

P-05-796 Calling on the Welsh Government to Ban The Use of Wild Animals in Circuses in Wales - Correspondence from the petitioner to the Committee, 27.06.18

Petition calling on the Welsh Government to ban the use of wild animals in circuses in Wales

To the Members of the Petitions Committee of the Welsh Assembly.

Firstly may I thank you for not only carrying out my request of writing to Lesley Griffiths AM in her capacity as Cabinet Secretary for Energy Planning and Rural Affairs. But also requesting that Lesley attends your meeting this morning.

As I am sure you are aware my petition collected over 6,000 signatures online and on paper. I and others collected signatures from all over Cymru, at events like the National Eisteddfod of Wales on Ynys Mon, dog shows, food festivals, university freshers fairs. The common theme of those who signed was the belief that this outdated practice had already been banned.

Hence it triggered a debate on 7/3/18. A debate that demonstrated members of all political parties felt passionately that a ban should be brought forward in Wales as soon as possible.

I was pleased to see that the Cabinet Secretary was in the chamber to hear the debate in full. It was good to note that Lesley agreed with Rebecca Evans AM the former Minister for Farming and Rural Affairs that the Welsh Government considered the use of wild animals in circuses to have no place in Wales.

I was also pleased by her response that the Welsh Government was considering which route to bring forward legislation, and was looking in particular at the legislation the Scottish Government has brought forward this year. I agree with the Cabinet Secretary that just like Scotland the route of bringing legislation forward by the means of primary legislation rather than the Animal Welfare Act would seem the most appropriate way forward.

However Wales are in a slightly different position than Scotland in relation to powers devolved to our Assembly and issues surrounding our exit from the EU. This is a concern I know many AMs such as Simon Thomas and Bethan Sayed share.

The Welsh Government and indeed the present Cabinet Secretary have previously stated that they intend to work with the UK Government who have recently committed to ban from 2020. But I am not happy with this option for many reasons.

Nor would the thousands of Welsh people who signed my petition, the second such petition to be presented to the Petitions Committee in two years.

As I write this both of the two remaining circuses that use wild animals have visited Cymru this year. One still remains, they are in fact here in Gwynedd. Their presence is certainly putting a strain on the resources of our already stretched LA Cyngor Gwynedd Council. Not least in respect of their practice of illegally fly posting.

It is clear that their extensive tour of Wales seeks to tap into our thriving tourist industry. In the Twyn area of Gwynedd holiday homes were targeted for instance by advertising flyers. I have been told by several business owners in Porthmadog who have been approached by the circus to display posters, that they have been told that animals are not used in their "shows ". One business owner who refused to display the posters returned to her shop premises the next morning to find that posters and vouchers had been left hanging out of her letter box. She found this upsetting.

In Conclusion.

As I have stated in my previous submissions in support of my petition, the Harris report to my mind gives the independent scientific evidence needed for legislation to be brought forward.

" The scientific evidence indicates that captive wild animals in travelling circuses do not active their optimum welfare requirements set out under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and other relevant legislation "

" life for wild animals in travelling circuses and mobile zoos does not constitute either a " good life " or a " life worth living " .

The Welsh public are in agreement that our Welsh Government should ban. What more can I add? Except to thank all those who have steadfastly supported me in my campaign of many years, particularly Hywel Williams MP.

Linda Evelyn Joyce-Jones Caernarfon Arfon Constituency 27/6/18 .