

Political party promises

Since 2002, mounted hunts have been running a coach and horses through Scottish laws to ban fox hunting. Now, according to the Scottish Greens, the SNP have the weakest stance on fox hunting of any major political party.

Labour's manifesto would close loopholes in the law that enables foxes to be killed by packs of hounds both north and south of the border. Even the Tories have recently said that they will drop their policy of allowing for a free vote to repeal the ban on fox hunting in England and Wales.

So where does that leave the SNP? Where, indeed? It looks sort of good in principle. But in practice?

After they commissioned senior Law Lord Bonomy to review what hunts were up to they announced in the Scottish Parliament that they would strengthen the law before the next election in May 2021. The first anniversary of that promise will be on 9 January - about two months from now. Did they repeat the promise in their September "Program for Government"? No they didn't. Were their press reports that friend of the game keepers Cabinet Secretary Fergus Ewing had spiked the idea? Yes there were.

Fox hunting legislation is notoriously fraught. Hours of video evidence supplied by the League Against Cruel Sports Scotland and Lord Boonomy's opinion that there is evidence of traditional fox hunting continuing in Scotland and the Government promising to strengthen the ban on one side. On the other will be those who see this as an opportunity to start defending fox hunting all over again. Is it realistic to think this new legislation can clear a consultation exercise, three Parliamentary hearings and Committee scrutiny between now and May 2021?

Is the SNP being naive, over ambitious or plain dodgy about how long it will take to pass the necessary legislation? If they haven't even started the process of consultation necessary can we really trust them to keep to their promise?

The League Scotland met Marie Goujeon MSP, the Minister responsible at the beginning of November. She repeated her promise to strengthen the law by May 2021. We told her that we would trust her word but the clock is relentlessly ticking. Time will tell and that time is short. By early next year we will see if the SNP went from being the fox champion to being the major political party with the weakest position on the hugely popular policy of really banning fox hunting in Scotland- for good.



Your help is vital in ensuring that Governmental promises of strengthen the law are upheld and that the new legislation meets the desires of the Scottish people who wish to see fox hunting illegal once and for all.

Your signature will communicate to the Government that the time to 'really' ban hunting is now.

Sign the petition