

Subject: Stop Zippos Circus from Returning to Brighton and Hove to Exploit Animals for Entertainment – Petition for Debate:

Extract from the proceedings of the Council Meeting held on the 31 January 2019

Date of Meeting: 7 March 2019

Report of: Executive Lead Officer for Strategy, Governance & Law

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Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

Action Required of the Tourism, Development & Culture Committee

To receive the petition referred from the Council for consideration.

Recommendation: That the petition be considered.

Petition:

“Stop Zippos Circus from returning to Brighton & Hove to exploit animals for entertainment.

<https://www.change.org/p/brighton-hove-city-council-stop-zippos-circus-from-returning-to-brighton-hove-to-exploit-animals-for-entertainment>

Lead petitioner: Victoria Wood

Additional Information:

Animals are not here for our entertainment and should not be made to perform in the circus. We want Brighton and Hove City Council to repeal, revoke, and/or reject any proposed or confirmed licence/permission provided to Zippos Circus for their 2019 scheduled tour, and any tour thereafter.

Their use of domestic animals, including horses and budgies is not necessary, and while Zippos claim they follow animal welfare rules and regulations, the fact remains that these animals are made to perform, and carry out tasks that are unnatural. The training required to perform these tasks is often not observed/monitored by the relevant regulatory bodies and can breach welfare legislation (usually involves punishment using whips and depriving the animals of food until they perform the tricks required by the trainers). By allowing Zippos Circus to return, year after year, Brighton and Hove City Council are condoning these questionable training methods.

Horses performing in a tent full of people is uncharacteristic and no doubt causes them stress and anxiety (by their very nature, horses are timid and would normally be startled by the loud noises and flashing lights used in the circus). Whips are used on horses in the performance, and while not performing, the horses are kept in cramped conditions, tethered, unable to roam freely.

We acknowledge that the RSPCA and the council's animal wardens carry out welfare checks. However, these inspections do not take into account the methods used to train animals, the transportation of animals, and the animals schedule before and after they leave Hove Lawns. At no point is the holistic welfare of the animal taken into consideration.

We also question why Zippos's Circus do not advertise their use of domestic animals on their poster. It seems unethical to fail to warn customers about the use animals when it is clearly an important issue for many people.

We, the undersigned, believe that any show involving animals is cruel and unnecessary, especially when it comes to Zippos. Isn't it time ALL animal circuses were committed to the history books?

The council have given us the opportunity to present our case to them when they make their decision in January. Please support us in our efforts by signing this petition - let's send a strong message to the council, let them know that we do not agree with the use of animals in the circus. We cannot make an effective case without your help!

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**COUNCIL****4.30pm 31 JANUARY 2019****COUNCIL CHAMBER - BRIGHTON TOWN HALL****MINUTES**

Present: Councillors Simson (Chair), Phillips (Deputy Chair), Allen, Atkinson, Barford, Bell, Bennett, Bewick, Brown, Cattell, Chapman, Cobb, Daniel, Deane, Druitt, Gibson, Greenbaum, Hamilton, Hill, Horan, Hyde, Janio, Knight, Lewry, Littman, Mac Cafferty, Marsh, Meadows, Mears, Miller, Mitchell, Moonan, Morris, Nemeth, A Norman, K Norman, O'Quinn, Page, Peltzer Dunn, Platts, Robins, Sykes, Taylor, C Theobald, G Theobald, Wares, Wealls, West and Yates.

PART ONE**63 PETITIONS FOR COUNCIL DEBATE****(2) STOP ZIPPOS CIRCUS FROM RETURNING TO BRIGHTON AND HOVE TO EXPLOIT ANIMALS FOR ENTERTAINMENT**

- 63.10 The Mayor stated that where a petition secured 1,250 or more signatures it could be debated at the council meeting. She had been made aware of 1 such petition. She also noted that there was an amendment to the covering report's recommendation from the Green Group.
- 63.11 The Mayor then invited Ms. Wood to come forward and present the petition.
- 63.12 Ms. Wood thanked the Mayor and stated that the petition resulted from concerns about the use of animals by Zippos Circus. Whilst he noted Zippos had confirmed their circus in 2019 would not involve any animals, the aim of the petition was to get a change in policy to prevent any future instances of animals being used for live entertainment. The petition had 5,750 signatures and he hoped that councillors would listen to the voices of these people and ensure a change in policy could be achieved and an amendment made to the Animal Welfare Charter. There was a clear need to prevent animals from suffering stress and anxiety and he noted that the RSPCA supported not using animals in circuses. She also drew attention to a recent government survey that found 95.4% of people supported a ban on the use of wild animals and there was strong support for domestic animals to be included. She suggested that with Zippos bringing an all human circus to the city this year, it showed that the use of animals was not a consideration for their business model and noted in 2016 following a public outcry they stopped using cats in their shows. He called on the council to set an example and to support the petition.

- 63.13 Councillor Robins thanked Ms. Wood for presenting the petition and stated that Zippos had confirmed their intention to bring the successful show from the Edinburgh Festival to the city, which was an entirely human production. He also confirmed that no other circus bookings had been made for 2019 in the city. He noted that in the past council animal welfare officers had inspected the conditions for the animals at Zippos and found them to be suitable. The Animal Welfare Charter set out the council's policy on the use of animals on council owned land with an exception for horses and ponies and under current legislation this could not be altered. However, he was happy for the matter to be reconsidered at the Tourism, Development & Culture Committee.
- 63.14 Councillor Mac Cafferty welcomed the petition and moved an amendment on behalf of the Green Group, which called for the Tourism, Development & Culture Committee to review the matter and to consider a report to enable the Animal Welfare Charter to be amended so that the use of animals was not permitted on council owned land. He noted that a similar petition had been brought to the council two years previously and had not been taken forward. He hoped that on this occasion the petition and the amendment would be accepted and necessary action taken to enable the Animal Welfare Charter to be amended as there was no need to use animals in this way for entertainment.
- 63.15 Councillor Druitt formally seconded the amendment and stated that he wanted to thank Zippos for taking note of the petition and deciding to bring their non-animal show to the city this year. He also noted that Councillor Robins had previously agreed to review the policy in 2017 but when the matter came to committee the decision was to retain the Charter and the policy as it was. He hoped that this time round there would be a change in position.
- 63.16 Councillor Nemeth stated that he welcomed the opportunity to discuss the matter further at committee and to explore the use of animals in circuses as there was a need to consider all sides of the issue. He noted that Zippos had been coming to city for a number of years and had their intention to continue to do so should be welcomed as it did benefit the city. He therefore hoped that the council could work with them and other partners to find a solution.
- 63.17 Councillor Robins noted the comments and stated that he could not accept the amendment and was having to defend a policy he did not agree with. However, the legal advice was that the legislation did not enable the council to extend the ban but in taking the petition to committee he was happy for that advice to be reviewed.
- 63.18 The Mayor thanked Ms. Wood for attending the meeting and presenting the petition, and noted that the Green Group's amendment had not been accepted. She therefore put the amendment to the vote which was lost by 21 votes to 23 with 3 abstentions.
- 63.19 The Mayor then put the recommendation detailed in the covering report to the vote which was carried unanimously.
- 63.20 **RESOLVED:**
- (1) That the petition be noted and referred to the Tourism, Development & Culture Committee for consideration at its meeting on the 7th March 2019.