

London Zoo almost closes

[Clip from BBC NEWS]

[Mark Mardell]

Conservative MPs on the environment committee don't think the zoo deserves another cash injection, arguing it should learn better commercial practices.

[Robin Squire]

They do it by looking at the relationship between admission price and what they are offering, and they look at the range of services they offer within the zoo itself. They are essentially at 19th century entertainment coping with funding in the late 20th century and some of us think that they haven't yet come to terms with that.

[Mark Mardell]

London Zoo does pioneering work on animal conservation. MPs of all parties think it would be a tragedy for the world if that's lost, but the opposition parties are divided about saving the zoo itself.

[Bryan Gould]

I don't think a government which has been prepared to throw 200 million pounds of taxpayer's money at shredding poll tax bills would be forgiven if it were too penny-pinching in respect of the future of London Zoo.

[Simon Hughes]

You can't just go begging the government for endless amounts of more money to keep going an outdated institution. A zoo is fun for children but fun for children cannot be paid for by the taxpayer at the expense of animal's rights.

[Mark Mardell]

With many people visiting safari parks preferring to see animals uncaged and the argument against zoos gaining momentum, the government may not be under too much pressure to change its mind. Especially if there's separate funding for a zoological department – something that is still on the cards.