

Cross-Party Group Minutes

Meeting Minutes

Cross Party Group Title:	The Cross Party Group for Zoos and Animal Attractions
Date of Meeting:	30/09/20
Location:	Virtual (BIAZA hosted zoom account)

In attendance:

Name:	Title:
Darren Millar Mandy Jones Janet Finch Saunders Caroline Jones Angela Burns Mark Isherwood	MS
Cllr Ryland Doyle	Office of Mike Hedges MS
Dr Cerian Tatchley Andrew Hall	The British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA)
Nick Jackson	Welsh Mountain Zoo
Mike Colwill Anthony Williams	Plantasia
Dr Georgina Webb	Conservative Group Researcher
Collette Macdonald	Rhyl Seaquarium
Jules Arrowsmith	Manorafon Farm Park
Graham Garen	Wales Ape and Monkey Sanctuary

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Apologies:

Name:	Title:

Summary of Meeting:

Darren Millar Welcomed attendees to the inaugural meeting of the Cross Party Group for Zoos and Animal Attractions.

Darren is proposed as chair by Janet Finch Saunders and seconded by Caroline Jones. Darren elected as chair of the Group.

Darren welcomed the speakers from BIAZA and Welsh Mountain Zoo. Dr Cerian Tatchley from BIAZA spoke about the general situation facing zoos in Wales. Nick Jackson of Welsh Mountain Zoo illustrated the financial impact of lockdown the zoo, the impact on operations including the conservation work done by the zoo.

It was noted that while zoos had benefited from other packages, no tailored support for animal-care organisations existed in Wales. This was despite the unique challenges of caring for specialised and complex animals. This was a challenge that had been recognised as needing support across different Government around the world and across other countries in the UK.

Angela Burns asked about the scale of the threat and the threat of closure – BIAZA and Welsh Mountain Zoo described the situation zoos and aquariums face as precarious and that further restrictions are increasing the challenge of the pandemic.

Mandy Jones asked about the need to take on bird of prey persecution in the countryside. Cerian Tatchley of BIAZA said they would be happy to put Mandy in touch with bird of prey centres who were looking at those issues.

Mark Isherwood asked about other examples of support that could be enacted other than financial support. Nick Jackson highlighted that being exempt from lockdowns, as covid-safe attractions with benefits to well-being, was essential. **Speakers asked MS' to make the case to allow zoo licence holders to continue to welcome visitors even if other forms of restrictions or lockdowns came into effect.**

Across the discussion it was noted that the Minister responsible for Zoos, Lesley Griffiths, had not met with the zoo industry and that this should be rectified.

Darren thanks everyone for attending and suggested letters should be sent to Lesley Griffiths and the First Minister.

OB