

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

9th October 2017

Dear Constituent,

RE: ANIMALS ARE SENTIENT BEINGS.

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of the status of animals as sentient beings.

Having looked into this matter, I understand the main reason for the move was to harmonise the legal status of animals under the French Civil Code with its Penal and Rural Codes, which already recognised animals as having interests that could not apply to inanimate property. It made no change to the protections animals enjoy.

UK laws are arranged differently so it is not possible to draw a direct comparison between our legal regimes, but I did note that French legislators explicitly rejected bans on bullfighting and cockfighting; both of which are illegal here.

I am proud that the UK was the first country in the world to implement laws protecting animals. The Government has publicly stated the fact, which I believe to be self-evident, that animals are living, sentient beings, and I share its continuing commitment to the highest standards of animal welfare.

Central to our legal approach is the *Animal Welfare Act 2006*, which makes it an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to an animal. It also contains a duty of care, which means that anyone responsible for an animal must take reasonable steps to make sure its needs are met. I therefore believe that existing UK legislation provides necessary and appropriate protection for animals in this country.

The Rt. Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, has recently announced plans to ban ivory sales to help bring an end to elephant poaching, and to increase sentencing for animal cruelty to 5 years – steps I very much welcome.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,

Tom

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

LISTENING TO YOU - CAMPAIGNING FOR YOU
Email: pursglovet@parliament.uk - Telephone: 0207 219 8043