

**MINUTES OF A MEETING
OF THE
DOG ISSUES WORKING GROUP
HELD ON
20TH JANUARY 2015
AT NELSON TOWN HALL**

PRESENT—

Councillor D. Clegg (Chairman in the Chair)

Councillor J. Cooney

Also present:

David Walker Waste Services Manager
David Alexander Senior Environmental Crime Officer
Sarah Waterworth Committee Administrator

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D. M. Whipp and P. White).



10. MINUTES

AGREED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17th December, 2014 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

11. DOG WELFARE GROUPS/VOLUNTARY GROUPS

Representatives from Pendle Dogs In Need, Pendle Dogs Rescue and Sibes and Sled Dogs had been invited to the meeting to talk about various dog issues in the Borough.

Pendle Dogs in Need

Paula Knowles and Sharon Ashley explained that Pendle Dogs in Need was a registered charity which operated from a hub on Leeds Road, Nelson and were committed to helping and rehoming dogs back into the Pendle area. The organisation offered full life time support to any dog that they rescued and would provide any help and advice after adoption had taken place. They also ran free dog micro chipping sessions and operated a dog food bank on a referral system.

The Chairman asked how successful did they think the Council had been on tackling issues around dog fouling, dangerous dogs, stray dogs, enforcement/control and dogs on leads?

They suggested that all Councils workers should have the power to issue on the spot fines in relation to dog fouling. More publicity was needed regarding the issue as they felt that the public needed to be educated more in cleaning up after their dogs and what the consequence would be if they didn't.

They asked could the Council do more promotion via Facebook, provide monthly updates which could include the number of fixed penalty notices issued and how could the public report issues?

Pendle Dogs in Need would share this information via their Facebook page to try increase the number of views.

Pendle Dogs in Need received the majority of their calls relating to stray dogs after 4pm on Sundays when there were no wardens on call. They informed members that if people found a stray dog and rang the Contact Centre after that time they were told to keep the dog in their home until the wardens were back in work at 10am on Monday or take the dog to Aspin Valley kennels and cattery. They felt that this was unacceptable and Pendle Dogs in Need would not encourage anyone taking a stray dog into their homes or even trying to handle one.

They believed that the majority of owners had no intention of collecting a dog once it was in the pound and asked if a fine system could be put in place for such owners.

Reference was made to the off lead area that had been created at Letcliffe Park, Barnoldswick. Ms Knowles said that while it was a good idea and more needed to be created in other parks within Pendle, the fence was too low, she felt it should be at least 6ft high. The public toilet block was in the middle of it and a number of owners were still not clearing up after their dogs in this area.

The Chairman thanked them for their comments.

Pendle Dog Rescue

Beryl Thompson, Heather Robbins, Liz Atkinson and Charlotte Atkinson attended the meeting on behalf of Pendle Dog Rescue.

The Chairman thanked them for attending and asked if they could explain what they did.

Pendle Dog Rescue was set up 18 years ago and worked under the Homeless Hounds Charity. They dealt mainly with Aspin Valley who would call them if a dog from the Pendle area had not been claimed after being with them for seven days. Liz and Charlotte Atkinson ran Sweetwell Boarding Kennels, Briercliffe and worked with Pendle Dog Rescue by kennelling dogs until they could be fostered or adopted.

The Chairman then asked if they had any issues around dog fouling, dangerous dogs, stray dogs, enforcement/control and dogs on leads.

Their main concern was dog fouling and felt that it was worse within Colne and Nelson. They agreed that there were enough dog bins throughout the Borough; the problem was that dog owners were not using them. They suggested that more enforcement should be carried out and Pendle Dog Rescue supported the need for the Council to have more staff to undertake this. They also felt that the Council needed to make it clearer where and who to report fouling too.

They reported that stray dogs on streets were not an issue like it had been in the past. The main problem was that there were too many abandoned and kicked out dogs as people could now buy certain breeds very cheaply or get them free.

The Chairman thanked them for their comments.

Sibes and Sled Dogs

John and Christine Duxbury and Lisa Stinchon explained that Sibes and Sled Dogs (SASD) was a breed specific rescue organisation that just dealt with Huskies. They were in the process of creating an off lead fenced exercise area off Greenfield Road, Colne so the Huskies could be exercised off the lead in a secure area. Huskies must be kept on leads as when let off the lead it was the dogs natural reaction to run.

Mr Duxbury said he thought every dog should be kept on a lead and more fenced exercise areas introduced.

SASD have rehomed over 300 huskies nationwide in the last 3 years and Aspin Valley would contact them if a Husky was brought into their care.

They believed dog fouling was an issue but mainly on the canal. It was suggested that more education about dog issues was needed. Going into schools and educating school children on dogs and their related issues was a good place to start as they tended to tell their parents.

Concerns were raised regarding the fact that if a husky had been found out of hours i.e. after 4pm on a Sunday, SASD were not allowed to take the dog until a dog warden had seen the dog. They would like to be allowed to find, pick up and keep the Husky in their kennels until the owner was traced.

Mr Duxbury agreed that SASD would happily take any breed out of hours until the dog wardens came back on duty as long as they had the kennel space for the dog. He asked if it would be possible that the Council could give him a blanket authorisation to do this.

The Chairman thanked them for attending.

After a short discussion the Group agreed that they needed to look at:-

- Marketing and advertising
- Out of hours warden service
- Cost of employing more staff and kennelling costs
- Cost of employing out of hours staff and kennelling costs
- Cost of employing multi task staff e.g. warden, enforcement and kennelling

It was also agreed that the RSPCA be invited to the next meeting and also that a presentation be given on the findings of the recent survey on 'Dog Issues'

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

AGREED

That the next meeting be held on Wednesday 4th February, 2015 starting at 2.00 p.m. at Nelson Town Hall.

Chairman _____