

Working with other animal welfare organisations, practical and ethical considerations

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Summary

There are about 188,000 Registered Charities in the UK.¹⁵⁵ 55 of these are good enough to be members of NEWC- but they rarely work together. Yet it is a fact that cooperation can multiply the effect of effort invested. The advantages are seen in expertise, resources, and economy of effort leading to greater impact at less total expense. Impact is not just in result but also in publicity. The public are keen to see Charities working together (many people believe that there are too many charities anyway), and cooperation increases both support and funding.

So why is not more done? Sad but realistic facts:

1. Charities, even working in the same field, have differing objectives.
2. Charities have different methods of working, of administering and paying or rewarding those they employ.
3. Charities can have a different ethos. In the animal world from the extreme vegan, animals-as-equals end of the spectrum to the single species, or even single group within a species, charity. There can be moral objections to cooperation.
4. Most charities are concerned to use their activities to enhance their image and increase their fundraising. They fear that cooperation will dilute this.
5. Jealousy is a factor. In spite of moral intentions the charity world is highly competitive.
6. Charities are busy and generally understaffed. Cooperation requires effort, time and resources.

There are two forms of cooperation; passive and active. Passive cooperation is simply an agreement between two or more charities not to compete either in a specific field of expertise, or in a particular geographical area.

Active cooperation means working together for a short or long term. This is difficult, but can be rewarding. Certain essential steps must be taken:

1. Chief Executives must get to know each other personally.
2. Agree on areas of mutual interest.
3. Agree not to be involved in other areas, in particular where issues of principle are involved.
4. Define and limit objectives of cooperation.
5. Agree investment of resources
6. Define and agree decision-making process.
7. Define and agree Press and Publicity policy and plan.
8. Agree on policy for exploitation for fundraising.
9. Agree on “get-out” clause!

If, after discussion, working together is not possible then agree to part friends. Charities should not deliberately denigrate each other.