

PE2021/K: Ensure the definition of protected animals in the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 applies to the sheep on St Kilda

National Trust for Scotland written submission, 30 April 2024

We were pleased to see that the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee will be able to consider the PE2021 petition at its next meeting.

On reading the papers for the meeting, we saw that there had been an additional submission on the topic of our own, National Trust for Scotland, submission. Without wanting to create too much more reading for the Committee members, we thought it was worth briefly clarifying the points raised:

We note the petitioner's additional submission on the 18th of April, and the points raised within this relating to the National Trust for Scotland and would take this opportunity to correct them.

For the avoidance of doubt, we have a number of items of correspondence from the Scottish Government in relation to the feral Soay sheep population, including in 2009, 2020, and 2022.

In each case, these restate the Scottish Government position that the population of sheep on St Kilda are not covered under the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006, as these are not commonly domesticated in the British Isles, not under human control, and are living in a wild state.

In no instance in this correspondence was vaccination in general, or vaccination for blue tongue specifically, raised with the Trust. This reflects the Scottish Government's previously stated position that these are not protected animals within the meaning of the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act.