 2025 and the possibility exists for supplementary cull licences to be issued after that point.

Already, over 230,000 protected badgers, a figure which represents half the British badger population, have been killed.

AWP firmly believes that the cull should be immediately ended and that more efficient measures can and should be taken to stop the spread of bovine TB in cattle:

### **Cattle Controls:**

The large majority (94%) of bovine TB infections are believed to be passed from cow to cow. Therefore, AWP believes in a far greater focus on controlling the spread of bovine TB in cows.

Government must support and invest in increasing the frequency of cattle testing – shown to have a significant effect on the number of infected cattle.

There must also be an increase in resources focussed on validating and approving more accurate tests.

Measures to ensure that infected cattle aren't moved from farm to farm must be strengthened.

### **Biosecurity:**

Since most outbreaks of bTB come from other cattle, farm biosecurity is key to reducing the transmission of bTB both from badgers and other cattle.

AWP believes government must focus on supporting cattle farmers to take the following steps to reduce the risk of transmission:

- Ensure correct stocking densities are maintained.

- Ensure cattle housing is clean and well ventilated.
- Ensure cattle are fed carefully balanced diets.
- Reduce opportunities for direct and indirect contact between badgers and cattle by protecting cattle sheds, feed troughs, feed stores and silage clamps.
- Source replacement animals with care.

Government must also provide answers to the public about the role hunting hounds play in transmission of bovine TB and how this is being tackled as part of an overall strategy.

### **Vaccination:**

AWP supports calls for a simultaneous vaccination programme, for both cattle and badgers, recognising that the development of an effective and appropriate vaccine for cattle must be given greater priority. More resources must be assigned to the development and roll-out of such a vaccine.

AWP is also encouraged by the results of the bovine TB reduction strategy in Wales over the past 15 years, where badger vaccination has been combined with tighter cattle testing, movement and biosecurity controls. By 2017, Welsh herds had become over 94% bTb free and, according to the Welsh government, this rate has been maintained.

### **Research:**

AWP believes that control of bTB in the long term requires further study and understanding of the following which government must prioritise and support:

- Modes of transmission.
- The genetics of resistance to TB in the dairy cow.



- The effects of breeding preferentially for milk yield via artificial insemination (AI) on the genotype of the cow.
- The effectiveness of out breeding of dairy cows to re-introduce heterozygosity or hybrid vigour.

### **Restructuring The Dairy Industry:**

AWP believes that the most significant long-term solution to the spread of bTB is a long term restructuring and de-intensification of the dairy industry to better support the health and welfare of cattle, as well as that of small farmers.

### **The Slaughter of Animals**

Hundreds of millions of animals are slaughtered within the UK each year. Apart from the ethical questions surrounding killing healthy animals to satisfy our taste preferences, many animals suffer prior to or during slaughter.

Animal Welfare Party does not support the killing of any healthy animal. In respect of animals being killed for food, we assert that the following minimum standards should apply:

- Slaughter should be conducted as close as possible to the point of production.
- All slaughterhouses must have independently monitored CCTV to act as a deterrent to abuse and the flouting of animal welfare laws.
- All slaughter without prior stunning (non-stun slaughter) should be banned.
- High concentration CO2 gassing must be banned.
- The negative mental impact of slaughter on slaughterhouse staff should be recognised and a programme to allow slaughterhouse staff no cost access to counselling outside of the workplace should be introduced.

## **Fishing and Fish Farming**

Low numbers of fish stocks remain a cause of concern for marine scientists. North Sea cod numbers are believed to be at a critically low population size. Mackerel and blue whiting are also extremely low. In fact half of the UK's top 10' fish stocks, which the fishing industry relies upon, are thought to be overfished. Despite this, Government has ignored scientific advice on protecting fish stocks and set catch limits too high. Furthermore, fish suffer the cruellest catching and killing methods yet the welfare of fish is rarely considered.

### **Restoring Marine Life:**

- Fish should not be caught in areas where stocks are low. Catch limits must be set in line with the science.
- AWP welcomes the creation of more marine conservation zones in recent years but we believe it is crucial for more zones to be created.
- Deep sea fishing should be banned.
- Destructive fishing methods, such as trawling, should be banned.
- Fuel tax concessions for the fishing industry must be ended. These and other subsidies should be redirected into a social plan and used, in part, to retrain those currently working in the fishing industry and redeploy them within sustainable sectors.

### **Controls:**

- Whilst fishing continues, only fishing methods that prevent marine mammals being trapped in fishing nets should be used.
- Penalties for fishing companies violating conservation regulations should increase significantly.

## **Methods of Killing Fish and Other Marine Life:**

- Fish should be protected from suffering before being killed. Fish should be included within all legislation on the killing and slaughter of animals.
- Fish harvesting continues to use methods such as suffocation in air, exsanguination without stunning, carbon-dioxide stunning and ice chilling, which cause unnecessary suffering. AWP believes alternative slaughter methods that reduce pain and stress prior to death should always be used.
- The cooking alive of decapods, including lobsters, crabs and prawns, must be prohibited.
- The sale of live decapods to the public must be prohibited.

## **Farmed fish**

Fish farming can use kilograms of feed (including feed made of other fish and crustaceans), for each kilogram of product produced. Like all intensive farming it is extraordinarily inefficient and wasteful. Vast areas of marine ecosystems and mangrove forests are being damaged due to the large-scale harvesting of fish and crustaceans as feed for farmed fish.

AWP therefore believes that fish farming should be brought to an end.

## **Animals Kept and Killed for their Fur**

Although breeding animals for fur is prohibited in the UK, across Europe millions of foxes, chinchillas, rabbits, mink and other animals are kept in tiny cages and farmed for their fur. Some of these animals would naturally roam many miles each day. AWP believes this cruel exploitation of animals cannot be justified and supports all those working to close fur farms internationally.

To play our part in ending this cruelty, we believe it is high time the trade and import of all fur products into the UK is banned. In the meantime, existing regulations must be strictly monitored and enforced, such as the import ban on dog and cat, and seal fur.

Whilst fur products continue to be sold in the UK, we believe labelling must be made clearer, providing information on the origin of the fur, the number of animals killed to make that specific product and the method by which the animals were killed. This would allow consumers to make informed purchasing choices in line with their own principles on animal welfare.

### **City Farms and Sanctuaries, Large Animal Companions, and Working Animals**

- Large animals are sometimes kept at city farms, as companion animals or working animals. City farms should operate as animal sanctuaries, where animals are not sent to slaughterhouses.
- Together with education, enabling rescued animals to live out their lives without undue suffering should be the main focus of city farms.
- Those who keep farm animals for non-production purposes should have an ownership licence (see chapter 3 'Animal Companions').

## **3. Animal Companions**

### **Abandoned Animals**

The UK's companion animal population has grown significantly in recent years. Companion animals are a common feature in our lives and family make-up with an estimated 28% of UK adults sharing their home with a dog and 24% sharing their home with a cat. (7)

The Covid 19 lockdowns led to a huge rise in the number of dogs and cats being kept and there are now estimated to be between 12 million dogs in the UK and 11 million cats (source Statista 2024).

Despite animals providing us with invaluable companionship, their needs can be overlooked and when they are injured, ill or in need, too often they receive inadequate support.

Animals are also vulnerable to being handed over or surrendered to shelters and rescue centres or even abandoned when their family's circumstances change.

Stray cats particularly, may suffer from hunger and thirst, pain, injury, disease, discomfort and fear. They are usually not neutered, and reproduce rapidly when resources allow, further exacerbating the problem.

Following the lockdown spike in companion animal ownership, many animals were later surrendered, leaving UK shelters and rescue centres often at capacity. Although official figures are lacking, thousands of surrendered or abandoned healthy dogs are believed to be killed or euthanised each year due to lack of capacity at shelters and in facilities operated on behalf of local authorities.

Meanwhile, thousands of puppies, kittens and other companion animals continue to be bred and sold for profit each year.

Animal Welfare Party would seek to better protect companion animals by ensuring families (owners) are better prepared and informed before taking on a companion animal and better supported to care for the needs of an animal throughout his or her life.

AWP advocates the following measures:

- The introduction of a UK-wide animal abandonment prevention plan – taking in public education and expectation management on companion animal ownership, improving access to animal health care, neutering and encouraging the re-homing of existing animals.
- Foster respect for and understanding of the human / animal bond and 'cradle to grave' ethos of good pet stewardship pushing for vastly increased provision for pets in social housing developments and the private rented sector.

- End the advertisement for sale, and the sale of all companion animals (pets) in retail stores and online.
- A companion animal licensing system should be established. Mandatory requirements would include minimum age limits (e.g. 18 years of age) for licence-holders, and the successful completion of a responsible animal care certificate (as is the case, for example, in Switzerland), appropriate to the species in question.
- Annual maintenance of the licence would require mandatory neutering of cats and dogs by sexual maturity or earlier, other than in very special circumstances; compliance with basic preventative healthcare measures such as vaccination and parasite control; annual veterinary check-ups; mandatory identification and registration, through both externally-visible identification and micro chipping; and maintenance of companion animal insurance designed to fund unexpected medical or surgical expenses. Limitations would be imposed on numbers of animals that may be kept at each address, relative to the type of housing.
- Tighten the licensing of breeders and breeding facilities – with registration required for all sellers and licences required for anyone selling more than one litter of puppies or kittens per year. A list of registered breeders should be made publicly accessible.
- Regulate rehoming organisations and sanctuaries so that unscrupulous puppy traders cannot pass off as rehoming organisations or sanctuaries in order to flout the law.
- Introduce compulsory neutering of all companion mammals to avoid unnecessary breeding. In cases where one litter is desired, a time limited licence would be applied for.
- Ensure that local authorities are fully equipped to house and adequately care for abandoned animals. Each area should have at least one Animal Protection Officer with expertise in animal welfare and powers of seizure, who can investigate complaints, and enforce the licensing system.
- Killing or euthanasia of healthy animals must be avoided at all costs. All animals must be scanned and ‘owners’ or the registered back-up attempted to be contacted when any euthanasia request is made and before being undertaken (Tuk’s Law).
- Revise the Pet Travel Scheme (PETS) to counter abuse of the system so that puppies under the age of 10 months are no longer

allowed entry into the UK.

- Strengthen the Animal Welfare Act, improve Border control and enforcement at British ports with sight checks mandatory for all imported animals, spot checks and increased penalties for offenders (those found attempting to import animals without correct documentation or abusing the PETS scheme).
- The UK Government must be supported in the establishment of a central equine database and single passport issuing authority to promote responsible horse ownership.

### **Companion Animal Neglect and Cruelty**

Animal neglect and abuse remains widespread, even though the UK Animal Welfare Act 2006 includes a 'duty to care'.

UK animal charities are frequently required to provide the material and financial resources for interventions – including prosecution of animal abusers – without government assistance. Animal Welfare Party believes more resources should be available for law enforcement.

Companion animal abduction has also grown in recent years and AWP welcomes the introduction of the Pet Abduction Act 2024 for England and Northern Ireland which recognises that cats and dogs are not inanimate objects but sentient beings and makes such abduction a criminal offence.

### **The Dangerous Dogs Act and the XL Bully Ban**

Animal Welfare Party has been deeply saddened by a number of horrific attacks in recent years by dogs believed to be of the XL Bully breed. We want to see an end to such incidents. However, we have long maintained that bans on particular breeds alone are not an effective solution to preventing dog attacks and that, without a wider social approach, dog attacks will continue.

Animal Welfare Party believes that the 1991 Dangerous Dogs Act (DDA) was rushed through Parliament as a knee-jerk reaction following a dog attack incident. 33 years later, despite revision, many organisations find that the Act is ineffective, costly and unworkable, leads to much suffering and the killing of healthy, non-aggressive dogs. Meanwhile the number of dog bites is increasing every year. AWP believes the DDA must be replaced with more effective legislation and a considered programme addressing all contributing factors to dog attacks.

A school of thought now maintains that most dogs bite out of fear and few are aggressive biters.

'Dangerous' status dogs, or 'dogs as weapons' are considered fashionable within certain subcultures. AWP believes that it is a lack of a responsible approach by owners, some of whom deliberately train animals to fight and attack, that needs to become the focus in any plan to reduce incidents of aggression.

Such a plan must include a compulsory registration scheme, humane education, strict enforcement, tougher penalties for animal abuse and more local council animal welfare officers on the street. Human and animal agencies need to collaborate to tackle these issues. These problems affect both animals and people and the root causes must be addressed via coordinated strategies.

Recognising that the current breed specific ban appears arbitrary and unscientific, we believe compulsory individual aggressive dog behaviour tests, and a ban on breeding dogs that do not meet certain criteria (e.g. dogs that fail behaviour tests), are likely to be more effective.

## **Animal Health and Care**

Animals often provide invaluable companionship but their needs can be overlooked and when they are injured, ill or in need, too often they receive inadequate support.

Although very basic emergency treatment is available from veterinarians free of charge, and although charities can assist some guardians unable to afford ongoing veterinary care, far too many animals fail to receive the care they deserve because of financial limitations of guardians and limitations on available charitable support. Euthanasia or inadequate care frequently result.



Similarly, financial constraints, and lack of knowledge of, or interest in, responsible pet care, result in many animals being denied the benefits of basic preventative health-care measures, such as vaccination, parasite control, dental care and neutering.

Animal Welfare Party believes that:

- In the small number of cases where no companion animal insurance is in place, there should be government funding for basic and emergency services provided through existing private veterinary clinics, hospitals and charities.
- Rescue centres, rehabilitation and re-homing facilities for domestic and wild animals should receive financial support from Government.
- Legislation and regulations against animal neglect and abuse should be strengthened, through a range of measures, including:
  - (i) increased powers of inspection and seizure for police and licensed inspectors.
  - (ii) mandatory completion by offenders of a responsible animal care certificate (see above) appropriate to the species in question, regardless of any prior certification.
  - (iii) increased penalties for offenders, including imposing relevant community service.
  - (iv) Resources for the implementation and enforcement of such legislation and regulations against animal neglect and abuse should be increased.
  - (v) Organisations and animal shelters that conduct inspections, animal seizures, provide shelters for animals, or prosecute animal abusers, should receive adequate government funding. Statutory regulation of animal sanctuaries should be introduced.
  - (vi) Whilst companion animal overpopulation persists, Government must seek to limit the breeding of cats and dogs and encourage re-homing instead.

- (vii) Breeding of companion animals to meet breed standards, or for other purposes, that result in hereditary anatomical, physiological or other impairments likely to be contrary to good welfare, must always be prohibited. All breeding establishments must be independently inspected and tightly regulated.
- (viii) A complete ban on the sale of animals online and in shops of any kind should be introduced.
- (ix) Establishments selling animals should be subjected to mandatory regulation in accordance with best practice principles, including with respect to stocking densities, health and husbandry standards, independent, unannounced inspections, and a range of penalties that could include revocation of licences, fines and custodial sentences, where violations are apparent.
- (x) The import of ear-cropped dogs and the sale of items for ear cropping must be prohibited.

### **"Exotic" Animals in Captivity**

Non-domesticated species also suffer as human companions. The stresses such animals may endure during, for example, capture from the wild, transportation and confinement, and poor husbandry conditions at markets or in pet shops result in a high incidence of major health and welfare problems, and premature deaths.

Wildlife trading also contributes to decreases in wild populations of many birds, mammals, reptiles and (ornamental) fish.

Almost all exotic animals experience unnecessary suffering and / or inability to express normal, species-specific behaviour in captivity in the UK.

For the reasons above, Animal Welfare Party calls for:

- A ban on the import of live exotic animals including their eggs, and an end to the granting of licences to those involved in the exotic pet trade with clear exemptions for rescuers and licenced rescue / re-homing centres.
- The breeding of exotic animals must no longer be permitted with a long term goal of phasing out exotic animal ownership.

## **Human-Animal Relationships**

Humans may also suffer as a result of poor policies on animals. For example, many social housing organisations and care homes have policies prohibiting companion animals. This means some people have to surrender their existing companion animals in order to live there. At the same time, some residents live in relative isolation due to reduced social networks, and for these people, companion animals may be extremely important. Animal Welfare Party believes that companion animals should be permitted within social housing settings and care homes, providing their own needs can be satisfactorily met.

Sociological evidence has demonstrated strong links between domestic violence and cruelty towards animals. Children who are cruel to animals in childhood may progress to being violent toward people, as adults. Recognition of such a connection is of use to social workers and others trying to protect children and adults from potentially violent individuals. Therefore, Animal Welfare Party believes a national register of animal abusers, which all agencies have access to, must be established. By acting promptly on cases of animal abuse, it may be possible to prevent further acts of violence towards people or animals.

Animal Welfare Party believes that social and healthcare workers and other authorities should be better informed about the animal-human violence link, encouraged to work cooperatively with each other on this issue and required to report suspected animal abuse to the appropriate authorities, in the hope of mitigating potential future abuse of animals or people.

## **Sentencing**

Animal Welfare Party calls for the maximum custodial sentence that can be handed down to those convicted of animal cruelty in England and Wales to be increased from 5 to 10 years.

The UK is a country with a proud history of thought leadership in animal welfare but several countries and states have set higher sentencing standards for animal cruelty. In the US states of Louisiana, Alabama, Connecticut and Massachusetts the maximum custodial sentence for animal cruelty is ten years'. In Ukraine the maximum custodial sentence for animal cruelty is eight years' while in the Australian state of Queensland and the US state of New Hampshire the maximum custodial sentence for animal cruelty is seven years'

imprisonment.

Therefore, AWP asserts that the maximum sentence for the worst cases of animal cruelty should be ten years' imprisonment. This, we believe, would more adequately reflect the seriousness of the offences and act as a more meaningful deterrent to the worst cases of animal abuse.

## **Human-Animal Conflicts**

As a dominating species, humans are often involved in requiring that nature and wild animals squeeze into smaller and smaller spaces or fit in with our plans.

The rise in the use of bird netting is one example of this.

Bird netting or anti-bird netting is a form of wild bird 'pest' control. It is netting used to prevent birds such as pigeons from reaching certain areas and is often installed under bridges or on buildings. However, often the netting doesn't effectively keep birds away and can cause them instead to become entangled and die. As much as birds may struggle it is very difficult to escape and many die a slow, agonising death from starvation or strangulation. Pigeons, doves, gulls, crows, jackdaws and starlings are all being killed in this way.

- Animal Welfare Party believes there is no place in a civilised society for such a form of wild animal control and that this use of bird netting must be banned.
- Until such a ban comes into force, offenders should be prosecuted under the 2006 Animal Welfare Act which states that is an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to any animal.

The use of netting by developers to prevent birds nesting in hedgerows is a similar problem. In a rising number of cases, developers, and other interested parties are attempting to circumvent laws protecting birds by 'netting' hedgerows in advance of development to prevent birds from nesting there. Once again, the netting poses a great risk of entrapment for birds and is something many members of the public have become appalled to see.

- Animal Welfare Party believes that 'netting' hedgerows to prevent birds from nesting must become a criminal offence.

### **'Invasive' Alien Species (IAS)**

The UK Government has proposed wide-ranging culls (killing) of 'non-native species' while at the same time, the new 'Invasive Alien Species' law also makes the rescue and release non-native animals such as grey squirrels and Muntjac deer illegal.

AWP maintains that all wild animals should be treated with respect and compassion and that such approaches to population management shame our nation. Culling a species because of its origins is unethical. We also believe that wildlife rescue centres should not have to choose between subjecting wild animals to an unnatural life in captivity, or being forced to kill them to satisfy the law.

AWP calls for this draconian piece of legislation to be revoked and for more compassionate solutions to solving human-animal conflict to be pursued.

### **4. Ending Harmful Animal Use in Research and Education**

Animal Welfare Party finds animal experimentation morally objectionable. In the UK, the number of scientific experiments using animals has not fallen significantly, despite commitments by successive governments to reduce their use. 2022 still saw 2.76 million scientific procedures involving living animals take place. (8)

A substantial body of large-scale systematic, unbiased reviews published within scientific journals have clearly demonstrated that the human clinical and biomedical utility of invasive animal experiments is generally poor.

The costs of such research in terms of animal, human and financial resources is usually very high. Animals are sentient beings who often suffer in laboratory environments and during scientific procedures. Accordingly, such experiments cannot normally be justified on a cost-benefit basis. In addition, very strong arguments proposed by philosophers and others assert that animal interests deserve serious consideration, independent of any possible human value, and that animals should not be treated as disposable tools to further human goals, which range from the trivial to the serious.

Large-scale scientific reviews have also described the ongoing development of non-animal methodologies within biomedical research, toxicity testing, and education. A substantial body of educational studies have clearly established that students from virtually all educational disciplines using humane learning methodologies nearly always achieve learning outcomes at least equivalent – and often superior – to those achieved through harmful animal use.

We must, therefore, end animal experimentation with binding targets for reduction, combined with proper funding and real support for non-animal methods.

Animal experiments must be replaced by humane, modern techniques in which animals do not suffer. Whilst animal experiments continue, public scrutiny must be increased.

AWP asserts that:

- The use of primates in animal experiments must end immediately. In 2022 1,820 primates were used in experiments in the UK. There were 2,197 procedures using primates comprising cynomolgus monkeys (2,024 procedures), rhesus monkeys (101 procedures) and marmosets and tamarins (72 procedures). (8)
- All UK ports & airports must be closed to the import & transit of live animals inc. monkeys & other primates to supply the animal testing industries.
- The use of animals for xenotransplantation must end immediately.
- Genetic manipulation (including cloning) of animals must end immediately.
- A deadline must be set to end the ‘severe’ suffering testing category, which accounted for 3.6% of all procedures in 2022 (an increase from 2021). which may involve such morally reprehensible procedures as forcing an animal to run until he/she becomes exhausted or repeated electric shock treatment to induce a state of ‘learned helplessness’.

- The testing of chemicals used in household products must be modernised, through appropriate funding and changes to regulations, to ensure non-animal techniques are available and with a system that is ready to use them.
- We seek a ban on all harmful use of animals within biomedical research, toxicity testing and education. Only non-harmful use should be permitted. Examples include non-invasive observational or behavioural studies of domesticated species, or non-domesticated species within sanctuaries or the wild; the education of veterinary students via participation in beneficial clinical procedures on genuine animal patients; and experimental treatment of animal patients, genuinely suffering from severe, naturally-occurring disease or injury, when conventional treatment is not effective.
- Immediate, quantitative, binding targets for reductions in animal use for the UK must be set, working towards an end goal of zero for all harmful animal use procedures - these having been replaced by non-harmful or non-animal alternatives. The delivery of this plan should be overseen by a dedicated Minister.
- Criteria to approve animal experiment licence applications should become harder to meet. We believe applications for animal experiments must be subject to much stricter requirements, i.e. an extensive and thorough rather than cursory prior review of the relevant scientific literature. Applications for experiments that are not deemed to be of significant importance, should not be granted.
- Mandatory, independent ethical review of all experimental protocols should be implemented as a condition of licensing, with ample opportunity for prior, independent and public scrutiny of such protocols.
- The composition of ethics committees must be balanced to allow for more expert animal welfare opinion.
- Mandatory retrospective evaluation should be introduced to assess the degree to which experimental objectives were successfully met, the extent to which animals suffered, to help inform both future research and further experimental licensing decisions.
- Mandatory compliance should be a prerequisite for (public) funding of experiments, licence approval, and publication of results, with a range of best practice standards, and each of the 3Rs: replacement, reduction and refinement of animal use implemented before and during experiments. These would include: minimum standards relating to animal sourcing, housing, environmental

enrichment, opportunities for social interaction for social species, appropriate use of anaesthetics and analgesics (painkillers), animal handling, non-invasive endpoints, and statistical input during experimental design.

- Unwarranted experimental duplication happens far too often and is quite simply unjustifiable. We call for mandatory prompt, public sharing of all experimental results, with a view to ending this.
- Section 24 of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 must be repealed.
- Decadops must be added to the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.
- The cosmetics testing ban must be strengthened by enshrining in law the 1998 ban, covering ingredients used both predominantly and exclusively in cosmetics, so as to prevent against any reversal in secret.
- Animal experiments for the development of patents should no longer be permitted.
- Funding for the further development, scientific validation and implementation of alternative methodologies must be vastly increased. Validation processes for non-animal methodologies must be improved so that non-animal methods can be used without unnecessary delay.
- The UK government must support the development of a well-funded national Centre of Excellence in the Development of Non Animal Methodologies.
- We call for increased, compulsory training and continuing professional development in experimental best practice standards and non-animal methodologies for all animal researchers and technicians.
- The breeding of lab animals and killing of surplus animals must end.
- We believe there is a moral imperative to provide independently-scrutinised sanctuaries, maintained to high welfare standards, funded by industries and sectors using animals, for those animals retired from laboratory animal use, in which such animals shall



be housed for the remainder of their natural lives.

## 5. Animals in Entertainment and Sport

### Traditional Use of Animals and ‘Bloodsports’

The ‘traditional’ use of animals in ‘entertainment’ often causes severe suffering and death, and is absolutely unnecessary. Such harmful animal use for entertainment or non-essential luxuries should be banned in the UK.

In the UK, hundreds of thousands of people can easily obtain a licence to stalk and kill deer and hunt or shoot other species.

The cruelty of bloodsports such as various forms of hunting, hare coursing, and game shooting is obvious, and Animal Welfare Party believes these practices are not ethically justifiable. As a purported measure to control populations they are also discredited.

Animal Welfare Party believes the fox hunting ban must be strengthened. Although banned in law with overwhelming parliamentary and public support, hunting with hounds continues in practice under the guise of ‘trail’ hunting, and successful prosecutions are rare.

Other forms of hunting, such as ‘canned hunting’ and pheasant shoots (involving animals kept in tiny cages, usually for long periods, and released just before being shot), are equally unjustifiable. The rear and release of non-native gamebirds is widespread across all parts of the UK, in varying degrees of intensity. According to latest estimates, 40.6 million gamebirds are released each year into the UK countryside. This includes 31.5 million pheasants, and 9.1 million red-legged partridges (Madden 2021). Not only is this practice environmentally destructive, it also poses a risk for the spread of infectious diseases such as Avian influenza.

Angling also causes extreme suffering and pain to fish.

Therefore, Animal Welfare Party seeks a ban on all hunting and killing for ‘sport’:

- All bloodsports should be banned without loopholes - this includes the cruel and environmentally harmful production and release of pheasants and partridge for shooting and ‘trail’ hunting because of evidenced wildlife crime committed on some trail hunts

- The existing Hunting Act should be tightened and more strictly enforced in the following ways:
  - (i) The use of dogs below ground should be prohibited.
  - (ii) A 'recklessness' provision should be inserted to stop hunters using the false alibi of trail hunting.
  - (iii) Sentencing powers should be increased so that a maximum penalty of 6 months' imprisonment may be handed down.
  - (iv) The Observation and Research exemption must be removed.
  - (v) The available time to charge suspects with breaching the Act should be extended from 6 months to 1 year.
  - (vi) A 'vicarious liability' clause should be included to cover the employers and landowners of those in breach of the Act.
  - (vii) The burden of proof in "exempt hunting" cases should be reversed.
  
- Wild animal population control (the necessity of which is questionable) should be carried out by trained, authorised, professional wildlife officers, with invasive methods avoided at all costs.
  
- Organisations should not be allowed to promote the use of guns to school-children.
  
- Harmful animal use should no longer be allowed within any type of art, fashion, cultural exhibition or entertainment.

## **Animals and Fireworks**

Fireworks are a considerable cause of stress and distress for many companion animals, wild animals and people. Many lives are blighted for months on end by the unpredictable loud 'bangs' of fireworks which cause distress and panic. Every year, deaths and injuries result from animals being frightened by fireworks.

Animal Welfare Party believes that, as a nation with a proud history of thought leadership on animal welfare, it should no longer be deemed acceptable to pollute, with extreme noise, the environment that we share with the animals around us - be they companion or wild.

Therefore, following similar trends in other countries and cities, we maintain that all but silent fireworks should now be banned.

## **Racing Animals**

For the animals involved, both horse and greyhound racing are dangerous and deadly sports.

In 2023, 176 racehorses died on UK tracks. (9)

In 2023, 105 greyhounds died on UK tracks, while 101 died away from the tracks and there were 4,238 injuries on Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB) tracks. (10)

Animal Welfare Party maintains that, in the year 2024, animals should not suffer and die in the course of humans being entertained and that the death rates above would not be tolerated if the athletes were human. We call for an end to the commercial racing of horses and dogs.

We have also long called for an immediate end to the Grand National Steeplechase.

The greyhound and horse racing industries frequently ignore animal welfare regulations, and hundreds of animals suffer and die each year on and off the tracks. These industries are part of the betting industry, and frequently lead to unethical practices.

Most people regard these races as a harmless or natural sport, which the animals enjoy, but they are far removed from natural canine and equine behaviour. Approximately 13,000 foals are born into the closely-related British and Irish racing industries each year, yet only around 40% go on to become racers. (11)

Those horses who do not make the grade may be slaughtered for meat, or repeatedly change hands in a downward spiral of neglect.

Of those horses who do go on to race, many are raced to death every year. In 2023, a horse died almost every other day. AWP believes such a state of affairs brings great shame upon our nation and must not continue.

Similar to the greyhound industry, in which thousands of dogs are raced to death or discarded, commercial horse racing is a ruthless

industry motivated by financial gain and prestige.

Accordingly, Animal Welfare Party calls for an urgent end to the commercial racing of horses and dogs.

As long as animals continue to be raced, AWP maintains the following:

- A new, independent body to regulate and oversee the welfare of horses in the horse racing industry must be established.
- No new animal race tracks should be established.
- Use of the whip must no longer be permitted in horse racing.
- The greyhound and horse racing industries must establish funds to care for all retired racing animals.
- A total ban on the export of greyhounds should be introduced.
- Despite calls for and opportunities to make significant safety improvements over recent years, a high number of horses continue to be killed or injured whilst taking part in the Grand National steeplechase and over the course of the three day Grand National festival. Such cruelty to animals can not be justified by popularity and has no place in modern Britain. Therefore the race must now be banned.

## **Circuses**

Following the Wild Animals in Circuses Act 2019 (England) and 2020 (Wales), the use of wild animals in circuses has been brought to an end. AWP has long called for a ban on all animal use in circuses. We believe the law must be revised to include domestic animals so that all animals are equally protected from undue suffering and exploitation.

## Zoos

The implicit educational message conveyed by keeping animals in zoos is that keeping wild animals in small, inadequate enclosures, sometimes without other animals of their own kind, is justified to entertain or educate us. However, many animals suffer due to not being able to display normal, species-specific behaviour. They often develop behavioural problems (e.g. boredom, 'pacing' or excessive aggression) and experience stress. As a result, they may also be more susceptible to certain diseases. Learning about wild animals can be achieved without seeing live animals confined in unnatural enclosures. Documentaries, wildlife magazines, websites and other sources provide excellent learning materials that are not ethically problematic. Zoos do not teach respect for life, and can no longer be justified.

AWP maintains that the worst zoos should be closed immediately, with remaining animals either being placed within sanctuaries or sent to zoos with higher welfare standards. The higher-standard zoos should be urgently transitioned towards non-animal zoos, or be turned into animal sanctuaries.

Animal Welfare Party believes that:

- State-of-the-art non-animal zoos should be established in the UK, and existing zoos should be turned into animal sanctuaries where all animals are allowed to live out their natural lives. Zoos, aquaria, dolphinariums and 'entertainment' establishments, which have animals on display should be phased out, and new establishments should be prohibited.
- Existing enclosures should be improved to ensure compliance with the highest welfare standards. Enclosures that house species, which are unfit for captivity, should be closed. The housing of animals must resemble their natural living conditions as much as possible.
- Breeding of species kept in zoos that are not included within conservation or reintroduction programmes should be banned.
- Conservation programmes in native habitats, rather than captivity, should be supported to mitigate habitat destruction by urban development and farming.
- Zoos that fail to comply with regulations should close. Animals from zoos that are being closed should be given adequate refuge in

sanctuaries or zoos with higher welfare standards.

- All zoos should be transitioning towards becoming animal-free zoos or animal sanctuaries.
- Zoos must serve as a sanctuary for animals who cannot be re-socialised and or rehabilitated in their original living environment or who cannot be relocated for other reasons.
- Providing shelter to sea mammals in need must be the only purpose of keeping sea mammals in captivity.

## 6. Animals in the Wild

### Wildlife Protection At Home

Ending the destruction of wildlife habitats, and subsequent extinction of endangered species, should be considered a top priority by Government. UK coastal areas and marine reserves are receiving more attention; however, this should be extended to all areas of ecological importance.

- As humans encroach upon the natural habitat of wild animals, their living environment is constantly diminishing. As a result, animals live closer to humans, and are frequently considered a nuisance. In an increasing number of cases, human-wildlife conflict ensues. Often, human methods of controlling wild animals lead to suffering and / or death. Animal Welfare Party believes wild animals should be allowed to live undisturbed, as much as possible.
- The intrinsic value and protection of the animals must be the starting point for this policy.
- Populations must be given the chance to restore their natural balance if disrupted.
- All blood sports, including recreational hunting, should be banned without loopholes. The trading of products that have been

obtained through recreational hunting must also be outlawed.

- Wild animal 'population control' (the necessity of which we question) should be carried out only by trained, authorised, professional wildlife officers, with invasive methods avoided at all costs.
- Human-wildlife conflicts must be resolved in an animal-friendly way. The UK should find humane solutions to human-animal conflicts due to habitat loss and migration of wild animals into urban areas. Animals that cause excessive damage should be dealt with humanely, and never be hunted by people for sport or entertainment.
- All snaring and trapping devices should be banned.
- Organisations that confiscate (wild) animals from harmful ownership, provide sanctuary, or prosecute animal abusers should receive government funding.
- Hunting tourism must be addressed. UK travel organisations should not be allowed to offer hunting trips such as hunting safaris in Africa.

### **International Wildlife Protection**

The trade in endangered species has developed into a ruthless form of crime. The lack of compliance with international treaties and political will to stop endangered species from being illegally traded is deeply disappointing.

- The UK must comply, as a bare minimum, with the international agreements on the protection of endangered species (CITES / Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species). Measures must be taken to halt the large-scale smuggling of wild animals, receive assistance with the inspection of smuggling routes on their borders, and educate citizens not to buy endangered animals or products made from wild animals.
- Additional control at borders is essential. Penalties for offenders should increase and international cooperation and integration of

data on wildlife crime should be enhanced.

- The UK must support the protection of wild animals within their countries of origin, and local authorities should be supported in combating illegal trade.
- The UK must play its role in improving CITES agreements. It must urge action on banning the commercial hunting of polar bears in Canada, opposing any relaxation of trade restrictions on ivory elsewhere.
- The UK must ban all trade in cruelty, including stopping imports of fur, foie gras and hunting trophies, and adopting core welfare standards for all trade.

### **Marine Animal Protection:**

Despite the international moratorium on commercial whaling, hundreds of whales are still killed every year. The Animal Welfare Party believes that the UK must use its international clout to make greater efforts to bring these activities to an end.

- AWP believes there is a need for a comprehensive overarching legislative framework for the effective protection of marine mammals from all threats. We believe it is necessary to expand the protection of marine animals under the framework of the International Whaling Commission (IWC), which should be reformed to an International Marine Council (IMC). Its remit should include protection of dolphins, sharks, rays, seals, turtles and other marine animals.
- The UK must actively oppose seal hunting in other countries.
- The UK must urge the international community to enforce the moratorium on whaling in the strictest terms. Sanctions must be imposed on countries that disregard that moratorium and these countries reported to the International Court.
- The UK must actively oppose the slaughter of dolphins in Japan and the Faroe Islands.



## 7. Environment

### Nature and Biodiversity

Many of us are now aware of the global biodiversity crisis that now confronts us. Between 1 and 2 million species worldwide are estimated to be at risk of extinction. (12)

Closer to home, the 2023 UK State of Nature report indicated one in six species is at risk of extinction in Great Britain. (13)

Worldwide, large areas of tropical rain forest and other vulnerable areas are cleared each year to grow animal feed. Due to the rapidly diminishing number of trees that can absorb CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere, this further increases the impact of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Such clearing also results in massive biodiversity loss. Conversely, re-forestation and re-wilding represent a major opportunity to reduce the impact of our carbon emissions and restore biodiversity.

Here in the UK, primary forests, woodlands, hedgerows, wildflower meadows, gardens, hedges and other biologically diverse ecosystems have disappeared or, in the case of rivers and streams, been polluted, at a very rapid rate along with many species that live in these habitats. Such loss can be attributed to human encroachment, fragmentation, climate change, industrial and farming practices, animal agriculture and hunting.

Nature restoration and the promotion of biodiversity are vital to facilitate the return of species to their original habitats. Conservation of nature and wildlife must become a matter of the highest priority, and the extinction of plant, animal and insect species must be halted. Public education campaigns on the value of biodiversity, aimed at all ages and running across all touch points must be initiated.

In many parts of the UK, green spaces and places are isolated patches scattered across regions. An intelligent ecological plan, linking these patches via ecological 'corridors', should be developed to facilitate movement of wild animals.

A comprehensive review of rubbish disposal and actions to combat littering, dumping and plastic pollution is of utmost importance to keep the number of certain (unwanted) wild animal species down, and to prevent birds and other animals from ingesting or becoming caught in plastic and other rubbish. Such measures will enhance the environment for everyone.

Accordingly, Animal Welfare Party believes that:

- The biodiversity crisis must be prioritised in all decision-making.
- Rewilding must become a key part of our conservation strategy.
- Nature reserves, parks and green corridors should be preserved and vastly expanded, to facilitate green recreation and wildlife protection.
- Farmers must continue to be supported to return land to rewilding.
- UK conservation programmes in-situ (i.e. within natural habitats, rather than captivity) should be funded to restore natural habitats and to offset urban environmental impact.
- Local and national authorities should take rapid and effective measures to protect surface and groundwater.
- Organisations polluting our water systems must be sanctioned.
- Importation of products such as unsustainably-managed timber and palm oil, which adversely affect biodiversity internationally, should be banned.

## **Plastic Pollution**

A toxic mix of plastics is currently polluting our oceans, rivers and countryside with severe consequences for our environment and wildlife. The previous UK government pledged that the UK would become a world leader in tackling plastic pollution. For this ambition to become a reality an action plan which acknowledges all sources of plastic pollution and the environmental and social impact is necessary. An end goal must be set of reducing plastic pollution to near zero. At the same time, a wholesale transition away from

single-use plastic must also become an urgent priority. Therefore, AWP believes that:

- The production and sale of all non-essential single-use plastics use must be ended with targets clearly set for a reduction and taxes used to reinforce these.
- Economic incentives are needed to drive consumer behaviour change and reduce usage.

## **Climate Change**

The effects of climate change have now been felt by almost all of us in the form of extreme weather events but those experiencing the worst effects so far are often the most vulnerable: those in developing countries, animals, insects, marine species and plants.

Whilst the UK ratified the Paris Agreement on climate change, which commits to holding temperature rise to 2C - preferably 1.5C above pre-industrial levels, and the 2023 Carbon Budget Delivery Plan is intended to be a roadmap for meeting net zero emissions by 2050, the effectiveness of Government strategy proposed to achieve this has been seriously called into question and the country's progress is now, more than ever, a matter of extreme concern.

Climate targets, including the UK's pledge under international law to achieve a two-thirds cut in emissions by 2030, are feared to be very much off track.

Without major societal changes, AWP believes these targets are at serious risk of not being met with grave consequences for all ecosystems and species including our own.

AWP believes we must aim to reach Net Zero Status before 2045 while supporting all measures and community and business efforts aimed at achieving this earlier.

To this end, AWP maintains that the climate and biodiversity crises must be prioritised in all decision-making.

We believe that every decision making body in the UK should, after declaring a climate emergency, publish their plans for how to respond

to it.

We believe there is a huge awareness gap over the role of animal product consumption in greenhouse gas emissions. Animal product consumption has risen substantially over recent years as the human population has become more affluent and those living in developing countries have begun to adopt the eating habits of those in developed countries. The global livestock (farmed animal) population is now estimated to be over 70 billion and this number is set to rise as the human population increases and demand for meat and animal products goes up.

The global livestock sector now produces more greenhouse gases than all forms of transport combined. (14) Meanwhile, methane produced by livestock is estimated to be 25 to 100 times more destructive than the carbon dioxide from vehicles.

Animals in intensive farms require feed high in protein, particularly soya, to fuel rapid growth and production of meat, milk and eggs. An estimated 50% of the grain and legumes we're now growing are to feed livestock. Much of this feed comes from soya plantations in Latin America. Over 70% of deforestation today is due to animal agriculture. (15)

Destroying rainforests to grow crops removes the trees that were acting as a 'carbon sink' absorbing carbon dioxide. With more carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere from livestock and natural carbon sinks being destroyed at a rapid rate, the adverse environmental impacts are compounded.

To achieve carbon net zero status before 2045, if not sooner, Animal Welfare Party believes that we must:

- Use all levers (tax, public procurement, public health, education) to lead on an urgent transition to a healthy and sustainable, plant-based food system.
- Re-direct subsidies away from animal agriculture and fisheries industries and into sustainable, plant-based, organic agriculture.
- Plan for and fund a rapid transition to renewable energy, including on-shore and off-shore wind.
- End all use of fossil fuels.

- Stop fracking.
- Urgently fund and action a nationwide energy efficiency policy for homes. This must include a serious programme to insulate the UK's housing stock, reducing our demand for energy, and enable gas boilers to be replaced by more sustainable alternatives on a mass scale.
- Increase UK tree cover and enhance other natural climate solutions such as soils and peatlands.
- Invest in affordable, efficient and accessible public transport.
- Fund better infrastructure for walking and cycling.
- Introduce a frequent flyer levy to reduce the number of flights taken – this would be aimed at the 15% of the UK's population who currently take 70% of all flights (Hopkinson and Cairns, 2021).
- Halt all new airport expansion.
- Policy strategy to reduce the carbon footprint of UK citizens must be urgently prioritised.
- The concept of working to personal carbon allowances or quotas must be promoted.
- The importation of grain and soya as animal feed, and feed from cleared rainforest land, should be banned.
- Compliance by suppliers with relevant animal protection and environmental regulations, and best practice standards, should be ensured through regular, unannounced, independent quality control audits.
- Intensive livestock farming industries should more accurately contribute towards the costs of repairing the environmental damage they cause, following the Danish government's lead in 2024 (the polluter-pays principle).
- Pollution controls should be effectively enforced and penalties for violators should increase.

## **Deforestation and the Poor**

Not only does the keeping of livestock (farmed animals) play a major role in global warming but the sector is also the leading source of resource consumption and environmental degradation today. To grow soya for animal feed, rainforest is now being cut down at a staggering rate. Around one third of the planet's land is becoming desert with the vast majority due to livestock grazing.

Without change, demand for soya is expected to double by 2050. Forests and other precious wildlife habitats are being destroyed to make way for crops for animal feed, pasture for grazing, and unsustainable palm oil plantations. Indigenous people also lose their territories. Rural communities are being forced off their land, and small-scale farmers are forced out by large agribusinesses.

Hence, Animal Welfare Party believes that:

- Planet-friendly farming must be supported, through the promotion of agriculture that takes account of food security, climate and biodiversity protection, rural employment, animal welfare and human health.
- The use of chemicals and pesticides must be radically reduced.
- UK companies, including supermarkets, must become accountable for the impact their products have on people and the environment.

## **Sustainable Farming & The Production of Enough Food for Everyone**

The livestock (farmed animal) sector is a major contributor to climate change and a major cause of deforestation. The sector is also the greatest contributor to water consumption. Half of the water we now consume is believed to relate to meat and dairy production. It takes around 9,500 litres of water to produce 1lb of beef. One quarter pound hamburger requires around 2,500 litres of water to produce, which is roughly the equivalent of showering for a month. Meanwhile, 1 litre of cow's milk takes around of 1,000 litres of water to produce.

Animal Welfare Party believes firmly that, as the human population is set to rise to between 9 and 10 billion by the year 2050, it will be

completely unsustainable to feed ourselves with diets based around animal products. Switching from intensive animal farming to organic animal farming offers no real solution as no less land would be used.

However, on any given area of land, it is possible to produce around fifteen times more protein from plant based sources than from animal sources. We therefore believe that environmental catastrophe can and must be averted with a global shift towards healthy, plant-based diets. This is the only way to halt and reverse rainforest destruction, and guarantee food security for the whole world, by dealing with the root cause, which is increasing demand for livestock (farmed animal) feed. We find it hugely irresponsible that successive governments in the UK have failed to take action to both close the awareness gap on the negative environmental consequences of animal product consumption and to promote a shift to healthy, plant-based diets.

The human health, animal welfare and environmental concerns of such a shift are increasingly appreciated by a growing number of people and, we believe, this will lead to a slow decline in the consumption of meat in particular. Less meat means less deforestation, less greenhouse gases and less pollution.

Here in the UK, Government must do more to support farming that is in the long-term public interest. At the same time, we must now also ensure equitable use of land and natural resources across the globe, so that UK production and consumption does not damage the environment and communities overseas.

Hence, Animal Welfare Party believes we must plan for a rapid transition to a plant-based food system, encouraging a reduction in consumer demand for animal products, and increase demand for plant based options in the following ways:

- Governments in the UK and across the developed world must use all the levers available uniquely to them to encourage a reduction in animal product consumption.
- Government must support the redirection of funds away from animal product production, to encourage animal-free farming, including production of high-protein crops, such as peas, beans and lupins. Subsidies that previously supported animal agriculture and fisheries must now be directed towards supporting plant-based agriculture and the transition to a plant-based food system.
- Organic vegetable farming must be subsidised.

- Governments must fund awareness-raising programmes on eating sustainably and healthily.
- VAT exemptions for animal products must end.
- Public money spent on food for catering in the UK amounts to around £2.4bn per year (16). This money is spent on approximately 3 million meals served each day in hospitals, schools, nurseries, care homes, prisons, the armed forces and in central government departments. AWP believes the UK public procurement policy must be substantially revised to ensure that public funds are no longer spent on products and ingredients that have negative consequences for society later down the line, either in terms of health and preventable disease and the unnecessary burden this places on the NHS or environmental damage.
- Animal Welfare Party believes that binding targets for reduction of public spending on ingredients such as refined sugar, trans fats, palm oil from unsustainable or unknown sources, alcohol, animal products and non-fair trade ingredients must be introduced. Meanwhile, sustainable, plant-based options must always be available on every menu and at every meal in hospitals, schools, nurseries, care homes, prisons, the armed forces and in central government departments.
- The UK government must seek to change consumer behaviour in order to promote health and sustainability. Taxes on products containing refined sugar, trans fats, palm oil from unsustainable or unknown sources, alcohol, animal products (relative to CO2 equivalent) and non-fair trade ingredients should be increased.
- The effort to achieve a more sustainable food pattern requires a clear standard: plant-based food should be the basis of a healthy, sustainable diet; animal proteins should be the exception.
- Opinion leaders, influencers and policy makers should walk the talk. Publicly paid for food served in the restaurants of public institutions and at official dinners should be organic and produced locally. As it would be irresponsible for public funds to be spent on the consumption of foodstuffs that are known to be harmful to the environment and/or human health, the food served should be free of or include a minimum of refined sugar, trans fats, palm oil from unsustainable or unknown sources, alcohol, animal products and non-fair trade ingredients.



## 8. Economy and Employment

Animal Welfare Party believes we need to rethink the very economic system that has been the engine not for growth but for unsustainable social debt, the depletion of the earth's resources and appalling environmental destruction.

The government must support and encourage sustainable and environmentally-friendly businesses. We need to better protect the savings and wealth of everyone in our community.

To encourage such a vital change in our economy we would:

- Promote sustainable, environmentally-friendly businesses, for the long-term benefit of society.
- Fund training and opportunities for those previously employed in the animal agriculture and fisheries industries, to move into genuinely sustainable and environmentally friendly industries.
- Stop the privatisation of public services. We need to recognise that essential public services, such as healthcare, education, transport infrastructure and energy supplies are not the same as for-profit, speculative private business ventures. Public services are vital services for citizens and the relentless focus on privatisation and profit has damaged these services and caused them to become less efficient for those who rely on them.

In order to make employment fair for all, we would:

- Increase the top tax rate to 50 per cent for those earning more than £181,000 per year (the top 1% of UK earners). AWP believes those who benefit most from the wealth created in the United Kingdom need to give more back to the society that has provided them with those benefits and the security and opportunities that arise from substantial private wealth.
- Seek to increase the minimum wage to £12 / £13.15 in London per hour (the real living wage) and make it available to all over 18, ending the unnecessary and unjustifiable discrimination against young people in the workplace.

- Seek to incentivise organisations to introduce a maximum pay ratio, whereby no member of an organisation earns greater than 75 times more than the lowest-paid worker in that organisation without the organisation being subject to an additional tax. Maximum pay ratio policies have already been introduced voluntarily (in various forms) by co-operative and true partnership organisations without adverse impact on productivity, competitiveness or profitability – in fact, it promotes all of those measures for judging the value of an enterprise. This, we believe, would further encourage wage growth amongst the lower-paid and end the "rush to the top" of salaries at executive level and re-establish a more reasonable earnings link between the lowest and highly paid in our society.

Animal Welfare Party would:

- Support a broader employment programme with greater diversity of job opportunities which will protect the United Kingdom more effectively from the pressures of a globalised economic environment.
- Further encourage and advance the availability of apprenticeships in manufacturing, digital and creative industries and other trades with Government guaranteeing additional funding for non-levy paying SMEs to meet their apprenticeship needs. This will broaden and diversify employment opportunities for young people leaving education, especially those for whom a formal academic route is now too costly or would not make the most effective use of their talents and skills.
- Improve flexible working and the availability of part-time jobs, at the same time ensuring full employment rights for all workers.
- Ensure the basic right to union membership and participation in all workplaces. No employer should be allowed to ban union membership and activity.
- Provide statutory time available to employees to take time off from work to deal with the death of a spouse, parent or child up to a maximum of ten days without incurring financial penalty from their employers or having to allocate holiday entitlement to such time off.
- Increase the penalty applied to businesses that fail to adhere to all tax rules and tighten loopholes enabling tax avoidance.

## **Economy and Agriculture**

An estimated 40-50% of all cereals are not eaten by humans, but by livestock (farmed animals). For soya the figure rises to around 75%. It can take up to 7kg of grain to make just 1 kg / 2.2 lbs of beef. (17)

Vast areas of former rainforest land are cleared to grow the feed crops necessary to produce meat. This is a highly inefficient way of producing food. Soya is mostly imported from countries such as Brazil, which has the biggest soya export market in the world. Most Brazilian soya is produced in very environmentally sensitive areas, including the Amazon rainforest and woodland savannah. This is an ecological disaster; as well as being crucial for biodiversity, rainforests are also an important carbon sink, trapping CO<sub>2</sub> that otherwise contributes to global warming.

The costs of animal products are artificially lowered through the provision of subsidies to farmers. These subsidies were meant to guarantee farm income, but have actually resulted in surpluses, and hence price collapses. Without surpluses, prices would rise and subsidies would no longer be necessary. Farmers are trapped in a system that requires even further intensification and cost reduction so that they do not run at a loss.

Worldwide livestock (animal) farming is set to double to meet growing global demand, as developing countries aspire to western levels of consumption. 1.4 billion cows eat more plant-based food than all the people of the world combined, yet only an estimated 10-15% of what they eat is turned into food for humans. Hence, Animal Welfare Party would:

- Ensure subsidies directed at animal agriculture and fisheries are roadmapped to a complete end.
- Tax the production and sale of foods linked to pollution, environmental degradation and declining health, in accordance with the 'polluter pays' principle, to partially compensate for the burden they impose on environmental and public healthcare systems.
- End the importation of crops such as soya and wheat for animal feed.

- Ensure subsidies are available to facilitate former (animal) farmers to switch part or all of their land to support trees, grains, fruit, vegetables, pulses, nuts and seeds.

## 9. Housing

Animal Welfare Party recognises the scale of the UK's housing emergency. The charity Shelter estimates that, currently, one in three adults in Britain (17.5 million people) are negatively affected by the housing crisis either by living in overcrowded, dangerous, unstable or unaffordable housing. Around 45,000 households in England are homeless. In 2023, 25,910 people were made homeless or were threatened with homelessness because of a no-fault eviction.

At the core of this crisis, has been a failure by successive governments to build enough social homes. Compounding this has been previous government policy to sell-off existing social housing stock and an increase in the participation of the private sector in social housing provision and management, which has seen a reduction in services provided and the misdirection of public funds into private profit.

Animal Welfare Party calls for:

- An ambitious plan to create homes that are both affordable and sustainable - ensuring that newly built social housing uses sustainable, environmentally-friendly methods of construction to create solidly constructed and energy efficient homes and that genuine communities are built with simple and affordable access to shops, schools, healthcare, public transport, work and play spaces.
- A focus on the use of brown-field spaces and avoidance of green-field sites for all new development
- Prioritising refurbishment over demolition, where possible, to reduce negative impact on environment and community.
- Improving the deteriorating condition of existing social housing stock, pushing a relaxation of the Affordable Homes Programme grant funding rules to allow local authorities greater flexibility in using funds to regenerate existing homes and raising property to a decent standard, allowing to grow the overall housing supply.

- Exploring ways to better make use of the vast number of existing vacant properties in the capital.
- An end to no fault evictions.
- A reduction in the influence of the private sector on the provision of housing.
- A focus on urban housing closer to major centres of commerce and employment which will also encourage more sustainable transport options for people. If people live closer to where they work and shop there is less requirement to use a car for so many journeys, but it would be more easily able to either walk or cycle.
- Stricter guidelines and more critical evaluation of major "out of town" retail developments which encourage car ownership, car use and the dissolution of communities as people travel far from where they live and work in order to buy essential goods.

## 10. Education, Culture and Science

### **Affordable Education for All**

In a progressive society, primary, secondary and tertiary (up to Bachelor's level) education must be free and accessible for all. The United Kingdom is one of the largest economies in the world and can afford to invest in future generations by providing quality education for everyone. This is an essential public service and it is the responsibility of the Government to ensure that education is run as a public service not as a market economy, and has excellence as its core value, not profit.

Nursery education should be universally available to ensure that all members of the community are involved in and can benefit from education from an early age.

### **Vocational**

Our education system should recognise the diversity of interests of the young people within the school environment and the subjects for study must reflect the different hopes and aspirations of those young people. A formal academic route may not be suitable for everyone

and it must be acknowledged and appreciated that vocational and practical education in manual skills are equally as important and useful to society as more academic educational courses.

Such options should be available within the education system to youngsters from an early age. Students should be encouraged to pursue these interests after the age of 16 rather than what is still a rather narrow focus on University as the route for educational progression. This would allow for the expansion of a skills-based job market focused on engineering, manufacturing and essential practical services.

### **Compassion and Sustainable Healthy Eating on the Curriculum**

A well-rounded educational process would comprise not only formal skills in reading, writing and arithmetic but would stimulate and encourage an artistic and cultural understanding of the world along with preparing children to fully take advantage of adult life. Teaching core values such as compassion and respect for others, and the explicit promotion of animal protection education should be integrated in curricula at every educational level.

School hatching projects of chicks and ducklings must be ended as should educational trips to zoos and aquaria.

There should be a reduction in the simplistic glorification of cruelty, violence and aggression, with a more critical approach to violent historical events such as wars and the role of oppression.

The science curriculum should have an ethical dimension that informs the debate and provides an understanding of the role of science in our society with an honest appraisal of the use on non-humans in scientific research.

With rates of depression, anxiety, self harm, drug and alcohol dependency on the rise in the UK and amongst children of school age, AWP believes it important that we begin to tackle these issues by focussing on life skills that children learn in school from a young age and that such lessons are given equal status as other more academic subjects. AWP believes all UK school children should have the opportunity to explore, understand and process ideas around failure and disappointment - including such events as family break up, relationship break up, domestic violence, bullying, abuse, not achieving the anticipated - such as exam grades, university admission, a job or certain wealth or status symbols. This, we believe, would better equip the next generation of adults with the inner resources to handle life's challenges without looking to potentially harmful or addictive short term solutions to ease emotional pain – such as the use of

drugs, alcohol, food and self harming.

With climate change one of the biggest challenges facing humanity today and with rates of preventable disease such as heart disease, diabetes and certain types of cancer also on the rise, AWP believes education on healthy and sustainable lifestyles must also be part of the curriculum from primary school age onwards. Such education must look at diet and the role that a diet high in refined sugar, trans fats, palm oil from unsustainable or unknown sources, alcohol and animal products can play in both climate change and human ill health.

Medical science education should promote a human-centric research focus based upon clinical observation, the evidence of epidemiology, the results of autopsy, and findings from human cell or tissue cultures and from relevant computer models. The current focus on the replacement of human studies and analysis with animal substitutes is a system that is holding back scientific progress, and hinders the educational development and interests of future generations of medical practitioners (see also chapter 4 Ending Harmful Animal Use in Research and Education).

Animal Welfare Party maintains that:

- Schools must receive a real-terms growth in funding.
- Urgent investment is needed to tackle the SEND funding crisis.
- Funding must be made available to address the backlog of building work required in schools.
- Recruitment into the teaching profession and retention must be encouraged by ensuring all pay awards and other new initiatives are fully funded by the government.
- School absence must be dealt with compassionately with:
  - the introduction of a mental health absence code.
  - the introduction of an attendance code of practice.
  - an end to truancy laws and criminalisation which has negatively affected women and those in lower socio-economic groups. A compassion-focussed response should instead focus upon ensuring welfare, social care, disability and SEN / educational support, mental health and appropriate healthcare needs have been assessed and provision is in place. Where it is found a

child is at risk of abuse or parental neglect, there are already mechanisms in place to address this via safeguarding and social services.

- Parents and caregivers choosing to home educate should have this decision respected and be supported.

## 11. Health, Community and Sports

### Health

AWP recognises that the Covid 19 pandemic, a long-term lack of funding and an ageing population have left the NHS in something of a crisis. Many struggle to secure GP appointments while millions are now on waiting lists for procedures.

Meanwhile, the major killers of the 20th century – heart disease and stroke, diabetes, certain types of cancer, and underlying these, obesity – impose a vast and preventable burden on health services. The single greatest causes are poor diet and inactivity; in particular, overconsumption of food ingredients such as animal and dairy fat, sugar and refined carbohydrates, which are rich in calories but low in essential nutrients.

A 2010 study by Oxford University and the British Heart Foundation found that eating meat no more than three times a week, for example, would prevent 45,000 early deaths a year in the UK and could save the NHS £1.2 billion a year. (18)

Meanwhile, a 2023 study by the Office of Health Economics shows that with 100% adoption of plant-based diets in England, there would be around 2.1 million fewer cases of disease and a total health care cost savings for the NHS could be around £6.7 billion. The potential impact of these savings, the report finds, equates to the full yearly budget of up to seven of England's hospitals, or the annual salaries of 64,990 consultants or 184,920 nurses. (19)

AWP firmly believes that we have the opportunity and means to vastly improve public health, prevent disease and prevent hospital admissions.

As with tobacco, the consequences of poor food choices should not be subsidised, and their promotion should not be state funded.



Yet understanding of the negative consequences of animal product consumption can be low, amongst both children and adult consumers, who may not know where their food really comes from, and what it does to their health.

Animal Welfare Party would:

- Always ensure access to healthcare remains free at the point of use.
- Focus on and increase funding for preventative health care with public health and awareness campaigns aimed at all ages and greater funding and subsidies to support healthy lifestyles and diets. This would reduce the financial and resource burden on the NHS that preventable diseases, such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity and certain types of cancer place.
- The promotion of healthy plant-based diets would lessen society's reliance on intensive animal agriculture and thereby reduce our vulnerability to antibiotic resistance and future zoonotic disease or pandemics, both associated with intensive animal farming.
- Reduce the influence of the private sector in the National Health Service (NHS).
- Ensure adequate funding and access to high quality primary healthcare.
- Ensure funding and support is available to train sufficient clinical staff in the UK, thereby ending our country's role in draining developing countries of their clinical professionals.

By properly funding our NHS and its workforce and encouraging and supporting healthy living throughout all stages of life and keeping people healthy rather than reacting to peoples' needs after their health is compromised, these measures would, we believe, help our NHS to be a genuine "health care" rather than "ill care" service.

### **Availability of Plant-Based Meals**

AWP believes that policies to encourage people to eat both healthily and more sustainably must work hand in hand. As stated in Chapter

## 7 – The Environment, Animal Welfare Party asserts that:

- Public money spent on food for catering in the UK amounts to around £2.4bn per year. This money is spent on 3 million meals served each day in hospitals, schools, nurseries, care homes, prisons, the armed forces and in central government departments. AWP believes the UK public procurement policy must be substantially revised to ensure that public funds are no longer spent on products and ingredients that have negative consequences for society later down the line, either in terms of health and preventable disease and the unnecessary burden this places on the NHS or environmental damage.
- Animal Welfare Party believes that binding targets for reduction of public spending on ingredients such as refined sugar, trans fats, palm oil from unsustainable or unknown sources, alcohol, animal products and non-fair trade ingredients must be introduced. Meanwhile, sustainable, plant-based options must always be available on every menu and at every meal in hospitals, schools, nurseries, care homes, prisons, the armed forces and in central government departments.
- The UK government must seek to change consumer behaviour in order to promote a healthy and sustainable world. Taxes on products containing refined sugar, trans fats, palm oil from unsustainable or unknown sources, alcohol, animal products (relative to CO2 equivalent) and non-fair trade ingredients should be increased.
- VAT exemptions on meat, dairy products and eggs, and processed foods that are high in saturated fat or sugar, must be removed to more accurately reflect the burden their consumption imposes on public healthcare systems.
- The effort to achieve a more sustainable and healthy food pattern requires a clear standard: plant-based food should be the basis of a healthy, sustainable diet; animal proteins should be the exception.

## **Nutrition Education**

Animal Welfare Party would:

- Ensure that government organisations promoting healthy eating provide clear, consistent, and evidence-based messages to the

public, rather than conflicting messages.

- End state funding of the promotion of unhealthy or unsustainable foods, such as meat, dairy and fish without stating the plant alternatives, and making explicit the advantages and disadvantages of each.
- Fund non-governmental organisations that promote healthy eating.
- Provide support for those struggling to give up unhealthy foods - comparable to existing 'quit smoking,' alcohol and drug rehabilitation programmes - recognising the addiction issues involved in giving up 'comfort' foods.
- Clearly label the proportion of calories as fat within processed foods, eliminating misleading food claims.
- End the false promotion of fish oil as an 'essential' source of essential fatty acids (EFAs). Make explicit the major problems with fish oils (sustainability, mercury, dioxins and PCBs). Stimulate and fund the promotion of cheaper and sustainable plant based EFAs that can safely be consumed every day.
- Work to end the false suggestion in advertising that meat is 'essential' for acquiring adequate protein, iron, B vitamins or any other nutrients and that dairy products are 'essential' for acquiring adequate calcium, maintaining bone health, or to prevent osteoporosis.

## **World Hunger and Famine**

The fact that millions of people are still profoundly under- and mal-nourished to the point of starvation and death in a world that creates enough food each year to feed everyone is a scar on the conscience of the UK and all other "rich" countries, and demands urgent attention at the national as well as international level.

It is a shocking statistic that around half of the world's grain and over 70% of the soya grown each year is fed to animals to eat.

Whether factory, free-range or organic farming, feeding grain and soya to livestock is a hugely wasteful use of the earth's resources.

Many argue that eating animal products is taking food from the poor to feed the rich. By eating plant foods, we are not just helping animals, but the world and all the people in it.

Accordingly, Animal Welfare Party would:

- Ban the import of grain and soya as animal feed.
- Ban the import of soya from cleared rainforest land.
- Increase the global emergency relief and development budget to support plant-based nutrition overseas, and decrease the budgets of the international financial institutions supporting animal agriculture in the global South.

## **Community Services**

AWP believes we must increase social security benefits to ensure that they meet the minimum standard for healthy living costs to provide food, clothing and warmth to those in need.

Closer collaboration is needed between services: child protection, domestic violence support, animal protection, social workers and the police to reduce the potential and incidence of violence in the home and community and social disruption.

We must increase community projects and stimulate youth programmes (through arts, sports, Summer University, and voluntary work opportunities). This will help people to feel more of a part of and the community around them, and investing time and energy in this way promotes social cohesion and a genuine sense of community.

Alongside youth programmes, we must encourage and promote more activities for the 65+ age group, recognising the value and considerable wealth of experience and wisdom held by the older members of our society. AWP would promote their role in the voluntary sector, ask for their support and help in managing community projects and encourage locally-based group meetings, to limit the social isolation felt by some within the older community.

## **Arts**

Animal Welfare Party stands for the flourishing and well-being of all life. For Humans, the arts are a key way in which we explore our relationship with the world, its beauty, its history, the transcendent and existence itself. Accordingly, AWP seeks to support the arts throughout the UK both through the Arts Council, community projects and Art Therapy provision.

Animal Welfare Party also believes wholeheartedly in the potential of the arts to communicate a wide range of social justice issues. This can include transforming the culture around animals. The creative use of arts can bring to light what is hidden in engaging, dynamic ways. It can allow people a better understanding of the challenges faced by UK wildlife as the climate and ecological emergencies take hold, as well as those endured by other animals around the country, whether in farming, entertainment, experimentation and beyond.

Many people were profoundly moved, for example, by artist Es Devlin's monumental public installation *Come Home Again*, in front of the Tate Modern in 2022, which featured an open dome decorated with the 243 priority species identified by the London Biodiversity Action Plan as declining in numbers, and which provided a platform for performance, education and conversation. Recent cuts in arts funding are a serious blow to this form of cultural response to the world around us - and to the solutions that might be inspired by that response.

Animal Welfare Party therefore recognises the vital cultural, social and economic role the arts can and do play in our society and believes that protecting the arts is fundamental to our wellbeing.

AWP opposes cuts to arts and entertainment funding and will fight to increase budgets and access to arts education and careers in the arts.

## **Sports**

Animal Welfare Party believes promoting sports and physical activity is hugely important to improving human physical and mental health.

Accordingly, we believe the promotion of and provision of access to sports and physical activity across all age groups and sections of society is vitally important.

AWP would work to ensure adequate funding for sports facilities and sports education for all school age children and encourage wide

participation in sports and other physical activities in the community.

## **12. Law, Policing and Security**

AWP believes we must ensure that the focus of our law enforcement agencies is on local, community-based engagement with people, providing a visible presence of the police on local streets.

We would call for immediate electoral, democratic institutional reform. Our Parliamentary system is discredited, and the 'first past the post' (FPTP) voting process should be consigned to history, replaced with a comprehensive proportional representation (PR) system to encourage democratic engagement with the political process. People would then feel that their vote can make a difference, and that all political parties can have a chance to influence the future direction of our society.

We also call for the system of paying financial deposits for candidates / parties to stand for election to be ended and replaced with a more fair and accessible system.

We would call for a smaller and fully or indirectly elected second chamber in the Houses of Parliament. There would also be a three-year moratorium between Ministers leaving their Office of State and being able to assume a role within the private sector, together with a ban on the concurrent occupation as both a Member of Parliament or Peer and paid consultancy work with private business.

Civil rights, freedom of speech and protests, and protection of privacy are core values in any democratic state. AWP strongly objects to any attempt to curtail these fundamental rights under any guise.

## **13. Transportation**

Encouraging a shift in the way we travel, from private to public and active transport, represents a major opportunity to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

Animal Welfare Party would increase Government support for public and active transport including an integrated rail network and public

ownership of London Underground. We would reduce and, where possible, remove the number of Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contracts which currently dominate the transport landscape and yet have proven to be very poor value for money, with vast sums of public money being diverted into private hands rather than being directly invested in supporting our transport infrastructure.

Encouraging and developing a reliable, affordable, accessible and safe public transport system is key to achieving a switch from private car use, as is the promotion of active transport, for example, cycling and walking, and ensuring funding and infrastructure is in place to make this option safe, secure and accessible.

All education institutes (whether at primary, secondary or tertiary level) should be easily accessible and very well serviced by effectively integrated public transport services.

Road safety for cyclists and pedestrians in urban centres must be improved.

To discourage car use, wherever possible, and to limit the number of car journeys undertaken, we support measures to disincentivise driving, such as taxation. This would improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. All such proceeds would be directly and immediately reinvested in the development of more sustainable transportation systems and infrastructure.

A refocus on social urban development and encouraging people to live closer to work, together with tighter regulations on and limits to "out of town" retail developments, would reduce the requirement to use a car for many journeys to and from work or simply for going shopping.

## **14. International**

### **Investing in Development**

AWP believes the UK must discontinue with policies that cause harm in other parts of the world. Instead we must invest in the potential of developing countries. Sustainability, education, animal welfare, health, children's rights and the equal treatment of men and women are key to this process.

- The UK must stop the import of products that affect living environments elsewhere in the world and that involve land capture and other violations of human rights.
- Development aid should focus on strengthening the position of vulnerable groups in developing countries, in particular women and children.
- Priority should be given to clean drinking water and hygiene, adequate (preventive) healthcare, access to essential medicines and contraceptives, education, sustainable agriculture and clean energy. The support of emancipation movements will, in turn, support democratisation processes.
- Animal Welfare Party wants to warrant sexual and reproductive health and rights, this will also contribute to slowing down population growth. The breaking of taboos on homosexuality, abortion and violence against women, reduction of maternal mortality and the promotion and provision of contraceptives are spearheads in development policies.
- Aid should be focused on the interests of humans, animals, and the environment and not on the interests of the industry sector in that part of the world.

## **Defending human rights**

Animal Welfare Party believes that human rights are more important than trade. European companies violate environmental and human rights on a regular basis. Often the victims are left empty-handed, without having an opportunity to obtain justice. Moreover, one billion citizens in fragile states are threatened by violence and structural injustice. These humans partly depend on our support for their safety and the protection of their human rights. Victims of war and violence, oppression and persecution, hunger, climate change and natural disasters deserve to be helped.

- The UK should not search for trade outlets in countries where human rights are not safeguarded.
- The UK should openly protest, without reservation, against violations of human rights anywhere in the world – even if it does



business with those countries. The curtailing of trade is one of the instruments that can be used to put pressure on the countries concerned.

- The UK must provide a fair asylum procedure and humane hosting of refugees.
- Veganism has been a protected belief since 1993, as a human right under Article 9 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights. Animal Welfare Party will strive for this right to be respected and protected within the UK.
- In the Israel Gaza conflict, AWP supports all calls for an immediate ceasefire, the free flow of aid into Gaza, the protection of all civilians and the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

### **Sexuality and Gender**

- AWP aims to take a progressive, compassionate & tolerant approach to matters of sexuality and gender. Where conflicts arise, we support resolution strategies where all interests are taken into account with an overall aim of finding solutions that work for all.

### **Limits on Weapons**

Animal Welfare Party believes the UK must also apply a 'War Never Again' rationale to its weapons policy.

- The UK must not supply weapons to repressive and authoritarian states which violate human rights.
- A blacklist must be created for countries and businesses to which no intermediary products or components of chemical, nuclear and bacteriological weapons may be supplied.
- The UK must stand against the use of every form of uranium in (conventional) weapons and must support and promote a comprehensive prohibition on nuclear weapons.

- AWP calls for an immediate end to UK arms exports to Israel.

## **Immigration**

The United Kingdom has always shown itself to be a forward-thinking, progressive society, which has welcomed immigration as a necessary part in our economic and social development and supported those fleeing persecution elsewhere in the world. The approach we have previously taken is to be celebrated and we should not allow ourselves to be swayed into a dismissive position by those who see immigration as only a negative.

A multicultural environment is one that has great benefits for everyone in our society and is the natural and ordinary consequence of migration. Many thousands of British-born people emigrate from the United Kingdom each year and are welcomed in those countries to which they move, and it is to the UK's credit that we have historically done the same in reverse, by welcoming those moving to the United Kingdom.

AWP therefore believes in a sensible and compassionate immigration policy which is supportive to those in need and serves our own needs.

Additionally, we believe in providing increased support for asylum seekers and refugees, who are seeking to escape from persecution, war, famine, social collapse or personal, domestic situations of abuse. While we believe that the UK should provide adequate financial and logistical support to countries with internally displaced refugees or to neighbouring countries that provide shelter, the UK is outranked by other developed countries in the number of refugees it offers protection to. We therefore need to ensure we play our role in offering protection to the vulnerable and helping refugees here to adjust to life in a country that is very different to the one they have left behind. The Government must encourage such persons to come forward with information about their skills and qualifications, and allow them access to the workplace and the social support structure whilst their application is being evaluated.

Those who abuse the system will not be granted the rights afforded to those genuinely needing help.

We further believe that the 'Life in the UK' test should include animal issues and basic legislation.

Further to this, Animal Welfare Party is supportive of all measures aimed at:

Ending the use of inflammatory, racist and anti-refugee rhetoric.

Ensuring refugees have safe alternatives to dangerous journeys.

Renewing the UK's commitment to international cooperation.

Restoring the right to seek asylum and building an asylum system with dignity.

Opposing the Rwanda asylum plan.

### **Our Relationship with the EU Following Brexit**

AWP supports the notion of working for a new, closer relationship with the EU based on trust, respect and closer integration. We assert that the UK working together with the EU will be the quickest and most effective route to achieve the urgent protections and improvements we seek for the environment, people and the largest number of animals possible.

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