

Introduction to the Association of Lawyers for Animal Welfare

The Association of Lawyers for Animal Welfare (ALAW) is a unique group, the members of which are lawyers and legal academics. ALAW's aim is to pursue the welfare and interests of animals through legal channels.

ALAW is an entirely non-profit making organisation aiming to harness the skills of its members and provide a forum for discussion of animal welfare law and related issues.

ALAW intends to monitor the progress of relevant legislation in Parliament and through its members to take part in the consultation process. It also intends to highlight any aspects of animal welfare law which appear to be in need of reform, and to contribute to the educative process through the dissemination of information relating to all aspects of animal welfare law, including where appropriate through training.

The most obvious areas of practice in which lawyers' training and expertise could be used to promote the cause of animal welfare, given the current climate, are those of criminal litigation, civil liberties and human rights. There are, however, a number of other, perhaps less obvious, areas in which lawyers could make a valuable contribution, including constitutional law, environmental health, planning, freedom of information, civil litigation, media law, associations and corporations, charities, and so forth. In addition, lawyers have well-developed skills such as advocacy and drafting that are of general application and could be utilized to assist and promote the cause of animal welfare.

Whatever their particular area of practice or specialism, therefore, by offering their skills and expertise, lawyers are well placed directly to contribute to the cause of animal welfare.

This first edition of the Journal of Animal Welfare Law – ALAW's newsletter – covers the main developments of the past year. The regular features of the Journal will include updates on court decisions concerned with animal welfare, a list of relevant new legislation and/or proposals for legislation, and articles on topical issues.

Anyone wishing to submit an article or case report should send copy to PO Box 67, Ellesmere, Shropshire SY12 9WZ or email: info@alaw.org.uk

Animal welfare law in the UK

***Pauline Moylan,
Barrister***

The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated - Mahatma Gandhi

It is an oft-recited mantra that the UK is a nation of animal lovers. If that is to be regarded as anything more than a popular myth, one might reasonably expect that ill-treatment of animals would be prohibited by law, and that non-compliance would be dealt with vigorously.

Another oft-recited mantra is that the UK has the best animal protection laws in the