

James Cartlidge MP  
Minister of State for Defence Procurement

03 August 2023

Dear Minister:

We the undersigned members of Parliament representing Scotland write regarding the bearskin caps worn by the five regiments of the British Foot Guards. While we strongly urge the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to replace all the bearskin used for the caps with faux fur, we specifically demand that the Scots Guards' caps be replaced with a modern, humane alternative.

Scottish people's morals and values are not reflected in the use of the current ornamental caps made from the fur of slaughtered Canadian bears. Polls show that the vast majority of our constituents reject fur – and, in fact, according to a recent survey, only 11% of people in Scotland support the use of real fur for these ceremonial caps. Furthermore, 79% think spending money on real fur for the caps is a poor use of government funds.

We understand that a viable faux fur has been created by the luxury faux furrier ECOPEL and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals that meets your department's five criteria and even outperforms bearskin in certain areas. The faux fur is less expensive than bear fur and is being offered free of charge by ECOPEL until 2030. Using it will save taxpayer money and help close the market for bear fur, thereby removing an incentive for hunters to kill black bears in Canada.

The Guards' cap has seen many incarnations over the years, and while the look of today's towering cap is iconic, the material it's made from is most certainly not. Replacing the bearskin with faux fur would allow the history of the caps to endure in a way that reflects modern society's respect for wildlife. We would be very pleased for Scotland to lead the charge and for our guards to pioneer this humane, modern cap.

Yours sincerely,

Dave Doogan MP  
Patricia Gibson MP  
Kirsten Oswald MP  
Martyn Day MP  
Marion Fellows MP  
Allan Dorans MP  
Tommy Sheppard MP  
John Nicolson MP  
Steven Bonnar MP  
Carol Monaghan MP  
Stuart McDonald MP  
Anne McLaughlin MP  
Deidre Brock MP  
Patrick Grady MP  
Martin Docherty-Hughes MP  
Richard Thomson MP  
Philippa Whitford MP