

NETWORK NEWS

The official newsletter of the Animal Welfare Network for Wales

An independent sector council working together to act as a voice for all of Wales' animals

2019 arrival brings new hope for animal welfare

AWNW's role more important than ever

The Animal Welfare Network for Wales enters 2019 with fresh and renewed optimism that the calendar year will lead to more significant developments for animal welfare in Wales.

A new quarterly newsletter will now update members on these opportunities; and the unique role of the Network - already driving change for some 13 years - in influencing this agenda.

AWNW remains uniquely placed to shape the animal welfare landscape in Wales; with a strong membership base, a seat on the Third Sector Partnership Council; and regular dialogue with the Welsh Government.

This influence was underlined when AWWN met with the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs Lesley Griffiths in November. Partnership working with the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group regarding their implementation plan continues - further to recent meeting with chair Stephen James.

While Brexit understandably dominates the political narrative in Wales, 2019 still offers the potential of significant progress, including for performing animals, in furthering responsible pet ownership and for species based in the hidden sanctuary sector.

Since 2006, the AWWN has acted as the sector council for all animals. From training members and local authorities on the Animal Welfare Act, to updating codes of practice and delivering frontline welfare events, the Network's impact has already been seismic. Now, our role in seizing 2019's opportunities will be key; with this critical juncture highlighting how the Network is more important than ever for all of Wales' animals.



AWNW 2019 Meeting Dates

17 January
4 April
4 July
17 October

INSIDE

02

Sanctuaries code submitted

03

Help for vulnerable pet owners?

06

Wales set to end third party sales



Sanctuary regulation remains a top priority

A so-called 'Noah's Ark' of animals have been safeguarded in North Wales, following intervention – which included the support of an AWNW member - at a failing Padeswood sanctuary.

Issues at Capricorn Animal Rescue included continued concern about the charity's sustainability and management; with the establishment subject to a Charity Commission statutory inquiry before November's removal of animals. A Charity Commission-appointed interim manager ultimately made the decision that Capricorn was no longer viable.



The problems highlight the need for additional arrangements in Wales to ensure animal sanctuaries meet the welfare needs of all species in their care. While many sanctuaries do invaluable work in rehabilitating and rehoming animals, a lack of regulation and oversight fails to offer the public adequate assurances as to care standards.

No cabinet change for animals

Lesley Griffiths AM retains cabinet responsibility over animal welfare, after new First Minister Mark Drakeford shook up the Welsh Government's top team.

The Wrexham Assembly Member has held the animal welfare brief since May 2016.

Positively, the Welsh Government is anticipated to soon adopt a voluntary code of practice, drafted by the AWNW. This marks a big leap forward - though a statutory code remains the best way to ensure sanctuary owners fully understand the standards they need to deliver. The development of the voluntary code amounted to a highly-constructive and detailed piece of work from the Network, utilising the expertise of NEWC, ADCH and BVZF, plus close observance of statutory provisions already in force in Jersey.

AWNW members remain fully committed to the regulation and licensing of animal welfare establishments in Wales, amid concerns that issues within the sector remain a problem often hidden from view.

There also remains a lack of knowledge within Wales as to the prevalence and frequency of animal sanctuaries. A special project for the Welsh Government-backed Companion Animal Welfare Enhancement Scheme identified 88 within Wales, but these findings were made approximately eight years ago. As such, the Network's tireless campaign for regulation and an improved research base will continue.

AWNW cover star for equine and dog codes

New, updated codes of practice for the keeping of dogs and equines were published in November, following re-drafting by the Animal Welfare Network for Wales.

AWNW's logo is proudly emblazoned on the cover of both documents. The launch of these codes was an important moment for both species - and Network members are ideally placed to circulate them and boost their readership within Wales; including by veterinary professionals, owners and keepers.

The Network was proud to have pooled collective expertise from across the sector; ensuring these codes are up-to-date and relevant, offering best possible protection for this country's dogs and equines.

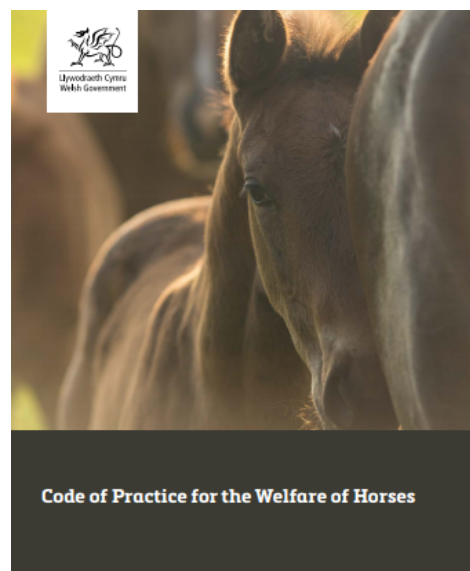
Dog: <https://goo.gl/eiDcmo>
Equine: <https://goo.gl/KBLDxK>

Cat code under Welsh Govt review

Cats are Wales' second most popular pet - and AWWN members with an interest in feline welfare now have the opportunity to submit viewpoints on an updated code of practice for the welfare of cats.

The consultation concludes on 8 March 2019.

An updated code can give cat owners across Wales access to the most up-to-date advice and guidance on meeting their pets' welfare needs. This will impact a huge number of households in Wales - 47% have a pet, and of those 39% have a cat.



Exploring support for vulnerable pet owners

The AWWN will soon be issuing freedom of information requests to each of Wales' 22 Local Authorities, to decipher support that currently exists to help pet owners struggling financially.

In Wales, the National Assistance Act 1948 makes provision for some vulnerable pet owners - namely those taken into hospital.

In England, this legislation has been disapplied by the Care Act 2014.

However, there is no clear picture currently as to how Wales' local councils support vulnerable pet owners, nor how this work compliments support currently offered by many charitable organisations, including AWWN members.

The Welsh Government itself recently acknowledged how pet owners circumstances can change; and how even responsible owners can face challenges - prompting their exploration of what veterinary provision, assistance and advice may be available to those facing hard times.

Big hints at longer-term animal welfare agenda

While the Welsh Government's shorter-term priorities for animal welfare will dominate much Network time in early 2019, recent discussions with, and statements from, Welsh Government give big hints as to their longer-term plans too.

In April, the compulsory microchipping of dogs will have been in force in Wales for three years. The Welsh Government has confirmed it is now exploring the viability of "extending the regulations to include other species, including cats" - an indication that permanent identification levels of more pets in Wales could soon become a legal requirement.

Civil servants will also be exploring the need for new codes of practice for primates, and other exotic pets.

Meanwhile, a renewed commitment from the Welsh Government for Wales to become a "free range nation for egg production" suggests a greater focus on higher-welfare produce could become a welcome inclusion to the upcoming agenda.

Group making big progress for racing greyhounds

2019 looks set to be a significant year for the welfare of racing greyhounds, as the AWNW's Greyhound Working Group continues to make significant progress.

Members continue to engage with Ysrad Mynach's Valley Greyhound Stadium; an independent track not affiliated to the Greyhound Board of Great Britain; and one of only five such courses in the UK.

Detailed racing greyhound welfare advice and information will soon be submitted to the Welsh Government; in the form of a code of practice which is expected to be adopted by the Minister on a voluntary basis.

Work on this code is being led by dog welfare expert Dr Samantha Gaines and the University of Bristol; and funded via a legacy to an AWNW member.



Final curtain for travelling wild animal circuses?



The spectre of wild animals in travelling circuses could soon be banished to the history books in Wales - after many years of campaigning, including from Network members.

An eight-week consultation on a draft Wild Animals in Travelling Circuses (Wales) Bill came to an end in November. All political groupings within the National Assembly for Wales have voiced support for a ban.

The proposed law is now expected to progress through the Welsh Parliament's legislative system - where Assembly Members will have opportunities to table amendments.

It is hoped a licensing or registration scheme for mobile animal exhibits will supplement this primary legislation.

The Welsh Government has previously proposed regulating individuals, groups or enterprises that travel to exhibit domestic or wild animals, for entertainment, therapy, educational or other purposes.

While the number of travelling circuses operating in Wales is low, there are considerable numbers of mobile animal exhibits – including falconry displays, and festive reindeer events; and guarantees around the conditions these animals experience must be brought forward.

Diary dates

3 March - UN World Wildlife Day

8 March - Cat code consultation concludes

29 March - UK due to withdraw from EU

6 May - two years until 2021 Welsh Parliament election

18-19 May - RWAS Smallholding and Countryside Festival

Sefydlwyd 2006 - Established 2006

awnw
RHWYDWAITH LLES ANIFEILIAID CYMRU
Cyngor y Sector ar gyfer Anifeiliaid | Sector Council for Animals
ANIMAL WELFARE NETWORK WALES



The end of third party puppy and kitten sales?

Third party selling of puppies and kittens could soon be banned in Wales, as the Welsh Government launches a consultation considering an end to the practice.

Such a move could mean anyone wanting to buy or adopt a puppy or kitten would need to deal with a breeder or a rehoming centre directly. It would effectively end the sale of puppies and kittens in pet shops.



A ban would mark a huge step for the welfare of young companion animals, and would follow the commencement of new dog breeding regulations in Wales in late April 2015.

AWNW members met with Welsh Government officials in January to discuss the host of benefits such a move could have for animal welfare, and in nurturing responsible pet ownership.

Progress towards a ban is also being made in England

5 for 2019

The big animal welfare issues on the agenda



Sanctuary voluntary code to be adopted



A ban on third party kitten and puppy sales



Wild animals in circuses bill to progress



Greyhound code of practice submitted



Plans developed for vulnerable owner support

Next Edition: April 2019

