**Leading animal welfare organisations join forces to launch the Time for Change Coalition Against Hunting**

*Press release.*

*Embargoed until 00:01 Friday, 30 June*

The UK’s most influential animal welfare and environmental organisations have announced they have formed a coalition to demand the next government strengthen laws on fox hunting.

They want to see the so-called sport – banned in theory in 2005 – ended for good.

Drawn from an array of more than 30 organisations and umbrella groups from across the UK, the coalition is estimated to be one of the largest ever brought in the UK, counting many millions of the public in its joint supporter base.

Launching the coalition at the Camley Street Natural Park in London yesterday [THURS], League Against Cruel Sports Chief Executive Andy Knott, MBE, said: “That such a diverse group of organisations has come together in such overwhelming numbers to finally end the senseless hunting of foxes, deer and other wild mammals tells of a growing sense of injustice that is undermining public trust. Any law that has as many exemptions and is so easy to circumvent as the Hunting Act is clearly not fit for purpose”.

“The public want to see a broad range of long promised animal protections introduced and there aren’t many issues that have such near universal public support as a proper ban on hunting. We are asking our joint supporter base to ensure the next Government is one willing to act in the interests of the many, not the cruel few.”

Keynote speakers were Chief Superintendent Matthew Longman, the National Police Chiefs’ Council lead on foxhunting crime; and Dan Norris, Metro Mayor for the West of England and Chair of the League Against Cruel Sports.

Ch Supt Longman, who has previously described illegal hunting as “prolific”, was due to speak about the importance of policing hunt crimes and how forces are taking it more seriously, and how the Hunting Act 2004 needs to be revisited.

Ahead of the launch Dan Norris said: “A key measure of civilised society is how it treats animals. The Hunting Act, which as an MP I was so very proud to help create, now needs urgent updating to reflect modern public opinion and new evidence. The current loopholes that have become blatantly clear need closing and the police must be backed with the resources they require.

"Twenty years on we again need politicians to come together to help end the senseless and unnecessary cruelty that still continues. Today is an important day in that fight as 32 animal welfare and conservation organisations representing many millions of people speak with one strong and united voice. With a general election looming our message is that it’s time for change and to truly ban hunting once and for all.”

The event also saw the launch of the [Time For Change petition](http://www.timeforchangecoalition.co.uk), hosted by 38 Degrees, which calls on the Government to strengthen the Hunting Act by removing its exemptions and also outlawing trail hunting – where hunts claim to follow animal-based scents rather than real animals but which, in reality, is just a smokescreen for old fashioned illegal hunting.

The coalition members are:

Action Against Foxhunting

Animal Aid

Animal Concern

Animal Defenders International

Animal Interfaith Alliance

Animal Protection Agency

Badger Trust

Battersea

Born Free

Catholic Concern for Animals

Cats Protection

Crustacean Compassion

Dogs On The Streets

Ecoflix

Foal Group

Four Paws International

Freedom for Animals

Humane Society International UK

IFAW

League Against Cruel Sports

Mahavir Trust

Naturewatch

OneKind

PETA

Power of One

Raptor Persecution UK

RSPCA

Shellfish Network

Save the African Elephants

USPCA

Wildlife and Countryside LINK

World Animal Protection

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors**

Pictures and other media from the event will be available for download here: [www.timeforchangecoalition.co.uk](http://www.timeforchangecoalition.co.uk)

The Time for Change Coalition Against Hunting is a coalition of around 30 leading wildlife and environmental organisations that are aligned in their objectives to see cruelty to animals outlawed.

The coalition is led by the League Against Cruel Sports, Britain’s leading wildlife charity campaigning to end cruelty to animals from blood sports. Registered charity in England and Wales (no.1095234) and Scotland (no.SC045533).

For more information, or to arrange interviews, please contact pressoffice@league.org.uk or call 01483 524250.