



LEAGUE
AGAINST CRUEL SPORTS

The League Against Cruel Sports

Strategic Plan **2026-30**

Contents

A note from the Chair	4
Strategic Context	8
Political	8
Economic	9
Social	10
Technological	12
Legislative/Legal	13
Environmental	13
Conclusion	14
Our Strategic Priorities for 2026-30	16
Core Priority 1: End Hunting of Animals with Dogs	18
Core Priority 2: End the Shooting of 'Game Birds'	20
Core Priority 3: Ending Greyhound Racing	22
Core Priority 4: Ending Animal Fighting	24
Enabling priority: Winning Hearts and Minds	26
Next Steps	29



A note from the Chair



One hundred years ago, a group of brave people got together to demand an end to cruelty to animals in the name of

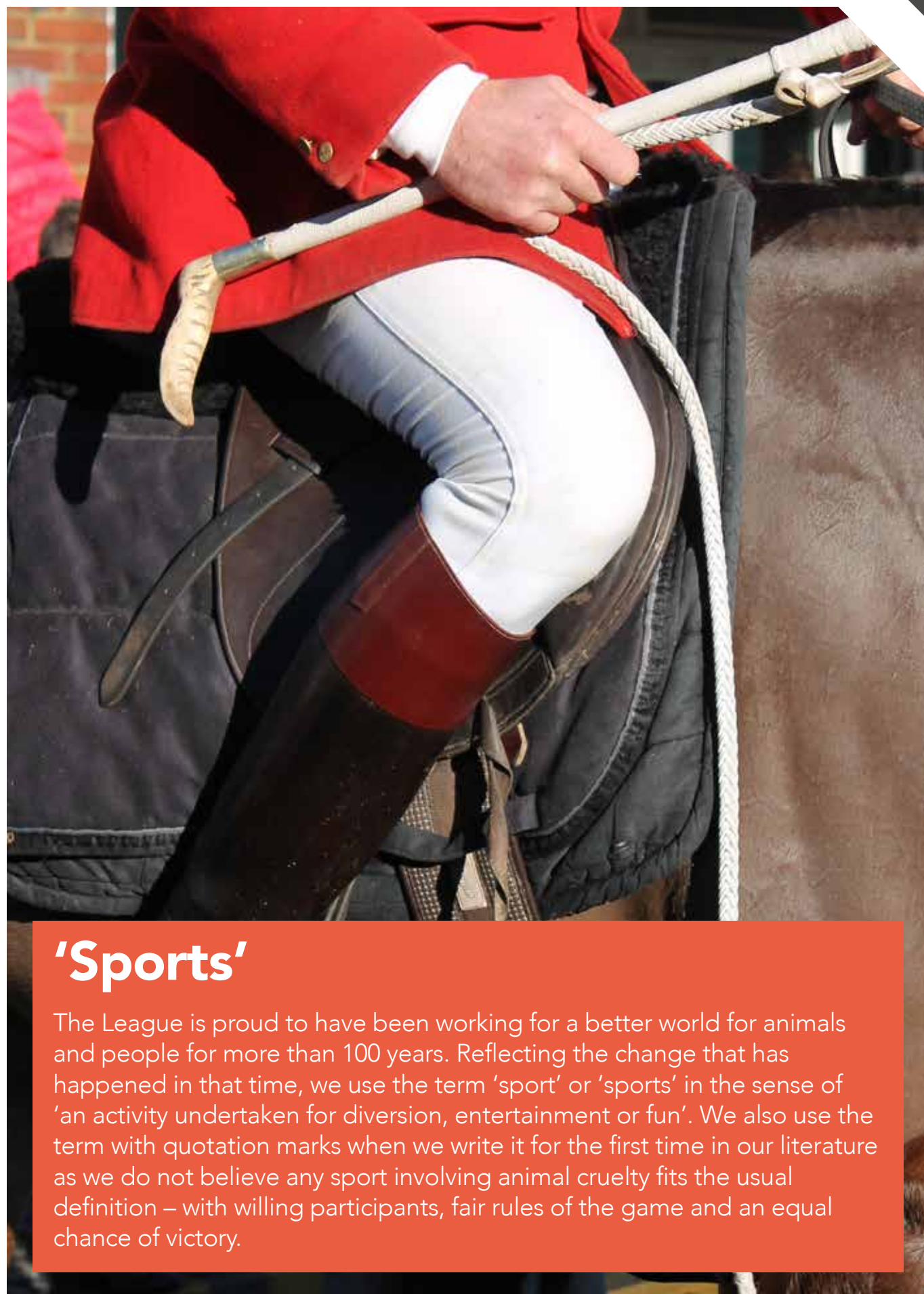
sport. They formed the League for the Prohibition of Cruel Sports, which in time became the League Against Cruel Sports as we know it today. The same motivation that drove our founders drives us today.

There is no place in society for cruelty to animals for fun. We have had great successes over the years, but there is so much still to be done. This strategic plan sets out our work for the next five years, and we look forward to working together with you towards a future where the persecution of animals for 'sport' is consigned to the history books.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "D. Fielding". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

David Fielding MBE
Chair





'Sports'

The League is proud to have been working for a better world for animals and people for more than 100 years. Reflecting the change that has happened in that time, we use the term 'sport' or 'sports' in the sense of 'an activity undertaken for diversion, entertainment or fun'. We also use the term with quotation marks when we write it for the first time in our literature as we do not believe any sport involving animal cruelty fits the usual definition – with willing participants, fair rules of the game and an equal chance of victory.

Our Mission

The problem: Animals continue to be cruelly harmed through both legal and illegal 'sport'

Our vision is of a kinder society where persecuting animals for 'sport' is in the past.

Our theory of change is that our vision will be realised when cruelty to animals in the name of 'sport' becomes culturally and legally unacceptable throughout society.

Our purpose is to harness the power of those who share our vision to campaign and advocate for legislative and policy changes that protect animals, and to educate, inspire and promote a future without cruel 'sports'.

Mission:

Empowered by knowledge and driven by compassion, we work to redefine what is acceptable so that no animal is persecuted in the name of sport.

We do this by demonstrating our values in everything we do:

Compassion:	Credibility:	Courage:	Collaboration:	Connection:
We are ethical and committed to creating a world that is caring towards animals and people;	We are law abiding, rely on evidence and have years of experience;	We have the confidence to challenge those who believe in killing animals for 'sport';	We unite with others through honesty to achieve a common goal;	We gain power from our connection to nature and each other

Only by living our values can we be that catalyst for change that animals so desperately need.

Strategic Context

This strategic plan covers the period 2026-30. The global covid-19 pandemic in 2020 highlighted the significant impacts unexpected events can have on strategies and plans, but the below considers some of the political, economic, social, technological, legal, legislative and environmental factors and trends which may define the context in which we pursue our mission over the coming five years.

Political

We begin this strategy period with one of the most favourable political environments in the League's history. The Labour Government in Westminster included a pledge in its 2024 general election manifesto to ban trail hunting¹ – ending a widespread breach of the 2004 Hunting Act² that has effectively allowed hunting of foxes with hounds to continue. Reform of the Hunting Act could also prevent the on-going hunting of stags, otters, hares, and mink. The Conservative party's position ahead of the 2024 general election was to make "no changes" to the Hunting Act³ having previously suggested an intent to repeal the Act⁴. The Labour manifesto also committed to end the use of snares as well as a more general intention to "deliver for nature" and take action to meet targets under the 2021 Environment Act through partnerships with civil society, communities and businesses⁵.

Devolved administrations in Wales and Scotland have similarly demonstrated support for many of the League's priorities with both nations implementing stricter animal welfare laws. Wales is due to follow its ban on the use of snares by signalling an intent to ban greyhound racing, recognising its inherent cruelty⁶. The restoration of power-sharing in the Stormont assembly also presents an opportunity for the progression of a Private Member's Bill to end hunting with dogs in Northern Ireland – the only part of the UK where it remains legal.

'Political, economic, social, technological, legal, legislative and environmental factors and trends which may define the context in which we pursue our mission over the coming five years.'

However, some risks and challenges persist within the political operating environment. The rise in popularity of Reform UK presents a potentially unhelpful narrative angle through the party's pledge to 'protect country sports' claiming that they "increase investment and help conservation of our environment"⁷. Reassuringly in this regard, public support for such sports remains weak among the general public, including in rural areas where Reform polls positively⁸. Noting protests by farmers in the UK and EU, we will guard against the risk that our policy positions could be portrayed as 'anti-farming' or in any way in opposition to rural communities – issues which may become more politically sensitive as the Government pursues broader environmental and land management reforms.

We are well respected across the political spectrum for the constructive, evidence-based and principled approach we have demonstrated for more than a century. Through new and reinvigorated leadership at executive and board levels, we are moving on from recent past challenges and have already begun to restore and maintain critical relationships across parties and administrations in pursuit of protecting animals from harm.



Economic

The UK economy is expected to remain weak and vulnerable to global economic dynamics through the early years of this strategy period. Growth is predicted to remain roughly half of pre-pandemic levels at between 1 and 1.5% per annum⁹ with inflation remaining above the Bank of England target of 2% before inclining towards that rate from 2026-27¹⁰. Continued high levels of public debt¹¹ combined with the Government's fiscal rules are likely to constrain scope for significant public spending outside of the committed increases in defence spending in response to geopolitical tensions. Broader global uncertainties, such as geopolitical instability due to the ongoing war in Ukraine, conflict and continued tensions in the Middle East, and an unpredictable US presidency, could further impact the UK's economic stability.

National economic factors will continue to affect both operating costs (increased staff costs and inflation-driven budget pressures) and fundraising potential, particularly as UK charity donations (propensity to give) have declined¹² with competition for limited funds intensifying within the sector. The continuation of cost-of-living pressures for households is likely to further contribute to the decline in donations to charities. We are also cognisant that our staff and volunteers are

impacted by these pressures, pushing us to continue to focus on the League being a great place to work and volunteer.

A possible modest improvement in the UK's economic outlook toward the latter half of the period – lower inflation and higher, though still low, growth – may revive donor giving to charitable causes. However, the negative trend in charitable giving predates the cost-of-living crisis, so even if economic headwinds ease, the fundraising environment will remain highly competitive and expensive, with no guarantee of a return to previous levels of donor participation without significant strategic innovation in engagement, retention, and value proposition. We may have the best chance of capitalising on this opportunity if we can align our messaging with the growing public concern around the urgent need for restoration of biodiversity and continued high public concern for animal welfare and the environment¹³.

'Growing public concern around the urgent need for restoration of biodiversity and continued high public concern for animal welfare.'

¹'Change' Labour Party Manifesto 2024, see <https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Labour-Party-manifesto-2024.pdf>

²Hunting Act 2004 available at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/37/contents>

³Conservative Party Manifesto 2024 at <https://public-consultations.com/publicweb/GE2024/Accessible-Manifesto/Accessible-PDF-Conservative-Manifesto-2024.pdf>

⁴Then Prime Minister, Theresa May, indicated in the 2017 General Election campaign that she was personally supportive of fox hunting and indicated an intent to allow Parliament a free vote on whether to repeal the 2004 Hunting Act. This policy was subsequently reversed, see <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/jan/07/theresa-may-drops-manifesto-promise-to-allow-foxhunting-vote>

⁵'Change' Labour Party Manifesto 2024, see <https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Labour-Party-manifesto-2024.pdf>

⁶See <https://petitions.senedd.wales/petitions/244932>

⁷Reform UK Manifesto 2024 at https://assets.nationbuilder.com/reformuk/pages/253/attachments/original/1718625371/Reform_UK_Our_Contract_with_You.pdf?1718625371

⁸YouGov 'Where does the British public stand on hunting?' 2024 available at <https://yougov.co.uk/society/articles/50958-where-does-the-british-public-stand-on-hunting>

⁹See Office for Budgetary Responsibility March 2025 Economic and Fiscal Outlook at <https://obr.uk/economic-and-fiscal-outlooks/>. See also IMF at <https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/GBR> and OECD United Kingdom Economic Snapshot at <https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/sub-issues/economic-surveys/united-kingdom-economic-snapshot.html>

¹⁰Ibid, notably OBR March 2025 Economic and Fiscal Outlook

¹¹OBR predicts public debt will increase to 104% of GDP by 2026-27

¹²See Third Sector at <https://www.thirdsector.co.uk/number-charity-donors-fell-record-low-last-year-new-figures-show-fundraising/article/1912192> indicating that less than 50% of people report donating to charity in 2024 compared to 58% in 2019. Also Charities Aid Foundation UK Giving Report 2025 at <https://www.cafonline.org/docs/default-source/uk-giving-reports/uk-giving-report-2025.pdf> Figure 2 indicating a continued decline in donations since 2016.

¹³See ibid, CAF UK Giving Report which indicates that animal welfare and environmental protection causes represent 7% and 5% of donations respectively (equal to £1.04 billion/annum for animal welfare causes and £705 million/annum for environmental protection/improvement). See also ONS Public Opinions and Social Trends, May 2025, which indicates consistent (c.80%) levels of concern about the natural environment and climate change across all age groups, available at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/publicopinionsandsocialtrends/greatbritain/latest>



Time for Change - End Cage Breeding event outside Welsh Parliament, 2025.

¹⁴YouGov 2024 'Where does the British public stand on hunting?' indicates that 79% of polled adults believe that the 2004 Hunting Act should remain in place, available at <https://yougov.co.uk/society/articles/50958-where-does-the-british-public-stand-on-hunting>

¹⁵For example, nearly 70% of respondents believe that 'game bird' shooting should be made illegal and 71% believe that snares should be banned according to polling by YouGov for the League Against Cruel Sports, e.g. <https://www.league.org.uk/news-and-resources/news/new-polling-shows-71-per-cent-think-cruel-snares-should-be-illegal-in-england/>

¹⁶<https://www.league.org.uk/news-and-resources/news/new-figures-fox-hunting/>

¹⁷YouGov 2024 'Where does the British public stand on hunting?' at <https://yougov.co.uk/society/articles/50958-where-does-the-british-public-stand-on-hunting>

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid. 72% of those polled consider it "unacceptable" to hunt species which have been bred solely for the purpose of hunting with 19% considering it "acceptable".

Social

Public opinion remains strongly supportive of our core priority of ending hunting¹⁴ and other cruel 'sports' and associated animal-harming activities¹⁵. A 2024 Survey conducted by FindOutNow and Electoral Calculus on behalf of the League indicated that 76% of GB adults support strengthening the Hunting Act, including 70% of rural respondents - only 7% of adults (11% in rural areas) oppose strengthening the Hunting Act¹⁶. Only 10% of Britons support any form of hunting for purely 'recreational' purposes while 71% believe it is acceptable to hunt for food¹⁷. A marginal majority (53%) of Britons support allowing farmers to hunt animals deemed to be agricultural pests¹⁸. Trophy hunting is seen as acceptable by just 4% of the public, with nine in 10 Britons (92%) viewing it as unacceptable¹⁹. Hunting of species bred purely for the purposes of hunting – which is the case for many tens of millions of game birds captively bred and released in the UK each year – is also widely opposed²⁰.

This is part of the overall backdrop of British society, where in 2025 almost nine in 10 children and seven in 10 adults describe themselves as animal lovers²¹. Between these two age groups we see a drop off, with only 63% of 18-24 year olds identifying this way. This gives us a clear challenge as this group of young adults become our future donors.

Public understanding of the nature and extent of cruelty and animal welfare issues is not uniform – greyhound racing, horse racing, and game bird shooting remain less clearly opposed by the UK public than hunting²², requiring more targeted education and advocacy. There may also be a perception that fox hunting (with dogs) has been "solved", potentially weakening support for further action unless public awareness of it is refreshed. The anticipated consultation on strengthening the Hunting Act is clearly an opportunity to educate and engage on this subject.

While always present on the UK NGO scene, non-violent direct action (NVDA) in support of moral causes – especially

for urgent action on climate change – has increased in the past decade²³. This has resulted in some polarisation in levels of acceptance of this form of protest as a tactic for influencing political and corporate action although a 2022 poll indicated that 66% of the UK public support NVDA as a protest tactic to protect UK nature²⁴. The League itself does not undertake direct action (with our focus being on driving systemic change rather than protecting animals one by one), but nonetheless this debate impacts the work of others in our sector, and therefore is relevant to our work.

A continued sector-wide donor trend toward a smaller number of donors giving to fewer charities will likely increase competition for donations and support²⁵. This may necessitate a focus on resilience through diversifying of fundraising streams²⁶, combined with adequate financial reserves. High levels of trust in charities²⁷, and growth in support for strident action on moral causes²⁸, could be harnessed effectively with the right engagement strategy.

As one of the better resourced organisations in our sector the League has a responsibility to provide a leadership and coordination role. We founded and operate the well-respected Time For Change Coalition which brings together the animal welfare sector to collaborate against hunting, and work at the heart of many other formal and informal groupings. Our work on the REVIVE coalition in Scotland provides a blueprint for intersectional working bringing together environmental, social and animal issues into a single force for change. Focusing on our work as a convener, collaborator and catalyst brings together both our mission and our values, and is proving extremely effective in influencing stakeholders.

²¹RSPCA Animal, Kindness Index 2025 <https://www.rspca.org.uk/en/whatwedo/latest/kindnessindex/2025/report>

²²YouGov 2024 'Where does the British public stand on hunting?' at <https://yougov.co.uk/society/articles/50958-where-does-the-british-public-stand-on-hunting>

²³See E3G at <https://www.e3g.org/publications/the-rise-of-direct-climate-action-in-the-uk/#:~:text=Thirdly%2C%20XR%20also%20differs%20in,game%E2%80%9D%20on%20climate%20change%20campaigning.>

²⁴See <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/oct/24/huge-uk-public-support-for-direct-action-to-protect-environment-poll>

²⁵See Charities Aid Foundation 2025 UK Giving Report at <https://www.cafonline.org/docs/default-source/uk-giving-reports/uk-giving-report-2025.pdf> which also found that only half of UK adults sponsored or donated to charity in the previous 12 months.

²⁶See UHY Hacker Young, 2024 at <https://www.uhy-uk.com/insights/how-can-your-charity-approach-income-diversification#:~:text=Why%20should%20charities%20try%20to,any%20single%20source%20of%20income.>

²⁷CAF 2025 UK Giving Report notes that more than 75% of people consider charities to be "somewhat trustworthy" or "very trustworthy" with only 17% considering them to be "not very trustworthy" or "not trustworthy at all". See <https://www.cafonline.org/docs/default-source/uk-giving-reports/uk-giving-report-2025.pdf>

²⁸See <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/oct/24/huge-uk-public-support-for-direct-action-to-protect-environment-poll>



Drone imagery of Bettws Hall, Wales - the largest game bird farm in Europe.

Technological

Technology presents both significant opportunities and challenges, as it does for the animal welfare sector as a whole. Increasing sophistication of Artificial Intelligence and technology like drones, and body-worn cameras offer potential for enhanced investigations, donor targeting, and operational efficiencies. However, these same technologies also pose threats. Digital misinformation, 'deepfake risks', and surveillance countermeasures (e.g., CCTV at game farms or encrypted communications among perpetrators) are an inevitable consequence of wider accessibility and affordability of such technologies, particularly for those opposed to us. At the operational level, hybrid working and digital communications continue to improve internal collaboration and recruitment reach.

'The rapid growth in content sharing channels on a range of social and online media platforms has resulted in increased exposure to images and footage of animal cruelty over recent years.'

Sadly, new technology has also driven, or enabled, the growth on online animal abuse and animal torture. This grotesque sport involves either the filming of acts of cruelty (e.g. using a catapult against wild birds²⁹) which is then shared for 'likes', or the commissioning of specific acts of animal abuse for a fee (e.g. people paying to watch monkeys being injured³⁰). The rapid growth in content sharing channels on a range of social and online media platforms has resulted in increased exposure to images and footage of animal cruelty over recent years, with 42% of adults having witnessed it in the past 12 months³¹. For children and young people, 37% of those aged 7-15 in 2025 have witnessed animal cruelty on social media – an increase from 33% in 2024³². This gives the League a potential new area of focus, as an evolving sport based on animal cruelty.

Navigating evolving social media algorithms will likely make it harder to organically reach new audiences. Leaguecast provides new outreach avenues, and a corollary opportunity to utilise such channels for fundraising as well as engagement and education, particularly relating to the League's reserves/sanctuaries. But we must be strategic in balancing innovation with security, reputation management, and ensuring that engagement is meaningful.

Legislative/Legal

As noted in the political analysis, the current legislative environment offers significant opportunities for progress, particularly through the Government's consultation on strengthening the 2004 Hunting Act to close the trail hunting loophole. Devolved nations are also paving the way with snare bans and plans to ban greyhound racing, which can be leveraged to advocate for UK-wide changes.

However, enforcement gaps – especially where laws are passed but not properly implemented or enforced – pose a challenge, especially when policing budgets are under pressure. Also, the Charity Commission's restrictions on political advertising, Electoral Commission rule changes, and the tightening of protest laws may constrain how we can campaign, advocate and raise funds particularly during elections. Keeping on top of these changes will also increase the administrative and cost burden for charities.

Further bureaucratic burdens (including subject access requests and Charity Commission complaints) deliberately instigated by groups opposed to us, could strain our administrative capacity and have financial costs, as well as potentially divert resources away from strategic aims. Navigating GDPR reforms, the evolving Data Usage Bill, and jurisdictional complexity across UK and devolved nations will also require continued diligence and careful management.

Environmental

The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world³³ and continues to face a nature crisis, particularly with regard to waterways (due to mismanagement by water companies and the impacts of high levels of agricultural run-off). The continued decline of UK biodiversity is further exacerbated by the impacts of climate change on local ecosystems, including our reserves/sanctuaries. This creates both urgency and opportunity: the

League can position itself as a custodian/protector of British wildlife, promoting the benefits of rewilding projects (e.g. beaver and stork reintroductions) and forming alliances with partner organisations and accessing new sources of funding³⁴.

The stated intent of the current Westminster Government to show leadership on the environment, and the growing concern among the public over biodiversity loss and the global challenge of climate change, provides a powerful potential narrative hook for our work. We will, however, need to ensure that our long-standing specific asks around hunting, shooting, racing and animal fighting are not overshadowed by larger global crises. Effective, compelling communication which shows the connections between issues, and highlights opportunities for solutions, will be critical to our success over this strategy period.

Our nature reserves represent a unique asset: they are well-established in local communities (having been acquired in 1958) and serve not only as havens for wildlife, but also as platforms for storytelling, fundraising, morale-building, and advocacy. They also enable important collaboration with neighbouring landowners and other potential partner organisations. They give us the opportunity to illustrate the intersectionality between nature, animal welfare and social good – which is a strong proposition for driving change.

'Our nature reserves represent a unique asset: they are well-established in local communities (having been acquired in 1958) and serve not only as havens for wildlife, but also as platforms for storytelling, fundraising, morale-building, and advocacy.'

²⁹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/czdv840p3r7q>

³⁰ See BBC report Woman Jailed over Sadistic Monkey Torture Videos 2024 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c4gve7xqd7qq>

³¹ See the Animal Kindness Index 2024 available at <https://www.rspca.org.uk/whatwedo/latest/kindnessindex/2024/findings> and 2025 at <https://www.rspca.org.uk/whatwedo/latest/kindnessindex/2025/findings>

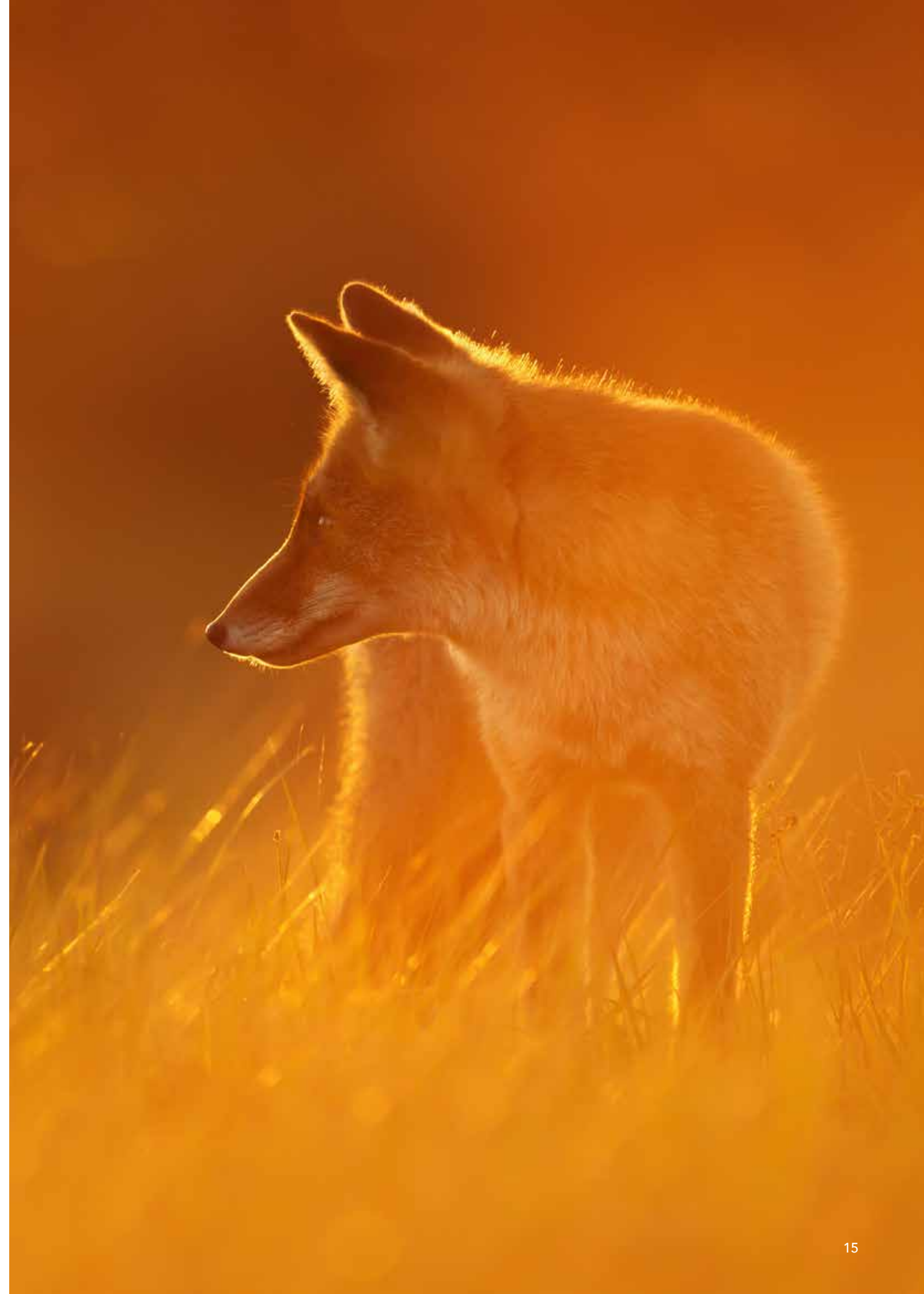
³² Ibid (2025). These statistics should be of concern given the long-recognised links between animal abuse and domestic violence. See, for example, 'Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence: Exploring the Link' available at <https://www.alaw.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Animal-Abuse.pdf> which also noted that, "...law enforcement agencies have identified that most serial killers have a history of animal abuse and consider that animal abuse can be an indicator of future violent offending."

³³ See State of Nature, 2023 available at <https://stateof-nature.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/TP25999-State-of-Nature-main-report-2023-FULL-DOC-v12.pdf>

³⁴ See, for example, funding made available through Rewilding Britain at <https://www.rewildingbritain.org.uk/>

Conclusion

Over the next five years, the League Against Cruel Sports is likely to operate in a context of unprecedented political alignment, growing public empathy, and legislative opportunity. This will be tempered by national-level economic constraints, technology-related risks, and competing priorities within wider society. To maximise the potential for success over the course of the strategy period, we must balance strategic focus with pragmatism, leverage our supportive political relationships across the political spectrum in Westminster and devolved nations, collaborate within and outside the sector and work to broaden public engagement beyond core supporters. We have a clear need to identify new and growth audiences, as we respond to demographic and economic challenges impacting people's ability to give and support. We must also continue to maintain diligence around legal, reputational and financial risks and manage our resources and people well.



Our Strategic Priorities for 2026-30

Our vision:

A kinder society where persecuting animals for 'sport' is in the past.

Our values:

Compassion

Credibility

Courage

Collaboration

Connection

The following strategic priorities represent the core of the League's work over the strategy period – areas where the organisation feels it can make demonstrable progress towards its mission over the next five years.

In addition to the core areas of work focused on ending cruel sports and in anticipation of achieving significant wins in these areas over the course of the next five years – we will also devote resources and develop work plans for two emergent areas of work:

1. Focus on the mutual benefits to be found at the intersection of conservation, land use, the natural environment and animal protection as a method for gaining more traction for change; including an expanded role for our reserves in demonstrating effective stewardship and the expansion of strategies such as REVIVE that focus on cross sector partnerships

2. Redefine what is acceptable for animals, both through tackling emerging cruel trends such as online animal abuse, and by working with others to clarify the social contract and legal underpinnings of cruel sport such as the Animal Welfare Act and the representation of animals as property.

These emergent priority areas complement our core priorities, which remain laser focussed on ending cruel sports.



Core Priority 1:

End Hunting Animals with Dogs

The problem: Despite the 2004 Hunting Act making hunting mammals with dogs illegal in England and Wales, hunting of foxes, stags, otters, hares and mink continues. This is either through the 'smokescreen' of activities like so-called trail hunting, which is used as a cover for hunting animals, or through the exploitation of the loopholes in the law. The law itself has proved very difficult to enforce and prosecute, and when convictions do happen the resulting punishments are paltry. The practice of hunting mammals with dogs remains legal in Northern Ireland and poorly enforced in Scotland.

Despite supporters of hunting frequently claiming that it is a traditional part of 'country life' and provides employment in rural communities. 'Hunt havoc' also blights communities through which hunts pass, causing antisocial incidents such as trespass across land, livestock worrying, traffic danger and disruption in countryside communities. The dogs themselves are also often victims of this sport, subject to injuries and routinely disposed of once they are no longer 'useful'.

The solution: Public opinion in the UK clearly shows that the majority of people – even in rural areas – oppose the hunting of foxes and other mammals with hounds. It is time that the Hunting Act was amended to ban trail hunting, remove all loopholes, and carry custodial sentences. Effective legislation must be passed through the Northern Ireland Assembly and enforcement in Scotland must be improved.

Our strategy: Drawing on our strong relationships with government, we will provide the evidence and expertise to push these legislative changes forward. We will rally the sector to collaborate on our shared goal of ending the hunting of animals with dogs once and for all and inspire the public to show their support for these changes.

Goals for Ending Hunting Animals with Dogs:

1. Reform the 2004 Hunting Act (England and Wales);
2. Ban Hunting Mammals with Hounds in Northern Ireland;
3. Advocate for Effective Enforcement of the Hunting Ban in Scotland.



Photo kindly provided by **Tristan Bane**

Core Priority 2:

End 'Game' Bird shooting

The problem: Tens of millions of 'game' birds are bred and released each year solely to be shot as sport. Around 60% of released birds survive the shooting season although 40% of these are wounded and so are vulnerable to predation. Others will face starvation or disease.

The mass rearing and release of game birds also poses other risks such as being potential reservoirs for avian influenza, and potentially disrupting the balance of the ecosystems into which they are released.

The management of landscapes to ensure unnaturally high numbers of native birds, like grouse, for shooting involves the trapping and extermination of hundreds of thousands of other wild animals, as well as other environmental issues like muirburn and mass indiscriminate chemical medication.

The solution: The sport of game bird shooting must end. Steps towards this include through the passage of legislation that prohibits the caged breeding and mass release of pheasants and partridges into the UK countryside, as well as the driven shooting of grouse. In order to convince policy-makers of the need to legislate for a ban on game bird shooting, we will produce compelling, evidenced reports and public engagement campaigns to highlight the inherent cruelty of these practices, their environmental impacts, as well as the public subsidies they attract – public funding for mass animal suffering.

Our Strategy: If people knew the reality of game bird shooting, the majority would surely oppose it. We will expose the horrific welfare issues associated with rearing of caged birds and of driven grouse shoots, and the fact that many birds are injured rather than killed in shoots leading to slow and painful deaths. We will shine a spotlight on the persecution of other wild animals to support unnaturally high numbers of grouse. We will highlight the environmental issues of mass releases

of non-native species, the impacts they have on the balance of ecosystems and the risks cage-reared birds pose as reservoirs of avian influenza. We will debunk the myth that birds are shot for food - we will explain how environments have been manipulated, and the balance of ecosystems disrupted, to enable a small number of people to indulge in a cruel activity where killing of animals is considered a sport – and one which often sees other iconic species impacted.

We will replicate the success of REVIVE³⁵ in Scotland where collaborative working between a range of organisations is focused on demonstrating and advocating for a better, restorative and regenerative form of land management – one that benefits people, the environment and local economies, as well as reduces animal cruelty and suffering in the name of sport.

Goals for Ending the Shooting of 'Game Birds':

1. End Caged Breeding of Game Birds (Pheasant and Partridge) and the Mass Release of Pheasant and Partridge;
2. End Driven Grouse Shooting.
3. Roll-out of Scotland's REVIVE model to England, Wales and Northern Ireland.



³⁵ See Revive website at <https://revive.scot/>

Core Priority 3: Ending Greyhound Racing

The problem³⁶: Greyhound racing is cruel from the cradle to the grave. Dogs endure poor early-life conditions – kept in kennels for long stretches, racing through injuries, and often suffering fractures or torn muscles. The racing life of a greyhound is short. They may start racing at 15 months and – if they remain ‘profitable’ and are not injured or killed in the course of their careers – may race until age five or six years.

When racing, running around an oval track at great speeds puts huge strain on greyhounds’ bodies making injuries, and even deaths, inevitable. If a greyhound is injured or no longer profitable, they may be euthanised, or used for breeding or experiments, rather than rehomed leading to concerns about the high ‘wastage’ rate of animals, as well as welfare concerns in a poorly-regulated industry.

Audiences for greyhound racing have been steadily declining for many years with the sport only sustained by financial links to the gambling industry. The Greyhound Board of Great Britain³⁷ portrays greyhound racing as “the UK’s sixth most popular spectator sport” and “fun, family-friendly and accessible” when the truth is that it is built on the suffering and exploitation of many thousands of animals each year.

The solution: Greyhound racing is cruel, a dying form of ‘entertainment’, and must end. The evidence of its cruelty and harm is indisputable and more and more jurisdictions³⁸ are recognising that there can be no place for such a sport.

Our Strategy: The majority of greyhound racing in the UK happens at tracks regulated by the Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB)³⁹. The Welsh Government has announced its intention to ban greyhound racing which currently takes place at one track within Wales. This presents an opportunity to leverage the progressive, welfare-based decision to end greyhound racing in Wales to call for

the end of greyhound racing in England and Scotland focused on the GBGB.

In February 2025, the Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy, stated that there were “absolutely no plans” to extend the ban announced in Wales to the rest of the United Kingdom emphasising the “joy” and “economic contribution” of the industry⁴⁰. This represents an out-dated and inaccurate view of greyhound racing which is ripe for challenge through evidence-based research and public engagement that demonstrates the cruelty of a dying industry – the finish line for greyhound racing is fast approaching. In that context, we will advocate for a managed end to greyhound racing, including credible plans to rehome racing greyhounds over the course of the decline towards closure of the sport.

- Goals for Ending Greyhound Racing:
1.

Build Public Support for an End to Greyhound Racing; through both welfare and social lenses.
2.

Work with partners in coalition to drive policy reform across all nations.
3.

Add our voice to work in Scotland as the next stage of ending greyhound racing in the UK.



The League is also very concerned about the welfare of horses in racing – from being ridden at a very young age, to their living conditions not allowing them to perform natural behaviours, to the huge number of horses ‘wasted’ into uncertain futures, to the use of the whip, to injuries on the track and in training – horse racing is in need of wholesale reform. We ask the public not to support it in its current form and call specifically for a regulator focused on welfare and a ban on the use of the whip. Our current resources don’t allow us to prioritise this issue, but we act where we can and support the work of partner organisations.

³⁶ Sources: the League website and report on injuries in racing greyhounds by Professor Andrew Knight available at <https://www.andrewknight.info/reports/injuries-in-racing-greyhounds/>

³⁷ See GBGB website at <https://www.gbgb.org.uk/about/>

³⁸ A number of countries or regions have banned greyhound racing on animal welfare grounds including Austria, India, Norway, South Africa, Türkiye and many US states. Animal welfare laws in Italy, Sweden and other countries effectively prevent racing of greyhounds on welfare grounds.

³⁹ Two tracks in Northern Ireland are operated by Greyhound Racing Ireland and the Thornton track in Fife is the only track in Scotland which is independent of the GBGB.

⁴⁰ See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c93kklzn14yo>

Core Priority 4: Ending Animal Fighting

The problem: The 1835 Cruelty to Animals Act banned many forms of animal fighting in the UK with subsequent legislation (notably in 1911 and 2006) strengthening protections of a range of species from being used for fighting and the penalties for those who break the law. Yet animal fighting continues, often linked to illegal gambling and organised crime. The RSPCA estimates between 800 and 1,000 suspected or confirmed dog fighting incidents annually in the UK and suggests that “most dogs used for fighting will ultimately either be killed in the ring, die as a result of their injuries or in some cases killed by their owners.”⁴¹ Reports of badger baiting – where terriers or other dogs are sent below ground to locate and flush out badgers to fight other dogs – increased by 55% between 2019 and 2020 with the Badger Trust estimating that more than 10,000 badgers are baited or illegally killed each year⁴². The Badger Trust also notes that “contemporary badger baiting is also linked with cyber-enabled wildlife crime, as gangs use social media to share badger crime, recruit diggers, and normalise violence against wildlife”⁴³.

As a largely hidden and secretive activities, evidence is difficult – and often dangerous – to obtain, resulting in low awareness levels among the general population and low levels of prosecution and convictions. This lack of enforcement is compounded by the lack of entry into force of sub-section three of Section 8 of the Animal Welfare Act (2006) which would criminalise the sharing of video footage of animal fights⁴⁴.

The solution: Given that it has been illegal for nearly 200 years, and yet still continues albeit secretly, it may be that the cruelty of forcing animals to fight may never be totally stopped. But more can be done to enforce the law, reduce incidents and bring perpetrators to justice. Due to the links between animal fighting and organised crime, greater enforcement of dog fighting, badger

baiting and other animal fighting abuse may also result in prosecutions for other criminal activities.

Our Strategy: The League alone does not have the resources or expertise to end, or even directly challenge, animal fighting but we can play a role in shining a light on these horrific, violent forms of animal abuse. And we can support others – notably the police, third sector partners and Crown Prosecution Service – in providing evidence to help bringing perpetrators to justice, and calling for tougher penalties that may start to deter these blood sports and reduce harm to animals.

Goals for Ending Animal Fighting for sport:

- 1. Strengthen Enforcement and penalties;
- 2. Support prosecutions by providing expertise and evidence.
- 3. Increase Public Engagement and Awareness of Animal Fighting.



Photo by Amy Starr on Unsplash

⁴¹ See RSPCA website at <https://www.rspca.org.uk/whatwedo/endcruelty/investigatingcruelty/organised/animalfighting>

⁴² See The Badger Trust at <https://www.badgertrust.org.uk/badger-crime-types-of-badger-crime>

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ See Animal Welfare Act (2006) Section 8 at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/45/section/8> and Animal Welfare Act (Commencement No.1) (Wales) Order 2007 at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2007/1030/article/2/made>. See also Response to Consultation on Sentencing Guidelines at <https://www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk/html-publication/item/animal-cruelty-guidelines-response-to-consultation/>

Enabling priority: Winning Hearts and Minds

The problem: Despite the UK being a nation of animal lovers - and our mission focusing on issues with very high levels of public support - every win for animals is hard fought and takes many years. The League is a charity, funded by individual members of the public who have many calls on their time and funds. We must access a broader audience for our work, both with the public and with policy makers, in order to make change for animals more quickly.

The solution: We will revitalise our external focus, actively seeking out new engagement from partner organisations and those who make, shape or fund legislative and policy changes. We will drive up the number of people who give us their time, money or voice by presenting our arguments in new ways and to new audiences.



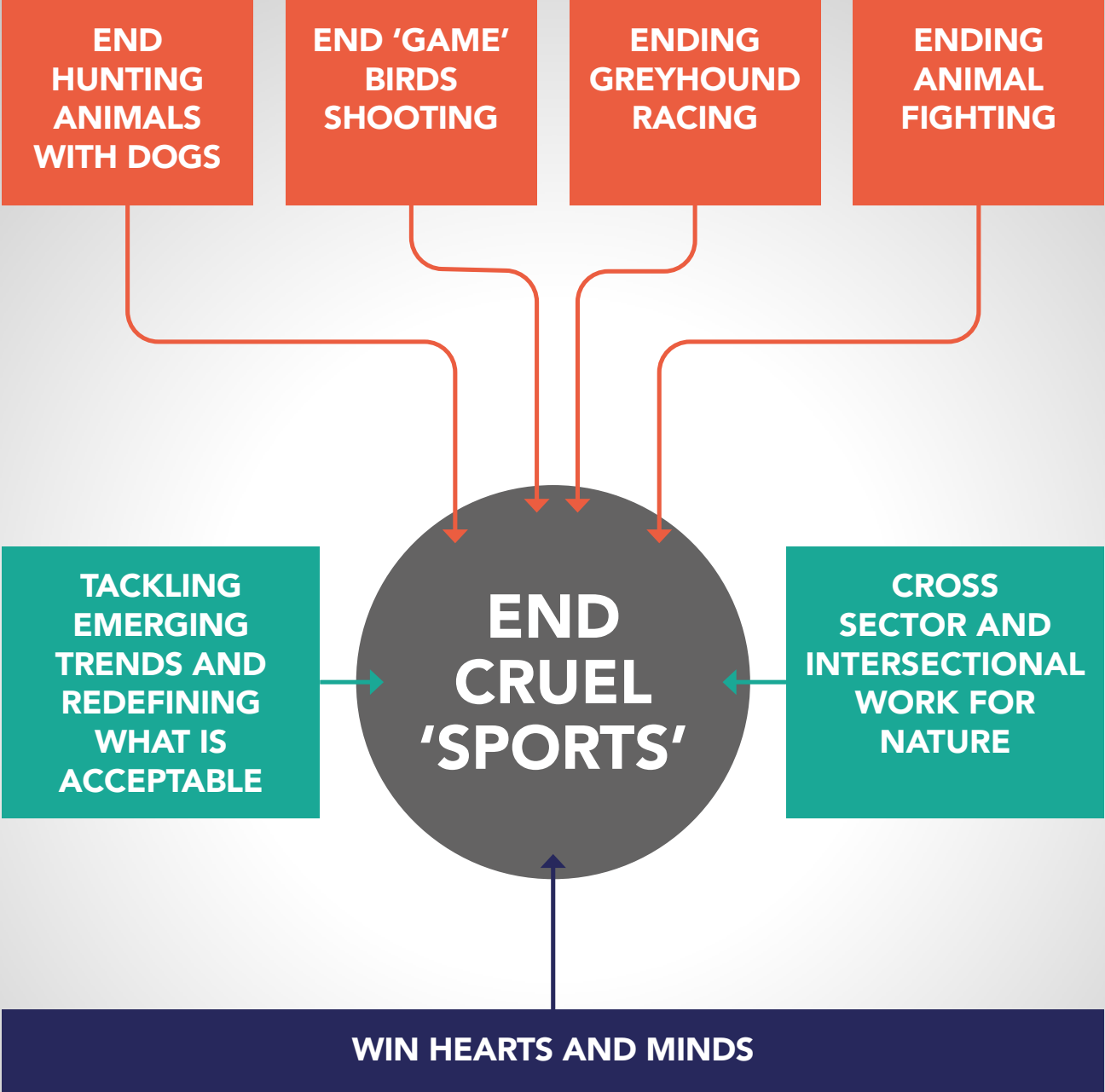
Our Strategy: Our emerging priorities and core priorities provide a plethora of ways in which we can make the argument against cruel sports, and gives us the ability to engage with a broader range of stakeholders than we currently do. As an organisation we will better align our campaigning, fundraising and engagement work to improve our cut-through in a crowded marketplace. As well as valuing and engaging with our current supporters, we will invest in identifying and recruiting more people to join our cause. We will continue to be a good partner to work with in the sector, seeking out new partnerships to drive our strategic priorities, and we will focus on supporting the animal protection sector as a whole to achieve our shared goals. Our brand and positioning will continue to ensure that we remain a 'friendly face', working with both grassroots activists and policy makers at the highest level, always with professionalism and credibility

Goals for Winning Hearts and Minds

1. Build our position as the leading voice on protecting animals from cruel sports and actively seek to work in partnership with others, and shape the animal protection sector.
2. Build our supporter base and maximise the active contribution of our supporters to our charity's success, by taking an integrated, audience-focused approach to our campaigning, fundraising and engagement work.
3. Build our reputation as a sector-leading, high-performance and influential organisation, which serves as an exemplary charity to support and to work for.



Our Priorities



KEY

- Core Priorities
- Emerging Priorities
- Enabling Priorities

Next Steps

This Strategic Plan for 2026-2030 sets out an ambitious agenda for change. It deliberately focuses on our mission delivery, objectives and goals, as these provide the framework for what follows. Our next steps are to work internally on how this aligns with our financial projections, in terms of allocating resources to different areas, and what it means for our working practices. As with the creation of this plan, this will be a collaborative effort across our trustees, staff team, external expertise, and external stakeholders.

We would like to thank everyone involved in the creation of this plan.





TIME FOR
CHANGE
#EndHunting
LEAGUE
AGAINST CRUEL SPORTS

TIME FOR
CHANGE
- COALITION AGAINST HUNTING -

TIME FOR
CHANGE
#EndHunting
LEAGUE
AGAINST CRUEL SPORTS

TIME FOR
CHANGE
#EndHunting
LEAGUE
AGAINST CRUEL SPORTS

TIME FOR
CHANGE
- COALITION AGAINST HUNTING -

TIME FOR
CHANGE
- COALITION AGAINST HUNTING -
#EndHunting
www.timeforchangecoalition.co.uk

Get in touch

01483 524 250

info@league.org.uk

league.org.uk

Engage with us on social media



[@LeagueAgainstCruelSports](https://www.facebook.com/LeagueAgainstCruelSports)



[@LeagueACS](https://twitter.com/LeagueACS)



[@Leagueagainstcs](https://www.instagram.com/Leagueagainstcs)

The League Against Cruel Sports. Registered charity in England and Wales (no. 1095234) and Scotland (no. SC045533). Registered in England and Wales as a company (no. 04037610). Registered office: New Sparling House, Holloway Hill, Godalming, GU7 1QZ, United Kingdom.

Cover photo kindly provided by **Tristan Bane**