

John F. Robins, Secretary, Animal Concern Advice Line (ACAL), c/o Animal Concern,
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Animal Concern Advice Line (ACAL) is a recognised Scottish charity: No. SC030982.
Animal Concern Advice Line was established in 2001 to take on the charitable work of Animal
Concern which was founded as the Scottish Anti-Vivisection Society in 1876.
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Council Leader Cllr Shaun Davies &
Council Managing Director Richard Partington Esq.,
Telford and Wrekin Council,
12 Steventon Road,
Wellington,
Telford TF1 2AS

Dear Councillor Davies and Mr. Partington,

I write regarding Hoo Farm Animal Kingdom, Preston on the Weald Moors, Telford,
Shropshire TF6 6DJ.

As part of their visitor attractions they stage regular sheep races throughout the summer.
Weather permitting races are held every day (apart from Fridays) from April to September.

This year their sheep racing season kicks off on Monday April 2nd with the "Sheep Gold Cup"
at 10am. On Monday 7th of May they intend holding a "Sheep Grand National".

More sheep racing information can be found on the Hoo Farm website here:

<https://www.hoofarm.com/explore/to-do/sheep-racing/>

You can view a video of one of the races from last year on the Hoo Farm FaceBook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/HooFarmAnimalKingdom/videos/1341242275940827/>

As you will see as many as 8 sheep, each with a knitted "jockey" strapped to their back, race
each other around a course with several fences to jump. While running they are subjected to
a very loud commentary and a crowd of cheering onlookers.

As the enforcing authority I ask your Council to inform the owners of Hoo Farm that their
intended sheep races will contravene the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and therefore cannot
take place.

Under Section 9 (2) of the 2006 Act any person responsible for the welfare of an animal
must ensure they meet:

- (a) its need for a suitable environment,
- (c) its need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns,
- (e) its need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

Please note that under the 2006 Act “suffering” means physical or mental suffering which includes stress and fear.

You don't have to have a degree in ovine behaviour studies to know that a busy, noisy tourist attraction is not a suitable environment for sheep.

Wearing toy jockeys while being made to run around a racecourse jumping fences in front of a noisy crowd and an even louder commentator is not a normal behaviour pattern for sheep.

The whole scenario will cause these animals to suffer fear and stress. These sheep races are not a bit of harmless fun but a criminal offence.

As well as the Animal Welfare Act 2006 I am concerned that Hoo Farm may also be in contravention of the Performing Animals (Regulation) Act 1925 in that they may not have the required license under that Act to train and exhibit performing animals.

I request that Telford and Wrekin Council take immediate steps to ensure these sheep races do not take place.

Yours sincerely,

John F. Robins,
Animal Concern Advice Line