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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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Hi,

As you probably know, despite most legislation on fireworks being reserved to Westminster, the Scottish Government is holding a consultation on the subject. This consultation is the result of complaints received by the Scottish First Minister following incidents of misuse of fireworks in her Glasgow constituency last November.

Yet again politicians are wasting their time trying to ensure the responsible use of fireworks. Even if they managed this impossible task the responsible use of fireworks can also cause stress, suffering and death to pet, wild and farm animals and birds. Fireworks, "responsible" or otherwise, also have adverse effects, ranging from nuisance to serious fear and alarm, on many people, especially those suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress.

I am not a big fan of consultations which ask you to tick a box and fill in answers to very specific questions as I feel they are often designed to achieve a pre-determined result. However there is nothing to stop you thinking outside those little boxes and give answers which clearly show what you want the Scottish Government to do.

I don't want to simply tell you what to say as we might not agree on everything and if answers are too similar they run the risk of being lumped together and counted as a single organised response.

I know of people who simply cannot take their dogs out of the house for weeks either side of November the 5th due to the terrifying effect fireworks have on their pets. On more than one occasion I have received reports of pet birds dropping dead in their outside aviaries when fireworks exploded nearby. I once attended an organised public fireworks display where the fireworks were set off from a pier and the display was launched by a huge explosion of rockets. Sadly the pier was a night roost for pigeons and starlings and several birds died of shock and fell into the water below. Setting off a few low-powered fireworks prior to the main event would have scared the birds away rather than killed them.

For decades now we have been calling for a total ban on the sale of fireworks to, and the possession of fireworks by, members of the general public. Fireworks should only be owned by certified trained operators and used in licensed public displays which are well publicised in advance to give pet owners and others time to prepare. Coupled with restrictions on the permitted noise levels of fireworks and specified dates and times when displays can take place this should, if properly policed, go a long way towards eliminating the many problems caused by fireworks.

Instead of following our advice politicians have continued trying to be all things to all people and have repeatedly tinkered with the law in largely unsuccessful attempts to control firework use. I think many MPs and MSPs still think of fireworks as the wee-fart bangers, Roman candles and fizz-pop rockets we had when I was a kid. Nowadays if you go into any supermarket from October to November you can buy fireworks that would do more than just blow the bloody doors off.

Please use this consultation to urge the Scottish Government to ask Westminster for the power they need to ban the ownership and use of fireworks by the general public. If you or your companion animals have suffered due to fireworks please retell your experience in the consultation.

No matter where you live but most importantly if you live in Scotland, please participate in the consultation (which **closes on 13th May**) via this link: <https://consult.gov.scot/safer-communities/fireworks/consultation/subpage.2016-07-07.1474135251/>

In addition, if you live in or near any of the towns below, please try to attend one of the remaining live consultation sessions to get your message across. If you do get to one of these events please let me know how well attended it was.

Thursday 28th March 2pm to 4pm **Ayr Town Hall**, 5 – 9 High Street, Ayr KA7 1LU

Thursday 28th March 6pm to 8pm **Ayr Racecourse**, 2-6 Whitletts Road, Ayr KA8 0JE

Tuesday 16th April 2pm – 4pm Spectrum Centre and Hidden Gem Café, 1B Margaret Street, **Inverness** IV1 1LS

Tuesday 16th April 6pm – 8pm Jurys Inn Inverness, Millburn Road, **Inverness** IV2 3TR

Wednesday, 17 April 2019 2pm to 4pm and 6pm to 8pm Elgin Town Hall, 1 Trinity Place, **Elgin** IV30 1UL

Thursday, 25 April 2019 2pm to 4pm and 6pm to 8pm Cairndale Hotel and Leisure Club, English Street, **Dumfries** DG1 2DF

Monday, 29 April 2019 2pm to 4pm and 6pm to 8pm Civic Rooms, Aberdeen Town House, Broad Street, **Aberdeen** AB10 1AR.

Thursday, 9 May 2019 1pm to 3pm Trades Hall Of Glasgow, 85 Glassford Street,
Glasgow G1 1UH

Very strange that Glasgow, where the criminal misuse of fireworks last November lead to this consultation, appears to have only an afternoon consultation and nothing in the evening. Surely someone in Glasgow has a job to go to? I'll raise this with the Government.

To attend one of the live sessions you need a ticket which is free and can be obtained on this link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/scottish-government-17009421281>

Cheers4now,

John