

**MINUTES OF A MEETING  
OF THE  
DOG ISSUES WORKING GROUP  
HELD ON  
4<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY, 2015  
AT NELSON TOWN HALL**

*PRESENT –*

*Councillor D. Clegg (Chairman in the Chair)*

*Councillor J. K. Starkie  
Councillor D. M. Whipp*

*Also present:*

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <i>Philip Mousdale</i> | <i>Deputy Chief Executive</i>             |
| <i>David Walker</i>    | <i>Waste Services Manager</i>             |
| <i>David Alexander</i> | <i>Senior Environmental Crime Officer</i> |
| <i>Kieron Roberts</i>  | <i>Parks Development Officer</i>          |
| <i>Howard Culshaw</i>  | <i>Assistant Solicitor</i>                |
| <i>Jane Watson</i>     | <i>Senior Committee Administrator</i>     |

*(Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Cooney and P. White).*



**13. MINUTES**

**AGREED**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> February, 2015 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**14. DOG WELFARE GROUPS/VOLUNTARY GROUPS**

The Chairman welcomed Ken Harrison from the RSPCA who had been invited to the meeting to talk about various dog issues in the Borough.

Mr. Harrison explained that the RSPCA dealt mainly with the welfare of animals, particularly neglect, and did not take in stray dogs. If they were presented with a dangerous dog or someone reported one then the Police would be contacted or one of the RSPCA's own Inspectors who were deployed from headquarters would deal with the matter. He also said that any cruelty issues were dealt with by headquarters in the south of England.

The RSPCA had been into six schools over the past year to educate children around animal welfare issues. They have from time to time been invited to give presentations to scout and brownie groups.

Mr. Harrison referred to the various leaflets the RSPCA produced or supported and it was suggested that the Council could place some of these leaflets at its counters and at Number 1 Market Street. It was also suggested that a link to the RSPCA website be included on the Council's website.

## **15. DOG ISSUES SURVEY**

Adam Pearson gave a presentation on the results of the dog issues survey which had been carried out between 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2014 and 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2016. A total of 577 public consultation responses had been received along with 200 street interviews across the town centres in the Borough.

The results of the survey indicated that dog fouling was the biggest issue, particularly in West Craven and for people who did not own a dog. A suggestion to address the issue was for there to be more dog bins, more enforcement/patrols and heavier fines.

It appeared that dog owners recognised dog-related issues in the Borough but they didn't feel as strongly as those who didn't own a dog. Dogs behaving dangerously and stray dogs were perceived to be less of a problem, but dangerous dogs appeared to be more of a problem in Colne and stray dogs in Nelson.

The issue of dogs on/off leads appeared to divide people who did have a dog and those who didn't. From the results of the survey dog owners agreed that they should be kept on leads on roads and in town centres but wanted more freedom in parks. The majority of dog owners agreed with the idea of designated 'off lead' exercise areas.

Irresponsible ownership was cited as the major factor throughout the survey.

The Group felt that the results had identified that there was a need for more enforcement and this was something they had referred to at an earlier meeting. From a personal view point as a dog owner Mr. Harrison concurred that more enforcement would be welcomed, particularly by responsible dog owners.

## **AGREED**

That the results of the survey be welcomed.

## **16. NEXT STEPS**

The Chairman said that from the results of the survey dog fouling and enforcement appeared to be the areas of concern for most people. He considered these to be the two priorities the Group should focus on.

In relation to keeping dogs on leads in certain areas the Group were asked to consider whether or not further work should be undertaken to see what could be done under the new Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. There was a difference of opinion about this but it was explained that under this Act a Public Space Protection Order could be put in place requesting people to keep their dogs on leads in certain areas such as on sports pitches.

It was also felt that options should be explored for keeping dogs on leads in other areas such as roads and play areas.

In relation to dog fouling there was clear support from the results of the survey that more enforcement would be welcomed. It was suggested that additional funding be identified during the budget process to provide additional resources for enforcement.

The Waste Services Manager circulated a report on dog warden costs and kennelling of stray dogs. The report provided details of the cost of employing additional staff, introducing an out of hours standby service and the cost of providing temporary accommodation for stray dogs collected following closure of the Council's kennelling contractor. From the information received it was felt that providing additional enforcement would be more beneficial than extending the out of hours standby service.

Details of a Keep Britain Tidy Campaign "Keeping an Eye on it" were also circulated. This was a poster campaign for the prevention of dog fouling. The posters displayed a "watching eyes" image and could be posted at dog fouling hotspots. The Group welcomed this idea and as this initiative was about to be launched nationally it was felt that the Council should participate in it.

Posters about dangerous dogs had also been produced along with a leaflet. The leaflet gave contact details of who to contact about dangerous dogs along with information about dogs which had been banned under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. It was suggested that these posters and leaflets be displayed in public areas within the Council and in libraries, community centres etc.

Reference was also made to the information provided on the Council's website regarding various dog issues. As well as providing information about where people should go and who they should contact for various issues it was felt that information on what the Council does in relation to dog issues should also be included on the website.

## **AGREED**

- (1) That a report be prepared based on the findings of the survey and issues raised by this Group including areas where Public Protection Orders, under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 could be implemented in relation to keeping dogs on leads.
- (2) That the dangerous dogs posters be distributed for display in public areas within the Borough.
- (3) That the Council participates in the Keep Britain Tidy Campaign "Keeping an Eye on it" initiative.

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_