Written evidence submitted by Pamela High

I would like to give my support to those who support the idea that it is time to stop persecuting grey squirrels and allow them to live amongst the other wildlife in the UK countryside. They fulfil a very useful role in the ecosystem (planting trees and playing their part in the food chain). I also wish wildlife centres to be allowed to take in grey squirrels that need help when they are orphaned and/or injured.

I notice there is much talk in grey squirrel hating circles about how grey squirrels spread the squirrel pox disease to red squirrels. I have also noticed considerable (rarely advertised) evidence that squirrels who are treated for pox in wildlife centres and then released into the wild with newly found immunity are helping the wild populations in this regard. Perhaps instead of paying out the said millions on ineffective, cruel and unnecessary grey squirrel culls, money would be better spent working with Four Wands Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre setting up an appropriate pox treatment protocol and treating affected red squirrels and rereleasing them so eventually they too can be immune to squirrel pox. But sometimes I feel certain lobbyists would hate red squirrels to develop such immunity because it would weaken their arguments for their blood thirsty pastime.

We need to be looking at compassionate solutions to challenges within ecosystems the UK caused by the frequently idiotic behaviour of human kind rather than shamelessly scapegoating other species because of the colour of their fur and their resourcefulness.

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