

P-04-631 Save our Service- Large Animal Rescue in North Wales.

Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee. 07.01.16

In response to the letter from North Wales Fire and Rescue (NWFR) I wish to draw attention to the fact that a cow was actually euthanized as a result of no trained/equipped rescue staff such as NWFR being in attendance 24th Sept 2015. It has been widely publicised across North Wales that NWFR is no longer attending large animal rescues so I believe the reduction in calls is due to both this and the fact that the RSPCA is not referring callers to NWFR or requesting their attendance. The reduction in calls is therefore not representative of the number of rescues enacted.

NWFR are aware of ten rescues and their outcome including human safety but how many more were not reported due to their being no service in place. It is stated that owners can source heavy lifting equipment, yes that is true many owners can find a tractor or JCB to use but it is the other skills that are missing. NWFR have trained staff in large animal rescue, they know how important it is to sedate an animal before attempting rescue, staff are experienced in rescue situations, staff can manage an incident scene so keep members of the public safe. NWFR are removed from the emotion of the situation too. It is both inadequate and dangerous to expect members of the public to enact these rescues safely.

Below are some quotes from a document written by Jim Green (large animal rescue specialist in Hampshire Fire and Rescue and British Animal Rescue and Trauma Care Association) I have attached full document to email.

What should be clearly understood is that large animals in distress should be considered "unpredictable hazardous materials". Rescues of animals however, are fundamentally different from routine hazmat incidents. Animals do not come with Emergency Action Codes which tell the firefighter if they do 'x', 'y' will result.

Critical to the ethos of animal rescue is acknowledgement that humans will put themselves and others at risk by attempting to rescue an animal that is in difficulty. Some would say these are selfless acts but rarely is consideration given to the jeopardy into which their actions place human life. With this in mind and the fact that personnel will come into contact with animals during the course of everyday FRS activities, it was important that all firefighters had access to basic knowledge of animals in distress, likely actions of the public and a clearly defined role whilst awaiting further trained resources.

Animal rescue training begins with basic ethos, why we carry out large animal rescue, the dangers associated with animals in distress and influencing factors such as the behaviour of the equine owner or farmer or public. In the US a survey concluded that 83% of the public would happily risk their lives for an animal?! (American Animal Hospital Association)

This shows how risky these rescues are for trained and equipped personnel can the public really be expected to step in to do this instead?



I do not feel that the fact that no one has been injured or killed YET is justification for not reinstating the service. Do we have to wait until someone is killed or injured for this to be looked at seriously? or is the identified and assessed risk (by experts such as Jim Green) not enough. NWFR have not answered the question of who else can provide this service, yes a vet should be in attendance but this only goes so far as to ensure the vet can receive medical treatment and maybe sedation and the RSPCA can be called but they have neither the man power to respond quickly nor equipment/training to enact these rescues either.