



House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

23 September 2026

Dear Prime Minister,

Delivering a stronger Hunting Act to end hunting with dogs for good

Animal welfare is a matter of profound public concern, reflecting our collective principles and the standard of society we intend to build. Our response to these issues is a direct expression of those shared values and offers common ground around which we can all unite.

The ban on hunting with dogs was an historic milestone intended to end the chasing and killing of foxes, deer, hares and other animals for 'sport'. Yet this cruelty continues on a huge and well-documented scale, under the guise of 'trail' hunting and through the exploitation of other weaknesses and exemptions in the Hunting Act 2004. It is clear that the current legislation is failing and delay in reform only results in further animal suffering.

We therefore welcome your recent confirmation that you fully support the implementation of a ban on trail hunting as set out in your government's manifesto and Animal Welfare Strategy. In anticipation of your upcoming priorities as Prime Minister, we are writing to ask you to ensure this is delivered promptly along with comprehensive strengthening of the Hunting Act.

The recent consultation on the issue was a very welcome step towards delivering this. However, expertise from animal protection groups, field monitors and law enforcement shows that simply banning trail hunting will be insufficient.

For any ban to be effective, the Hunting Act must also be comprehensively reformed. If not, we risk hunts simply pretending to drag hunt while exploiting the same legal loopholes which enable trail hunting, and allowing hunts to continue chasing and killing deer under the guise of scientific research, carrying birds of prey as props while fox cub hunting and using other covers for illegal hunting.

Ending hunting with dogs holds significant electoral weight and enjoys overwhelming public support, regardless of location or politics. Recent data shows that 62 percent of the public – including 58 percent of rural residents – favour a trail hunting ban. It is supported not only by a majority of Labour supporters but also by a high percentage of Green, Reform and Liberal Democrat voters. Furthermore, polling from this year shows only 16 percent of the public oppose broader measures to strengthen the ban, while nearly 25 percent of voters would be less likely to vote for the governing party if fox hunting is not abolished by the next election.

You have always been a strong advocate for an end to the cruelty of hunting with dogs, including fighting attempts to repeal the ban.

In light of this, we seek your assurances that:

- The government will remain committed to fulfilling its manifesto promise to prohibit trail hunting
- Comprehensive measures to strengthen the Hunting Act will be included within upcoming legislation to end the hunting of animals with dogs once and for all
- The consultation findings will be published promptly, ensuring enough time for legislation to be introduced in the next parliamentary session

We remain eager to work with you to achieve the protection the public expects and that persecuted animals so urgently deserve. Working together towards this common goal, we have an opportunity to build a country where wild animals are no longer ripped apart with hounds in the name of ‘sport’.

Yours sincerely,

Rachael Maskell MP	Paula Barker MP
Lorraine Beavers MP	Sian Berry MP
Ian Byrne MP	Richard Burgon MP
Irene Campbell MP	Sarah Champion MP
Ellie Chowns MP	Carla Denyer MP
Neil Duncan-Jordan MP	Cat Eccles MP
Sarah Edwards MP	Clive Efford MP
Andrew George MP	Mary Glendon MP
Liz Jarvis MP	Kim Johnson MP

Ayoub Khan MP	Clive Lewis MP
Brian Leishman MP	Douglas McAllister MP
John McDonnell MP	Iqbal Mohamed MP
Abtisam Mohamed MP	Simon Opher MP
Kate Osborne MP	Adrian Ramsay MP
Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP	Hannah Spencer MP
Nadia Whittome MP	Sean Woodcock MP

Baroness Natalie Bennett

Pip Donovan, Chair — Action Against Fox Hunting and Action Against Stag Hunting

Michelle Masterton-Smith, Head of Campaigns & Communications — Animal Aid

Elena Edwards, Executive Director — Animal Concern

Jan Creamer, President — Animal Defenders International

Elaine Toland, Director — Animal Protection Agency

Nigel Palmer, Chief Executive — Badger Trust

Mark Jones, Head of Policy — Born Free

Crustacean Compassion

Ian Redmond, Head of Conservation — Ecoflix Foundation

Sarah Dixon, Director — The FOAL Group

Arthur Thomas, Public Affairs Advisor — FOUR PAWS UK

Laura Walton, Co-Director — Freedom for Animals

Sue Alderman, Chair — The Hare Preservation Trust

Vanessa Waddon, Chief Executive Officer — Hope Rescue

Claire Bass, Senior Director, Campaigns and Public Affairs — Humane World for Animals UK

Emma Slawinski, Chief Executive — League Against Cruel Sports

Rhys Giles, Director — The New Hunting Ban

Kirsty Jenkins, Director of Policy — OneKind

Elisa Allen, Vice President of Programs & Operations — PETA

Dr Steven McCulloch, Chair — Pigs Protection

Rob Pownall, CEO — Protect the Wild

Rabbit Welfare Association & Fund

David Bowles, Head of Public Affairs and Campaigns — RSPCA

Duncan McNair, CEO — Save The Asian Elephants

Kate Fox, Founder — Verify Humanity