

GREENS FOR ANIMAL PROTECTION



GAP in the News

October 2018 Edition

GP AP PWG @ Conference

Putting animal rights at the heart of Green Party policy

Diana Newson, David Finney and I were proud to take an accredited policy to Autumn conference again this year. In a tightly packed Saturday afternoon we successfully defended animals from almost total erasure from Food and Agriculture policy before holding our own well-attended workshop. Diana presented the motion brilliantly and after a nearly unanimous vote we went hopefully to the plenary session, only for those hopes to be dashed when plenary was cancelled to make time for the holistic review.

Spirits rose again on the Sunday afternoon when Diana bravely took the platform, and after Karen Varga's powerful supporting statement from the floor the Green Party yet again showed their commitment to animals. We now have a new policy that officially acknowledges the sentience of animals and their right not to be abused. *Emma Randall, Animal Protection PWG Manager Oct. 2018.*



Sian Berry & Jonathan Bartley, our co-leaders

GREEN PARTY CORE VALUE 5

Our actions should take account of the well-being of other nations, other species and future generations. We should not pursue our well-being to the detriment of theirs.

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Kent Wildlife Trust protest

GAP member Tom Fitton reports

A peaceful demonstration was held on 29th September outside Kent Wildlife Trust's 2018 AGM, with protestors calling for the Chair to be removed from his position. Michael Bax, Chairman of Kent Wildlife Trust, was Huntsman for the Blean Beagles (a hare-hunting group), between 1971 and 1991. He then served as Joint Master of the same group between 1991 and 2016.



Bax continues to sponsor fox-hunting groups, such as the Ashford Valley Tickham Hunt, who were filmed killing a fox last year. The business he owns also sponsors the shooting of birds. Representatives of both the League Against Cruel Sports and Hounds Off were present and gave excellent accounts of themselves to the gathered media, which included the BBC, the Independent and Kent Messenger. Although unable to attend this protest Green Party Animal Spokesperson, Keith Taylor, shares campaigners' concerns and provided them with a statement, critical of Michael Bax's position.

Radical 'Animal Protection'

The Vegan Society and The Green Party – in harmony?

Green politics positions itself as 'radical', which essentially means 'getting to the roots of things'. The Green Party of England and Wales affirms 'radical transformation of society for the benefit of all' as a core principle. The long-term aim of the GPEW Animal Rights Policy is currently AR200, "To eliminate the wholesale exploitation of other species, foster understanding of our inter-relationship in the web of life and protect and promote natural habitat." The GPEW Animal Protection Policy Working Group aims include "develop policy on animal-protection issues" while Greens for Animal Protection aims to "campaign for animals". The aims of GPEW and The Vegan Society seem similar regarding animals.



Veganism is the radical concept that human beings can behave as allies enabling non-human beings to be liberated from oppression. Specifically, The Vegan Society defines veganism as: "a philosophy and way of living which seeks to exclude – as far as is possible and practicable – all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose; and by extension, promotes the development and use of animal-free alternatives for the benefit of humans, animals and the environment." In other words, veganism addresses flaws in the concept of 'animal protection'. For example, 'protection' and 'elimination of wholesale exploitation' (and, indeed, 'environmentalism'), would allow for human beings to carry only 'kindly, individually' exploiting some non-human beings.

Truly radical politics, at the roots of things, includes ethically consistent ending of all forms of oppression. This means liberation for all, behaving as allies to all beings marginalised by our privileges, and centring all within their own distinct liberation struggles. So, non-human beings need to be centred within their own liberation movement. We need to bring non-human beings into the ethical community with human beings – as many Indigenous societies continue to do. Ethical behaviour toward non-humans by humans needs to be a root and core value throughout all human societies. Ending 'wholesale exploitation' – where entire industries do to millions what is unethical for one person to do to another – is only part of this process.

Current human-rights concepts, as upheld by e.g. the European Court of Human Rights, have helped improve social justice. But human-rights treaties and law are still widely misunderstood, poorly enforced and disrespected. Worse, 'human rights' has a flawed ethical basis: individuals can still assert that oppressive behaviours are 'protected'. Yet many just ethical principles are collective and community-based. Ultimately non-human animals are also excluded from this ethical framework.



Radical Green transformation of society will plant collective, ethical liberation of all human and non-human beings at the roots of our whole legal, ethical and social order. *Amanda Baker, Research & Policy Advisor, The Vegan Society*

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GAP Greens for Animal Protection NEWSLETTER

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