



## **P-04-445 Save our Welsh cats & dogs from death on the roads – Correspondence from the petitioner to the Committee in response to correspondence from the RSPCA, 23.11.2013**

Response to RSPCA's letter to William Powell, Chair, Petitions Committee

I welcome the response from the RSPCA as it is important that this subject is openly discussed. The Charity confuses the dog training collars with the invisible fencing collars (Dog Training collars should continue to be outlawed)

The RSPCA writes “ where a painful stimulus is delivered as a result of an animal's action from which it cannot retreat”.

Firstly, there is no evidence at all that there is any pain triggered by the correction as it mimics the 'nip' given by an adult animal in the wild to discipline the offspring and is recognised by the pet and I can reassure the Chair that the pet can and does retreat from the stimulus or correction, unlike the dog training collar which is controlled by a human's hand.

After gentle, gradual training and a reinforcement period, the pet does not even approach the area where the warning alerts start. This was demonstrated in the accompanying short video to this petition back in January. I enclose it again for good measure:

<http://www.jacobwhittaker.co.uk/pics/FencingPlus.mp4>

The RSPCA quotes from the CAWC letter but excludes another couple of sentences from the same report:

The CAWC says “on the balance of probabilities, the element of the Welsh ban which extends to boundary fencing is not conducive to the promotion of animal welfare, but may in fact, be increasing animal suffering” and cites the pets (300,000 cats) which are killed on roads every year clearly as a welfare problem.

Practical alternatives are limited and have their own welfare risks e.g. confinement indoors .This was actually suggested by the ABCP/Feline Advisory Bureau amongst other things like chicken mesh cages for cats .As a society should we be moving backwards to keep animals in cages again ? Who wants the cost of maintaining a garden fence akin to a concentration camp, assuming the Planning officers/neighbours agree ?

Any dog owner will tell you that when continuously tethered or chained, dogs can become neurotic, unhappy, anxious and often aggressive. Pets should be allowed to run, play and roam freely as is their natural instinct.

The RSPCA Cymru officers should get in touch with their former CVO, Chris Laurence who has an invisible fence of his own; here is the Daily Mail article:



<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-2020343/Dogs-Trust-veterinary-director-Chris-Laurence-Hypocrisy-bunny-hugger.html>

Why does the RSPCA support livestock fencing which carries a live electric shock (unlike an electronic collar) and no warning alerts ?

Furthermore, the Charity cites a lack of evidence in relation to welfare problems which relate primarily to a shortage of research, but they omit to mention Defra's own 3 year research project into electronic collars' use for training dogs which was published only a few months ago from which I quote Adam Broderick's response:

*"While research showed no evidence that e-collars cause long-term harm to dog welfare when used appropriately, Defra wants to ensure electric dog collars are used properly and manufactured to a high standard.*

*We will work with the Electronic Collar Manufacturers Association to draw up guidance for dog owners and trainers advising how to use e-collars properly and to develop a manufacturers' charter to make sure any e-collars on sale are made to high standards.*

*A ban on e-collars could not be justified because the research provided no evidence that e-collars pose a significant risk to dog welfare. For a ban to be introduced there would have to be evidence showing they were harmful to the long-term welfare of dogs.*

***There are no proposals to place restrictions on the use of electronic containment fences."***

The Welsh ban came into force in 2010, before this DEFRA-funded research project was completed.

The University of Lincoln research project is researching the behaviour of cats and part of the study is looking into containment fencing – but dogs are not included.

At my own cost, I would be happy to take the Minister and other interested parties to see an invisible fence in action in England. It is absolutely vital they see this harmless and effective system for themselves and speak to the owner.

Lastly, I met with Nick Ramsay (AM) yesterday at his Constituency office in Monmouthshire. He voted in favour of the legislation in 2010 and was surprised to hear that it included invisible fencing. I quote his exact words:

*"How did that happen? The Kennel Club wanted the invisible fencing excluded.*

*This is not what we voted for"*

Monima O'Connor  
Petitioner