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A democratic alternative to the monarchy

Mr Michael Ward
CEO, RSPCA
Wilberforce Way
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13 December 2017

Dear Michael

In the past few days there have been reports about Prince Harry and other members of the royal family, enjoying hunting of wild boar and other animals in Germany and the UK. This follows years of reports about royals (including the Queen) hunting foxes, big game in Africa and supporting the culling of badgers, all of which are in stark contrast to the mission and values of the RSPCA.

This point was raised via Twitter on December 10 this year. The following is a copy of the exchange:

Revolting-Subject @UnRoyalReporter

Dec 10

Should the Royal Society For the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals say something when their Royal patrons delight in hunting & killing wild animals?

97%Yes, courage & principal
03%No, allow them their fun

Richard Simon @RSSkeptic [in reply]

Dec 10

Out of all the patrons the @RSPCA_official could choose, why do they pick members of a family that delight in killing defenceless animals?

RSPCA (England & Wales)Verified account

@RSPCA_official



Replying to @RSSkeptic @UnRoyalReporter

We were granted royal status by Queen Victoria after being founded in 1824, and the patronage has since been passed down through the monarchy. We won't agree with the royals on everything they do or stand for but the benefits they bring to the RSPCA and hence to animals are great

1:59 PM - 11 Dec 2017

Grumps @bobwiggin

Dec 11

Replying to @RSPCA_official @RSSkeptic @UnRoyalReporter

Exactly what are the benefits the royals bring to the RSPCA and how are they quantified? Doesn't the fact that royals enjoy killing animals for fun cancel out any "benefits" and why do you persist in ignoring royals' penchant for killing animals for fun?

RSPCA (England & Wales) Verified account

@RSPCA_official

20h20 hours ago [Dec 12]

Sorry you feel this way. Our royal patronage and recognition by Her Majesty the Queen is something we are very proud of.

The RSPCA is one of the most widely recognised charity brands in the country, doing something that has widespread support. The hunting that the royals engage in is widely opposed by the general public. It is in contravention of the values and policies of the RSPCA, an independent charity that also adds a public service element to its mission through law enforcement. You have gone so far as to say the RSPCA believes "that chasing and killing live animals with dogs is barbaric, outdated and has no place in modern Britain ". You are also on record as opposing the badger cull, which is supported by Prince Charles.

Given all this, can you please clarify and quantify the claim that "the benefits they [the royals] bring to the RSPCA and hence to animals are great"? How can an organisation benefit from identifying with patrons who stand opposed to its values and mission? What measurable benefit can there be for a charity that already enjoys widespread recognition and support, not for its royal connections but for its commitment to protecting animals? Given widespread support for animal welfare in the country, how can association with supporters of 'barbaric' practices enhance your reputation or give value to the

charity? Is there any reason why the RSPCA can't follow the model of your Scottish equivalent - focusing on supporting animals without compromising your message through royal patronage?

I would be interested to hear your answers to each of these questions and hear a clear and measurable account of the benefits of that patronage, that outweigh the harm royal connections can do to the cause of animal welfare. If the RSPCA has conducted research or produced a report into this apparent benefit it would be useful to put that in the public domain. Perhaps you can send me a copy of any such report.

If no such measurable benefits exist, members of the public could be forgiven for believing that the continuing royal patronage has more to do with the attitudes and perceived status of your trustees and executives, than it has to do with what's in the best interests of the charity. This then raises obvious questions about the independence of the charity and possible royal influence on the RSPCA's approach to hunting.

All the best

Graham Smith
CEO
Republic

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