

## Animal cruelty – Bertie Barden

In 2020, a bulldog-style puppy was found next to a bin in a park. It had been beaten to death and left in an adidas bag. In the same year, a dog was left collapsed and bleeding in the same park after being attacked with a machete. This dog was lucky enough to survive with the help and care of the RSPCA. These were only two of the unimaginably horrific cases I read during my research for this speech. On average, every 30 seconds the RSPCA receives a call about a new animal abuse case. The RSPCA receives over 1 million cases every year, with only 100,000 able to be solved. As recently as last weekend, someone chopped down a tree containing the nest of a rare osprey in Wales. So, what can be done to stop cruelty to animals and save many of their lives?

Ecclesiastes tell us that we are all the same in the eyes of God, humans and animals, neither is more superior. “For what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity.” Animals are the same as humans. They eat, sleep and care for their babies. It is our responsibility to live along side animals and to care and respect them, not to consider ourselves superior and their lives to be worth less than ours.

The treatment of livestock in farming has improved over the years due to the Welfare of livestock act in 1994. This ensures that animals in farms are kept in acceptable and comfortable conditions with adequate diets and proper care. However, there is no such legislation that protects pets outside of the pet shop. Only guidance is included in the animal welfare act, which means it is very difficult to punish or give consequences to people treating animals poorly.

So, I ask the question again, what can be done to stop cruelty to animals? If advice and guidance were more readily available for new pet owners, would this help them to understand to responsibility involved of looking after and caring for an animal? Respect for animals could be introduced from a young age by bringing in animals into school to teach students about not only the responsibility but also the importance of seeing animals as a life and not an object to treat as you wish.

As Albert Einstein said, “if a man aspires to have a righteous life, his first act of abstinence is from injury to animals”.