

Inspection Report

Date of inspection:

24/10/2025

Date report completed:

27/10/2025

Name of applicant or current
licence holder:

Anthony Grimshaw & Carl Grimshaw, Directors.

Name and address of zoo:

Smithills Open Farm Ltd, Harricott Farm, Smithills Dean Road, Bolton

REGULATORY SERVICES

06 NOV 2025

Tel n~~B~~BOLTON COUNCIL

01204 595765

Licence Number:

Postcode: BL17NS.

Date of last formal inspection:

19/06/2022

Type of last formal inspection:

Renewal

Timing of next formal inspection:

2028

Type of next formal inspection:

Renewal

Type of inspection Statutory composition of inspection team Please tick appropriate box
Section 10 Periodical: 2 Defra/Welsh Government nominees; 1 LA vet; option of up to 2 more from LA...
Section 11 Special: Any number of competent LA authorised appointees
Section 14(1)(b) dispensation renewal under section 6(1A)(a) (where a direction has been made that section 10 shall not apply):
Defra/Welsh Government nominee/s.....
Section 14(2) dispensation Periodical:
Defra/Welsh Government nominee/s.....
For a licence inspection (Section 4(1A)(b)) and a significant change inspection (Section 9A(8)) please use the inspection form at Appendix 11A of the Standards.

Name and designation of inspector(s)	Name of zoo representative(s)
Andrew Greenwood FRCVS List 1 DoE inspector	Carl Grimshaw Director
Helen Gloster, Environmental Health Manager.	Louise Blundell Farm Manager
	Jenny White Farm Manager
	Alex Laverick Zoo Zone Manager

When this form has been completed and signed the original must be sent to the local authority. If the zoo is owned by the local authority, the local authority must send a copy of the completed form to Defra where the zoo is situated in England or to the Welsh Government, where the zoo is situated in Wales.

Preamble to inspectors' report

Information and guidance about the Zoo Licensing Act 1981 (ZLA) is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/protecting-biodiversity-and-ecosystems-at-home-and-abroad/supporting-pages/species-protection> and <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/ahw/zoops/?lang=en>

Preamble to inspectors' report*, including any comments about the current dispensation status, if applicable.

The inspector is grateful for the assistance, cooperation, and hospitality of the directors and staff. The zoo has an unusual structure, consisting of a large open livestock farm, with cattle, pigs, horses, sheep, and other domestic species, established on fenced paddock land owned by Bolton Local Authority. Some other species on the farm could be designated "zoo" stock, but all are or have been commercially farmed in the UK such as llama, alpaca, ratites, and red deer. Among the more obvious farm stock the emphasis is on rare breeds.

More recently a centrally-placed complex building has been added, housing more traditional "zoo" animals, including some 17 species comprising smaller mammals, reptiles and invertebrates, and eagle owls.

While the number of non-domestic species held remains low and there are no dangerous species held, the Section 14(2) dispensation remains appropriate.

*this might include general background about the zoo (type of collection, size etc) and any relevant information or comments from the pre-inspection audit

Findings at inspection

Guidance note: Where possible a Yes, No or Not Applicable (N/A) answer should be given. Where not all criteria are met for a particular question, comments and clarification should be made indicating where any deficits occur. If appropriate, means of correction or improvement should be included as Conditions or Recommendations under 'Additional conditions' or Additional space' towards the end of the form.

1. Provision of food and water	Marking Yes No N/A	Comments/clarification
Section 1A(c)(ii) ZLA 1981:		
1.1. Are animals provided with a high standard of nutrition?	Yes	
1.2. Is food and drink that is supplied appropriate for the species/individual?	Yes	
1.3. Are supplies of food and water: (a) kept hygienically?	Yes	
(b) prepared hygienically?	Yes	
(c) supplied to the animal hygienically?	Yes	
1.4. Has natural feeding behaviour been adequately considered to ensure that all animals have access to food and drink?	Yes	
1.5. Are feeding methods safe for staff and animals?	Yes	
1.6. Is feeding by visitors permitted?	Yes	Limited to some of the common farm species and only under direct supervision by staff. Signage and records of feed amounts purchased serve to manage the process.
(a) if 'yes', is it properly controlled?	Yes	
2. Provision of suitable environment		
Section 1A(c)(i) ZLA 1981:		
2.1. Are the animals provided with an environment well adapted to meet the physical, psychological and social needs of the species to which they belong?	Yes	
2.2. Are the following environmental parameters appropriate: (a) temperature?	Yes	An infrared temperature gun is recommended for more accurate monitoring of local and environmental temperatures in the non-domestic species enclosures.
(b) ventilation?	Yes	
(c) lighting?	Yes	
(d) noise levels?	Yes	
(e) any other environmental parameters?	Yes	

2. Provision of suitable environment (contd.)	Marking Yes No N/A	Comments/clarification
2.3. Are there satisfactory measures in place to safely confine the animals?	Yes	
2.4. Do animal enclosures have sufficient shelter and refuge areas?	Yes	
2.5. Do animal enclosures provide sufficient space?	Yes	
2.6. Are backup facilities for life support systems adequate?	Yes	A diesel-powered generator is available on site.
2.7. Is the cleaning of the accommodation satisfactory?	Yes	Generally very good.
2.8. Is the standard of maintenance adequate for: (a) the buildings? (b) the fences?	Yes	
2.9. Is all drainage effective and safe?	Yes	
3. Provision of animal health care		
Section 1A(c)(ii) ZLA 1981:		
3.1. Are the animals provided with a high standard of animal husbandry?	Yes	
3.2. Do animals on display to the public appear in good health?	Yes	
3.3. Are observations of condition and health made and recorded?	Yes	Daily inspections recorded.
3.4. Do animals receive prompt and appropriate attention when problems are noted?	Yes	The consulting veterinary practice is only 6 miles away. Health problems can be dealt with on the farm or at the practice, depending on the type of species involved. The practice principal is 'Lead Vet' for the zoo.
3.5. Are enclosures designed and operated in such a way that social interaction problems are avoided?	Yes	
On-site facilities		Nets, halters and ropes, cages and travel boxes are all available.
3.6. Are catch-up and restraint facilities adequate?	Yes	
3.7. Is darting equipment satisfactory?	N/A	
3.8. Are on-site veterinary facilities adequate?	Yes	Locked medicine store in feed room, temporary isolation pens are available.

3. Provision of animal health care (contd.)	Marking Yes No N/A	Comments/clarification
Veterinary care Section 1A(c)(ii) ZLA 1981: 3.9. Are the animals provided with a documented and maintained programme of preventative and curative veterinary care and nutrition?	Yes	
3.10. Is there a system for the regular review of clinical and pathological records?	Yes	At regular veterinary visits - 4 times per annum.
3.11. Are appropriate veterinary records kept?	Yes	
3.12. Are medicines kept and disposed of correctly?	Yes	Out of date medicines go to the local vet practice for disposal.
3.13. Are controlled drugs used and recorded satisfactorily?	N/A	None used.
3.14. Are appropriate antidotes available?	N/A	
3.15. Are <i>post mortem</i> examination arrangements satisfactory?	Yes	Carried out by the local vets or, if necessary, submitted to appropriate pathology labs. All exotics are examined p.m.. Large mammals may be examined on site.
Isolation and containment 3.16. Is adequate reserve accommodation available for isolation of animals for: (a) assessment? (b) treatment? (c) recovery? (d) quarantine (where required)?	Yes	
Sanitation and control of disease Section 1A(e) ZLA 1981: 3.17. Are satisfactory measures in place to prevent the intrusion of pests and vermin into the zoo premises?	Yes	As far as possible on an open farm site.
3.18. Does it appear that general sanitation and pest control are effective?	Yes	

7. Conservation, education and research	Marking Yes No N/A	Comments/clarification
Section 1A(a) ZLA 1981: 7.1. Is the zoo participating in at least one of the following:		Currently the zoo is mainly involved in the conservation of rare breeds, through the Rare Breeds Survival Trust, particularly with horses.
(i) research from which conservation benefits accrue to species of wild animals?	Yes	Until now, the zoo has not supported any in situ wildlife projects financially or by collecting from the public, but is keen to do so. Initially support of UK species would seem most appropriate. There is a major opportunity for this with the park's visitor level approaching 250,000 per annum. It is recommended that the zoo look at the options for this (on a small scale at first and with expert advice) if it is to continue to grow the wild animal part of the collection.
(ii) training in relevant conservation skills?	No	
(iii) the exchange of information relating to the conservation of species of wild animals?	No	
(iv) where appropriate, breeding of wild animals in captivity?	No	
(v) where appropriate, the repopulation of an area with, or the reintroduction into the wild of, wild animals?	No	
Section 1A(b) ZLA 1981: 7.2. Is the zoo promoting public education and awareness in relation to the conservation of biodiversity, in particular by providing information about the species of wild animals kept in the zoo and their natural habitats?	Yes	Good use is being made of the small wild animal collection in terms of signage, talks and children's classes, arranged visits, and feed back surveys for visitors and teachers.
7.3. Where appropriate are animals managed in a way consistent with the conservation needs of the species, (such as exchange between zoos, accommodation to encourage natural behaviour and breeding etc)?	Yes	Can be gradually increased, although acceptance by Major zoo organisations (e.g. BIAZA) is proving slow. The main current positive interactions are with breed societies. Membership of ABWAK, which represents zoo keepers in Britain and Ireland would be a good place to start.
7.4. Are on-site education facilities adequate for the resources of the collection?	Yes	Most of the public education about farm animals and their products takes place in front of the exhibits, and is clearly very popular. This also extends into explanation and demonstration of food production. There is space for classroom-type activities also.
7.5. Are the conservation efforts adequate for the resources of the collection?	Yes	Although only in terms of domestic species at present, see 7.4
7.6. Are the research efforts adequate for the resources of the collection?	Yes	Currently involved in collecting DNA samples for rare breeds.
7.7. Is captive breeding properly managed?	Yes	Limited so far.

9. Records	Marking Yes No N/A	Comments/clarification
Section 1A(f) ZLA 1981: 9.1. Are there up-to-date records of the zoo's collection, including records of:		
(i) the numbers of different animals?	Yes	
(ii) acquisitions, births, deaths, disposals and escapes of animals?	Yes	
(iii) the causes of any such deaths?	Yes	
(iv) the health of the animals?	Yes	
9.2. Are daily diaries maintained, and do they contain appropriate information?	Yes	
9.3. Are animal stock records clear and up-to-date?	Yes	
9.4. Are annual stock records completed in the correct format and submitted to the local authority?	Yes	Appropriately listed in ZIMS fashion.
9.5. Are animal source and destination records kept?	Yes	
9.6. Are archived records secure?	Yes	
10. Miscellaneous		
10.1. Do staff numbers and training of staff appear adequate?	Yes	Very good, well trained staff. College students also attend, but there are no volunteers as a policy.
10.2. Is the management structure and organisation of staff adequate to ensure compliance with the Standards at all times?	Yes	
10.3. Are effective risk assessments carried out where appropriate?	Yes	Also for college students. Recommend that washing of hand and animal feed equipment are kept separate in the feed kitchen.
10.4. Has an ethical review process been established and implemented?	Yes	
10.5. Are public toilet facilities adequate and serviced?	Yes	
10.6. Are parking facilities adequate?	Yes	
10.7. Is a First Aid policy and accident reporting and recording system in place?	Yes	In an accident book.

11. Associated legislation	Marking Yes No N/A	Comments/clarification
11.1. Is electrical equipment routinely serviced?	Yes	Regular PAT testing carried out.
11.2. Have fire precautions been agreed and implemented?	Yes	Risk assessments, extinguishers, clearly signed assembly points, and fire marshal training for staff are all in place.
11.3. Is refuse and clinical waste disposed of correctly?	Yes	
11.4. Are the required needs of disabled visitors met?	Yes	Ramps and paths, disabled parking and toilets, and designated seating are all in place.
12. Compliance check including licence conditions		
12.1. Is the current licence or a copy on public display at each public entrance?	Yes	
12.2. Is adequate Public Liability Insurance current?	Yes	£20M
12.3. Have any Additional licence conditions been met?	Yes	All previous conditions and directions have been met.

Additional space

The following space is provided for:

- additional notes and comments on the answers to the earlier questions
- recommendations (other than in respect of grant or refusal of a licence and any specific conditions recommended for a licence) including those based on comments already made to earlier questions
- any general remarks which the inspecting team may wish to record

Recommendations.

1. Section 2.2 An infrared temperature gun is recommended for more accurate monitoring of local and environmental temperatures in the non-domestic species enclosures.
2. Section 7.1 It is recommended that the zoo look at the options for financing some in situ wildlife projects (on a small scale at first and with expert advice) if it is to continue to grow the wild animal part of the collection.
3. Section 7.3. It is recommended that the zoo establish membership of ABWAK for the keeping staff.

Section 10.3. It is recommended that washing of hands and animal feed equipment are kept separate in the feed kitchen.'

Inspecting team's recommendation to the local authority

Having inspected (name of zoo)

Smithills Open Farm

on: 24 October 2025

the inspecting team make the following recommendation:

Please tick appropriate box

- it is recommended that a licence be refused
- it is recommended that the above collection be licensed in accordance with the ZLA 1981 subject to the conservation measures in section 1A
- it is recommended that the above collection be licensed in accordance with the ZLA 1981 subject to the conservation measures in section 1A and the following Additional Conditions (N.B Additional Conditions must be clearly worded so as to be enforceable and a timescale applied for compliance)
- it is recommended that the following alterations be made to the above collection's licence conditions

Additional Conditions (if appropriate)

No further conditions are required.

Inspector(s) signature(s)



Date signed

03/11/2025

The Data Protection Act 1998 – Fair Processing Notice

The purpose of this Fair Processing Notice is to inform you of the use that will be made of your personal data, as required by the Data Protection Act 1998.

The local authority in England (or in Wales as the case may be) is the data controller in respect of any personal data that you provide when you complete this zoo inspection form. The information that you provide may be used by the local authority in its consideration of issuing or amending a zoo licence in accordance with the Zoo Licensing Act 1981 (ZLA). The local authority may be required to release information, including personal data and commercial information, on request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs) or the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). However, local authorities will not permit any unwarranted breach of confidentiality nor act in contravention of their obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA).

Where the zoo, to which this inspection report applies, is owned by the local authority, the local authority must send a copy of the completed form to Defra (in accordance with section 13(2) of the ZLA) where the zoo is situated in England, or to the Welsh Government where the zoo is situated in Wales. Defra or the Welsh Government (as the case may be) may use the information contained in the form to ensure that local authorities are carrying out their duties correctly in accordance with the ZLA.

Defra and the Welsh Government are also subject to the EIRs and the FOIA and so may be required to release information, including personal data and commercial information, on request. However, as above, Defra and the Welsh Government will not permit any unwarranted breach of confidentiality nor act in contravention of their obligations under the DPA.

