



Cynulliad National  
Cenedlaethol Assembly for  
Cymru Wales

**All Party Group for Animal Welfare**

**An All Party Group for Members of the National Assembly for Wales formed to promote and further the cause of animal welfare, by all means available, in Wales**

**Welsh Assembly All Party Group on Animal Welfare – 1.07.09**

**In Attendance:**

Lorraine Barrett AM (Lab, Cardiff South & Penarth)

David McDowell – Equine Consultant/RSPCA  
Graham Capper – Wrexham County Council

Lionel Ford – The Donkey Sanctuary Trust  
John Campbell – Protect Our Wild Animals  
Suzanne Campbell – Protect Our Wild Animals  
Wendy Davies – British Horse Society  
Tony Evans – World Horse Welfare  
Philip Jones – World Horse Welfare  
Claire Lawson – RSPCA  
Roy Peckham – Pit Pony Sanctuary  
Dean Piper – Police  
Tina Reece – APGAW Secretariat (minutes)  
Alun Streeter – OCVO  
Rebecca Evans – The Horse Trust  
Nicolas De Brauwere – Redwings Horse Sanctuary  
John James - BVA

**Apologies:**

Huw Thomas – NFU  
Libby Anderson – Advocacy for Animals  
Karen Davies – BVA  
Kathryn Woodhouse – Greyhound Rescue Wales  
Penny Hard – Greyhound Rescue Wales  
Tina Davies – Greyhound Rescue Wales



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**Meeting opened at 12.15pm**

### **Item 1: Chair's Welcome and Introduction**

**Lorraine Barrett AM** opened the meeting by welcoming to the meeting on 'Livery Yards and Regulation'.

She stated that in the weekend she had attended the Greyhound Rescue Wales AGM, which she had very much enjoyed. She explained that Operation Greyhound, a group set up by Greyhound Rescue Wales, the RSPCA and Dogs Trust to deal with the imminent closure of the Swansea greyhound racing track, was a good model of cooperative working. She went on to say that it could be worth having a meeting on the topic of racing greyhounds and regulation.

Briefly spoke about the debate she initiated in the Assembly on the topic of halting the planned badger cull. Explained that unfortunately she lost the vote on this issue.

Introduced the two speakers for the meeting and thanked them for giving up their time. The speakers were introduced as: David McDowell, an independent equine consultant representing the RSPCA, and Graham Capper from Wrexham County Council Trading Standards.

**Each of the attendees then introduced themselves to the group.**

### **Item 2: Topic for Discussion: Livery Yards and Regulation**

**David McDowell (Independent Equine Consultant representing the RSPCA)** introduced himself and explained his background in horse welfare. Stated that he had been part of the DEFRA horse working group which had continued to meet on the issue of livery licensing. Said that there was a lot of feeling that there should be regulation on dealers.

Explained that many problems in this area stemmed from the confusion over ownership and responsibility, especially in the case of DIY livery yards.

Quoted Welsh Assembly Government statistics that show that there are likely to be over 200 livery yards in Wales, which could translate to over 20 000 horses. This area of a horse's life is conspicuously absent from any current legislation which covers other such businesses as riding schools.

Said that it is very difficult to trace problems with livery yards because of the fact that they are not inspected or recorded in any way by the authorities. Other risks from this absence, apart from animal welfare, include human and animal dangers such as fire hazards, exposed wiring and dangerous structures.



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Stated that the best option is to impose minimum standards for the livery industry, but not to introduce “best practice”. These regulations could also help to catch riding schools and other businesses that can avoid the current legislation.

**Graham Capper (Wrexham County Council)** introduced himself and explained that he would speak from the Local Authority perspective.

Stated that Wrexham was one of the main areas in North Wales for the equine industry.

Explained that a “light touch” was needed in this area as there was currently no funding available to Local Authorities for any type of enforcement.

Said that there are many different types of livery available, and that many yards are multifunctional. Went on to state that there is a growing problem of cheap livery on the edges of urban areas. Said that it was generally very cheap to buy a horse in comparison to the actual costs of owning a horse.

Said that it was very difficult for Local Authorities to identify the location of livery yards due to the informal nature of many.

Stated that disease control and spread were another important consideration in the argument to regulate livery yards, as many were currently operating with high-risk practices.

Explained that the Companion Animal Welfare Enhancement Scheme (CAWES) project currently being jointly run by Wrexham County Council and other councils in North Wales “Is horse welfare a problem in Wales?” has shown that there is indeed a problem. He said that one shocking statistic they had uncovered was that out of 365 horses inspected, 100 did not have passports.

Said that many of the more acceptable yards that he has seen would not even come close to receiving British Horse Society (BHS) approval. Explained that this is because of a “grey area” and that there was most definitely a need to raise standards for livery yards for the benefit of welfare and disease control.

Stated that another problem that had been identified is the stabling of stallions 24 hours a day. Also said that the welfare of animals being carried (transported) is a major issue that needs to be addressed.

Concluded that this has been a slow build up to a chronic situation, but that a further burden to Local Authorities would be to protect the equine industry which contributes an estimated seven billion pounds to the Welsh economy.

### **Item 3: General Discussion**

**Lorraine Barrett AM** thanked the speakers and opened the floor to a general discussion on the issue.



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- It was stated that models from other regulation could be lift-able, such as that being planned for sanctuaries.
- It was agreed that this would be a modern approach that would consolidate resources.
- A comment was made that there is a lot of mileage in what was said during the course of the meeting and that more work on the CAWES project will lead to more information and data that can be used to inform government.
- It was suggested to the room that a limit be set on the number of horses being kept which would constitute the establishment being classified as a livery yard. This suggestion was met with some concern due to loopholes that could be provided. It was instead suggested that the definition should cover any exchange of money for the livery.
- It was stated that at times there is very little difference between yards and that people want minimum standards to adhere to.
- A question was asked about the legislation that would be required to regulate livery yards and it was explained that the Government could introduce secondary legislation under section 12 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006, which the Local Authorities would likely enforce. It was also stated that this system would particularly benefit from being cost neutral.
- Another comment was added that urged vet inspections to be included in any sort of inspection and stated that trotting yards were also currently not covered by regulation.

**Lorraine Barratt AM** thanked everyone for the interesting discussion and stated that APGAW would write a letter addressed to the Minister for Rural Affairs inviting all NGOs and Local Authorities in Wales who were in agreement to sign up to the need for legislation in this area.

It was also suggested that the Minister for Rural Affairs could be invited to speak on the subject at a future meeting of APGAW.

Thanked everyone for attending and contributing to this important issue.

**Meeting closed at 1.30pm**