REPLACEMENT NEWS

Winter - Issue 146

A tribute to Herbie, the beagle who inspired change
page 6

Inside:

Latest news
Project updates, party conferences, and two new animal-free research papers published

142 MPs and counting
The growing momentum behind Herbie's Law

Liver research in Liverpool
Inside Liverpool's Human Liver Research Facility

ANIMAL FREE RESEARCH UK

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Hope on the horizon: celebrating progress and remembering Herbie

It's been a bittersweet year for us at Animal Free Research UK - one of exciting progress, fresh challenges, and a heartbreak to bear.

You may notice this issue is a little shorter than usual as we prepare for **the Government's long-awaited strategy** to phase out animal testing, promised by the end of the year. Although the contents remain tightly under wraps, we've met with MPs and officials to help shape it. **But will it go far enough** - by introducing Herbie's Law and including clear timelines to end animal testing? We can only wait and see. Rest assured, we'll keep you updated as soon as it's released.

Though the strategy is imminent, we certainly haven't taken our foot off the gas. Our researchers continue to make incredible progress, with two new papers published and exciting updates from our breast cancer and Alzheimer's disease projects (page 4). You'll also find a feature on the **Human Liver Research Facility in Liverpool** - led by our funded Professors Chris Goldring and Ian Copple (page 12).

Our Public Affairs team have also attended the **Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat conferences** this autumn and have gained even more cross-party support for Herbie's Law (page 5).

Herbie's Law was inspired by my beloved Herbie, who passed away earlier this year. This will be our first Christmas without him since he bounded into our lives 10 years ago, full of excitement and needing to be loved. I share my tribute to Herbie on page 6, and if you'd like, please scan the QR code to leave your own message - I'll read them all. **Hearing his name spoken in Parliament was deeply moving**, and I take comfort knowing his legacy will live on through Herbie's Law (page 7).

We've achieved so much together this year, raising the profile of animal testing in Parliament and beyond, with **one in six MPs now supporting Herbie's Law** (pages 8–9).

Our Senior Science Communications Officer, Dr Gemma Davies, and our Public Affairs Director, Isobel Martin, also share their reflections on the year - from scientific setbacks to policy progress. **As a nation of animal lovers, we know we can and must do better by them.**

We will keep fighting until every animal is free - and your continued support is making that vision a reality.

From the bottom of my heart, *thank you* for standing with us through it all.

With grateful thanks,

Carla Owen, *Chief Executive*

Latest News

Project updates, and two new publications

A paper on our animal-free antibodies database published in the journal Alternatives to Laboratory Animals (ATLA)! Our paper explains the benefits of animal-free antibodies compared to those made using animals. The paper received excellent feedback from reviewers, with one stating that it "will be the citation of choice in future discussions of the issues that the database addresses." By providing researchers with practical alternatives to animal-derived antibodies, millions of animal lives could be saved every year - while benefitting patients, too.

A paper written by Dr Adrian Biddle at our Animal Replacement Centre (ARC) 1.0 was published in the journal BMC Biology. The paper highlights a group of rare cancer stem cells that are thought to be key players in melanoma (a common and deadly type of skin cancer). These cells could be responsible for melanoma's ability to easily spread to other parts of the body and may explain why treatments are often ineffective, so specifically targeting these cells could open the door to new treatments in the future.

Dr Cinzia Allegrucci at the University of Nottingham has made a key breakthrough in her project developing animal-free breast cancer organoids (3D cell balls that closely mimic the human body). Cinzia has now removed all animal-derived products from her organoid culture methods - a real achievement as these cells are very sensitive to changes in their environment. Next, Cinzia is testing synthetic hydrogels to support the organoids as they grow, to make the model fully animal-free.

Dr Patricia Ragazzon at Keele University has successfully developed a method to generate brain cells called microglia (the immune cells of the brain), for use in a human cell model of Alzheimer's disease. This is an important milestone in Pat's project, and she is now preparing a paper to share her methods with other researchers to encourage and support them to adopt animal-free methods to study the brain.

Conference season round-up:
Championing animal-free science across the political spectrum

As the political conference season wraps up, we are proud to have made a strong impact at three major party conferences. Party conferences remain a crucial part of our advocacy work, offering a unique opportunity to engage directly with politicians, staffers, and stakeholders across the political spectrum to build vital support for Herbie's Law and the transition to animal-free science.

Isobel Martin, Steve Darling MP, and his guide dog, Jennie

We kicked off the season bringing a giant Herbie cut-out to our stand at the Lib Dem conference in Bournemouth. 25 MPs and Peers visited our stand, with 19 pledging support for Herbie's Law, including 11 new supporters. They enjoyed photos with Herbie, vegan sweets and learning more about human-specific science.

With Labour in government, support is vital to accelerating animal-free science, especially with the Government's phase-out roadmap expected soon. At their conference in Liverpool we met with 14 MPs, and at a packed healthcare panel, our Director of Public Affairs Isobel spotlighted human-specific tech like AI, giving the opportunity for an expert to acknowledge the limits of animal testing and the growing shift to human-specific methods.

Lord Courtown and Isobel Martin with our giant Herbie

We wrapped up the season by heading to Manchester, where we met with 20 MPs and Peers at the Conservative conference. Our reception was a standout moment, featuring an inspiring speech from former MP and trustee Anna Firth. We asked a question in a panel discussion on the UK's life sciences ambitions, raising concerns about falling behind in adopting human-specific technologies. George Freeman MP, former Science Minister, voiced strong support for replacing animal testing, while an industry leader echoed the need for investment in animal-free innovation.

After a whirlwind few weeks, we return with a wealth of opportunities to follow up on. The support for Herbie's Law and animal-free science has been incredibly encouraging, and we're excited to build on these connections at this pivotal moment for research and innovation.

We'd especially like to thank everyone who contacted their MPs and encouraged them to engage with us during the conferences. **Thanks to your efforts, several MPs sought us out specifically - your support truly made a difference!**

Our Public Affairs team: Isobel, Ashley, and Aaron!

REMEMBERING HERBIE

by Carla Owen, CEO

I'm writing with a heavy heart to share that our wonderful beagle Herbie passed away in June, just after his 15th birthday. Our family is still coming to terms with his loss, and as I write this, I find myself remembering – as I do every day – all the small, joyful moments that made life with him so special.

Herbie wasn't a pet, he was family. Ten years ago, an excited boy with a tattoo in his ear – a symbol of the life in a lab that he narrowly escaped – rushed into our home and filled it with his big, beautiful beagle spirit. He made us laugh with his antics, comforted us with his steadfast presence, and greeted each new day with excitement, chasing scents and adventures with gusto.

Herbie was our anchor: strong, determined, and always protective. He naturally took his place at the back of our pack, making sure no one was ever left behind. Whether we were at home or out in the woods, we could count on Herbie to keep a watchful eye over us all. True to his beagle nature, he met each day with boundless enthusiasm, a nose for adventure, and a joyful energy that lifted everyone around him.

We cherished every tail wag and every lick; now we hold tightly to those memories, forever grateful for the time we shared. **Herbie brought happiness and adventure to our lives,** reminding us to look out for each other, to laugh together, and to face every day with courage and love.

His legacy lives on in Herbie's Law, our campaign to ensure that no animal ever suffers in the research labs he was born for. Herbie's Law is a promise – inspired by Herbie's journey – that it's possible to build a kinder, more compassionate world. His life inspires me every day to fight for animal-free science, so that countless others might be spared, and loved, just as he was.

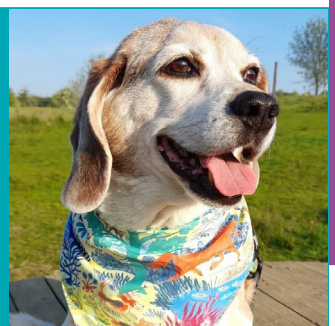
I am forever grateful that Herbie was one of the lucky ones. With your support, we are working so that luck is never needed again.

Forever loved, forever missed. - Carla

If you'd like to make a tribute to Herbie or leave a donation in his name, I would be so grateful.

Scan the QR code or visit **herbie.tributepage.org** to leave a message.

SCAN ME



HONOURING HERBIE'S LEGACY IN PARLIAMENT

On 15 September, **Chris Hinchliff MP** stood up in the House of Commons and called on the Government to include Herbie's Law in its forthcoming non-animal methods strategy.

He highlighted the shocking scale of animal experimentation: between April and June 2025 alone, licences were granted for 1.6 million animals to be used over the next five years - including 850 beagles and 511 non-human primates.

Projects approved in this period range from invasive brain research on monkeys, to giving mice cocaine and amphetamines, to studies solely looking at different methods of killing animals.

Responding, Minister of State Dan Jarvis MP acknowledged that Herbie's Law sets out a framework to phase out animal experiments in medical research by 2035, and confirmed that the Government's goal is to work with scientists, industry and civil society to achieve their plan.

Chris Hinchliff MP speaking in the House of Commons

We are deeply grateful to Chris for championing our cause at this crucial moment. With the Government preparing its non-animal methods strategy, **the time is now to press for real, measurable change.**

What is Herbie's Law?

Herbie's Law would set a goal of phasing out animal experiments in medical research over the next decade, in close collaboration with the scientific community. **We're asking the government to:**

1. Immediately stop licensing experiments on dogs, cats and monkeys.
2. Reform the broken system that governs animal testing, so that where non-animal methods exist, the law makes sure they're actually used.
3. Overhaul failing regulatory procedures to ensure that legal requirements to use non-animal methods are being enforced wherever possible.

Already, 142 parliamentarians from across the political spectrum back Herbie's Law - **that's around 1 in 6 MPs** - but we must grow this support further. For Herbie, and for the millions of animals who weren't so lucky.

Scan the QR code on the next page to invite your MP to back EDM210 and support Herbie's Law!

HERBIE'S LAW - A YEAR IN REVIEW

142 MPS AND COUNTING: The growing momentum behind Herbie's Law

Since the launch of Herbie's Law in 2024, the movement to end animal experiments in medical research has grown into a powerful force for change. Thanks to your support, what began as a vision is now a national conversation in Parliament, the media, and communities across the UK.

Political Support Grows Stronger

So far, 142 Parliamentarians - MPs, Peers and Lords - have backed Herbie's Law, calling for an end to animal experimentation and a bold new era of human-specific science. From debates and parliamentary questions to photocalls and cross-party letters, political momentum has never been stronger.

The Labour Party pledged in its manifesto to work towards phasing out animal testing and has since committed to publishing a strategy to support the development and uptake of non-animal methods. **We've been directly consulted with, and we're pushing hard to ensure Herbie's Law is part of the plan.**

Isobel and Ruth Jones MP

Ruth Jones MP tabled an Early Day Motion - **EDM210** - based on Herbie's Law, now backed by 51 MPs.

Following his visit to our Animal Replacement Centre of Excellence at the University of Exeter, **Steve Race MP introduced a Bill** into Parliament based on Herbie's Law.

Steve Race MP and our CEO Carla

In the House of Lords, Baroness Natalie Bennett urged the Government to implement Herbie's Law.

MPs including Irene Campbell and Ben Obese-Jecty raised Herbie's Law directly with Ministers, pressing for a clear timeline.

Public Support at an All-Time High

In January, a landmark YouGov poll commissioned by Animal Free Research UK revealed that **7 in 10 people in Britain support a new law to end animal experiments** in medical research by 2035.

The poll was widely covered in the media, and more recently we've seen articles in The Sun and The Daily Star, with a powerful full page op-ed piece in The Mirror by Deborah Meaden.

Driving Change in Parliament

We've been working tirelessly to keep this issue on the political agenda:

- Hosting events in Parliament, including a **House of Lords roundtable** with global experts on animal-free science.
- Building cross-party consensus, with **39 members of the new All-Party Parliamentary Group** (APPG) on Phasing Out Animal Experiments in Medical Research - almost double the number required.
- Coordinating a **cross-party letter signed by 60+ MPs, peers, and celebrities,** calling for Herbie's Law and an immediate end to experiments on dogs, cats and monkeys.
- Engaging directly with Ministers, including **Science Minister Lord Patrick Vallance**, to press for ambitious Government action.

Raising Herbie's Legacy Nationwide

From the Labour, Conservative, and Lib Dem Party Conferences to major press coverage and celebrity voices, Herbie's Law is shaping the debate on the future of UK science. Every mention in Parliament, every headline, every pledge of support keeps Herbie's legacy alive, and takes us one step closer to ending animal experiments for good.

Together, We're Making History

Herbie's Law is no longer just a proposal. It's a movement - one fuelled by compassion, science, and the dedication of people like you. With your continued support, we will make sure the Government delivers on its promise of a non-animal future for medical research.

Herbie's name has been spoken in Parliament. His legacy is inspiring MPs, scientists, and supporters nationwide - and his law is becoming a reality.

Take a stand in 2 minutes:

Scan the QR code to ask your MP to support Herbie's Law.

SCAN ME

Is the UK being left behind?

by Dr Gemma Davies
Senior Science Communications Officer

Working in this space, I've come across a lot of opinions on animal testing. From those who strongly oppose harm to animals under any circumstance, right through to "I'd kill a thousand mice if it meant I got to live". Of course, everyone has the right to their own opinion, but the problem with the latter is that we *are* already using millions of mice – and other animals – every year in medical research, but these experiments are failing to deliver the new treatments patients urgently need.

Medical research is being carried out as quickly as possible in universities and industry around the world, but in the bigger picture - which includes those who make regulatory decisions on drug safety testing - there has long been a lack of interest and motivation to change *how* that research actually gets done. We've seen incredible advances in technology over the past few decades, but **medical research is seemingly stuck in a rut** – with some areas using methods established and unchanged since long before I was even born.

Why? Partly a lack of incentive and reluctance to step outside of well-established regulatory comfort zones. Funding and access to training are other hurdles. But animal tests aren't the catch-all safety net that we would need them to be to justify carrying on in this direction indefinitely. **Animal research can only take us so far,** before the indisputable differences caused by them simply being a different species become too great to ignore.

It's time to make a change – and for the first time it feels like this could be on the horizon: Bold and unexpected regulatory changes announced in the US. Roadmaps being developed in Europe, and calls for change around the world. Million-dollar investments in innovative, animal-free tech companies.

However, you will notice these announcements are all overseas. So, where is our big, brave move, you ask? **Are we being left behind?**

Well, maybe – we'll see. Like you, we wait with bated breath for the announcement of the Government's promised strategy. The tide seems to be slowly turning, and we can feel cautiously optimistic that at some point each country's individual changes will converge. But the UK can't sit back any longer. This is why Herbie's Law is so important to provide a realistic timeline backed by scientific evidence to make significant, meaningful change.

This is the way to move forward, and never look back.

For more news, views and insights, head to our blog!

SCAN ME

Building a compassionate future in Parliament

by Isobel Martin
Director of Public Affairs

In the short time since we launched Herbie's Law, I can't believe the progress that you have made possible, and how much the landscape has shifted.

After several years building a strong foundation of support for animal-free science in Parliament, we knew that **a new law would be the only way to secure a permanent transition** to this compassionate future. Inspired by Herbie, Carla's wonderful adopted beagle, we launched our campaign ahead of the 2024 General Election.

Since then, Herbie's Law has been backed by 142 parliamentarians (at the time of writing – the list keeps growing!) and secured high-profile celebrity support and media coverage.

A Bill based on Herbie's Law has been introduced into Parliament, and while this version isn't likely to become law, it marks a major milestone. MPs have called for Herbie's Law during debates in Parliament and a packed oral question session. We've engaged MPs and peers with dynamic events, from visits to labs, to photocalls with our giant cut-out of Herbie.

In parallel, we set up the **All-Party Parliamentary Group on Phasing Out Animal Experiments in Medical Research,** which has 39 MPs and peers as members (almost double the required number!). This has become an authoritative voice for change.

In its manifesto, the Government committed to working towards phasing out animal testing and will be launching a strategy to take this forward at any moment. **We have continuously pushed for this to commit to real change,** meeting with the minister responsible and coordinating a cross-party letter signed by over 60 parliamentarians and celebrities.

Meanwhile, huge progress is taking place on the global stage, including the US Food and Drug Administration launching a roadmap to make animal testing the exception rather than the norm for the safety testing of new drugs over the next 3-5 years.

While we know that Herbie's Law still has a long way to go, we are immensely proud of the huge strides it has already made. We are truly grateful to you for making this possible, both through your donations, and by raising this issue with your MPs. Time and again, they tell us that they're speaking with us because you, their constituents, have made them aware of Herbie's Law.

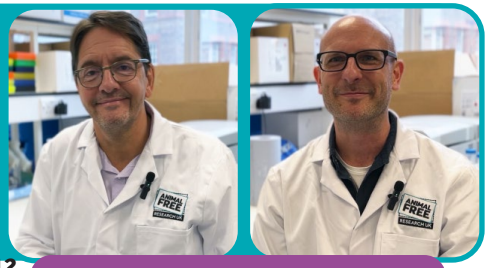
LIVERS IN LIVERPOOL:

Pioneering human-based liver research

At the University of Liverpool, we're proud to fund work at the the Human Liver Research Facility (HLRF), where our scientists are transforming how we study liver disease. Thanks to patients who generously donate their liver tissue after surgery, the lab - just across the road from the hospital - creates models that reflect the true biology of human disease, offering new insights that animal experiments simply cannot provide.

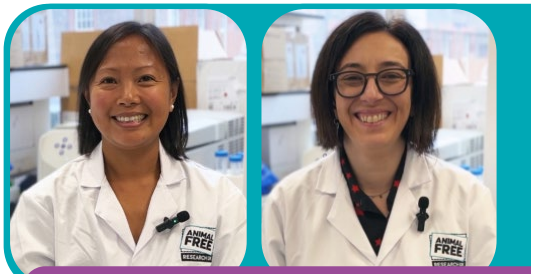
Professors Chris Goldring and Ian Copple and Doctors Giusy Russomanno and Rowena Sison-Young are united by a bold vision: **to champion human-specific methods in liver research.** By working with and helping others to access real human tissue, they are building research tools that not only spare animals' lives, but bring us closer to better, more effective treatments for patients.

Professor Goldring's project focuses on non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), a condition affecting millions worldwide. By growing liver spheroids (tiny 3D 'balls' of cells that closely mimic how the liver works inside the body), the team can study how cells accumulate fat just like a real liver, providing a powerful way to study NAFLD and test potential new treatments.



Professors Goldring (L) and Copple (R)

A key focus in the facility is replacing all animal-derived products with ethical alternatives. The team have already swapped collagenase, an enzyme which helps break down tissues, with an animal-free alternative called liberase. To take this further, **Professor Copple** is leading a transition grant to replace foetal calf serum (FCS) in liver cell culture - a commonly used by-product of the meat industry which poses both scientific and ethical concerns. This crucial step will make their pioneering work entirely animal-free.



Drs Sison-Young (L) and Russomanno (R)

The team is committed to sharing their methods with the scientific community and aim to empower researchers to move away from outdated animal experiments, replacing them with approaches that are more reliable, ethical, and relevant to human health.

By placing humans at the heart of research, our projects at the Human Liver Research Facility are showing that **science can be more compassionate and effective** in delivering results that truly matter to patients.

MYTHBUSTING

some common misconceptions about animal testing

✓FACT

✕ Animals in labs are well cared for to ensure they don't suffer.

✓ Every year, animals suffer because of breaches of the law or animal use licences.

In 2023, British labs held 2,300 project and 13,483 personal licences for animal experiments. Yet **169 cases of non-compliance with licence terms were reported**, affecting 154,904 animals — an 864% rise from 2022. Shockingly, **553 animals endured pain beyond legal limits**, and nearly half of breaches stemmed from neglecting basic care. It's clear that the only true safeguard is eliminating animal use altogether.

✕ Animals are similar enough to humans that they can accurately model human diseases.

✓ Important differences mean that animals can't provide reliable results.

Animals differ significantly from humans in metabolism, ageing, immunity, and genetics, making drug test results unreliable. Even with genetic similarities, small but key differences mean animals can't accurately model human-specific diseases - for example, animals do not naturally develop Alzheimer's disease. Because of this, **relying on human-specific research is the most effective way** to develop safe, successful treatments for people.

✕ It's too expensive to switch to animal-free methods.

✓ Animal-free methods are often cheaper and more efficient.

Switching to animal-free research can seem costly at first, but modern human-specific methods are faster, more reliable, and cheaper long term. Technologies like organ-on-a-chip, AI drug screening, and 3D bioprinting save time and money, and could help reduce the 92% failure rate of animal-tested drugs. Unlike the ongoing costs of animal housing and care, these models cut both costs and waste. **Investing in animal-free science is not only ethical but also smarter and more economical.**

FABULOUS FUNDRAISERS

Rosie's meaningful journey across Ireland

"In 1999 I planned a ride across Ireland on my horse, Copaill. A small party of us set off from Sligo and headed for Holywood.

Now, at 87 years old, I'm setting out again - this time by car, alongside my husband Irvine (who's 93!).

To make this journey meaningful, I've committed to walking one to two miles every single day - including throughout the trip - to raise funds for Animal Free Research UK."

Rosie and husband Irvine

A huge thank you to Rosie, Irvine and all the family and friends who made her trip possible - Rosie has walked 85 miles and together, they've raised over £1,600 in the fight to end animal testing!

The Bude community smash their fundraising target!

This year marks the tenth anniversary of our Bude community group. To celebrate, they set themselves the challenge of raising £1,000 to support animal-free science. They invited 10 individuals, groups, and businesses to each raise £100 - and we're beyond grateful that not only did they hit their target, they absolutely smashed it, raising over £6,550!

From sponsored swim and walks to festivals, raffles and quizzes, to "Weagles" - beagle ornaments made by the wonderful Gillian Mitchell - their creativity and dedication have been incredible. It's truly inspiring to see a community come together with purpose and achieve something so impactful. **Well done, and thank you to Steph and the team!**

Listen to the Animal Free Labcast

Join Carla and Dr Gemma Davies every fortnight for thought-provoking conversations with leading scientists, policymakers, and animal protection advocates. Together, they explore what it really takes to create a world free from animal testing.

Recent guests include **Dr Sam Aspinall**, who is developing animal-free alternatives to gelatin for use in research, and artist **Emily Sutton**, who designed our 'Brighter Future' artwork for World Animal Free Research Day earlier this year.

Catch up on all the episodes on our website, YouTube, Spotify, Apple Music, or your favourite podcast platform.

SCAN ME

"Makes scientific research accessible"

Give as You Live

Leading retailers like Marks and Spencer, Sainsbury's, Tesco, John Lewis, Debenhams, Interflora, Expedia and Booking.com all offer cashback donations to good causes, so next time you're shopping online, why not take a look?

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Check out our shop

Wear your values with pride with one of our t-shirts, hoodies, notebooks, water bottles, tote bags, and more. They make great gifts too!

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Play for animals – Join our weekly lottery

Play our weekly lottery for your chance to win £25,000! From just £1 a week, every player has a 1 in 63 chance of winning a prize. We receive 50p out of every £1.

SCAN ME

Your legacy, our future

Write your will in under 30 minutes - for FREE

Writing your will might feel like a daunting task, but it's one of the most important things you can do for your peace of mind – and for the people you care about most.

That's why we're offering a limited number of free wills to amazing supporters like you.

We've partnered with **Farewill**, the UK's leading will-writing service, to make the process as easy and stress-free as possible. Their friendly experts will guide you every step of the way – and you can complete your will in as little as 15 minutes, all from the comfort of your own home.

In partnership with Farewill

Scan the QR code below to get started and tick "write my will" off your to-do list today!

After providing for your friends and family, we hope you'll consider leaving a legacy of love for animals by including a gift in your will to Animal Free Research UK. Thank you.

For more information about our free will offer please visit our website: www.animalfreeresearchuk.org/farewill

Have questions or need support?
Contact legacies@animalfreeresearchuk.org

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