

DECISION NUMBER: PCCG-2014-008

MINUTES OF THE ANIMAL WELFARE MEETING
HELD ON 3RD FEBRUARY 2014
AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS, CROESYCEILIOG

Present: Mr E J HARRY (Chair)
Mrs L Buchanan-Smith
Ms G Mason
Mr M Evans
Councillor L Winnett
Inspector E Smith (RSPCA)
Sgt Julie Pearse – Dog Section
Mr Paul Harris, Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner
Mrs Sian Curley, Scheme Manager
Mrs Maria Chapman, Scheme Administrator
Ms Michelle Vaisey-Baker, Assistant Scheme Administrator

Apologies: Inspector John Davies

The meeting began at 4pm

1 Minutes and Actions of last Meeting – 14th October 2013

ACTION

The minutes were reviewed and agreed to be an accurate record.

Councillor Winnett stated that the opportunity to visit Waterton Kennels had been a fantastic opportunity. Mrs Chapman (MC) advised that a thank you letter had been sent to the Waterton Dog Section following the last meeting.

MC advised that she has liaised with Sue Poole the Scheme Administrator for South Wales Animal Welfare Scheme who has confirmed that their Animal Welfare Visitors make regular visits to their kennels. Sue Poole also provided a written update report from September for MC to review. It was requested that this be circulated to our scheme members for information. It was noted that we have agreed to do bi-annual visits to Waterton and that MC is due to schedule the next visit which will take place in March. PS Pearse (JP) advised she would provide MC with dates in March that the Gwent dogs will be at the kennels so that the visit could be organised around this.

MC

JP

Mrs Curley (SC) advised that the letter to democratic services had not been sent as the requirement for Councils to allocate a Councillor to the scheme is potentially part of the problem of why they do not attend as they do not necessarily have an interest and are not volunteers. It was suggested that instead of councils now being required to nominate a

Councillor for the scheme we could invite those who are already members to become permanent volunteers instead and remove the requirement for councils to send representatives. That way those councillors who are interested in remaining could stay on the scheme. Members declined this offer as it was felt that someone should be representing the local authorities on the scheme and that the issue of non-attendance should be raised with the relevant Council Leaders. Mr Harris suggested that the Commissioner write personally to the Leaders of the Council's and request that they nominate representatives who have an interest in the scheme. It was noted that it would be beneficial for the letter to include some information on what the dog section and the scheme do as Councillors are not always made aware of this.

MC

2 Operational Update from Dog Section

JP informed us that PC Watkins and PD Jack took first place at the recent dog trials, with PC Booth and PD Blix coming in second place. All will now go forward to the regional trials which will take place in March. A venue has yet to be arranged so once this has been organised invites will be sent out inviting scheme members to the last day of the trials which will be 13th March. The trials will run over three days in total and will hopefully have dogs from Avon & Somerset, Devon & Cornwall, South Wales and potentially the Ministry of Justice.

JP

3 Scheme Update

MC relayed a message of thanks from PS Maria Henry that she had sent upon receipt of the flowers from scheme members.

We were advised that there is no update on any dog section visits as no visits have been conducted since August 2013. MC queried if there was any reason for this e.g. if there are any blockages that the Scheme Administrators could assist with to ensure visits are made. We were informed that two of the visits had been missed due to shortage of time and lack of opportunity to fit them in. Another of the visits had actually been arranged and two visitors had attended but they had the wrong date so no visit actually took place.

Members were informed that new rota's from April 2014 have been produced and will be circulated to all members shortly. The new rota no longer has the entry stating that it is the 1st visitors responsibility to contact the 2nd visitor to make an appropriate appointment, this is due to the recent lack of visits. It is therefore both visitors responsibility to ensure visits are conducted each month. It was queried whether the Councillor's should remain on the rota given the discussion earlier in the meeting. It was noted that the majority of Councillor's have conducted visits therefore it was agreed that the majority will remain on the rota with exception of Councillor Bevan who has not yet conducted any visit or attended any meeting. Everyone was advised that if there is any problem in arranging or carrying out a visit please can members contact

the Scheme Administrators to advise of this as soon as possible and they will endeavour to establish if another volunteer can conduct the visit that month.

All members were reminded to ensure their completed report forms are posted to the Scheme Administrators once a visit has taken place, they can either do this directly or by handing the form to the dog section officer to post off in the internal mail.

4 Demonstration at Waterton (3rd June 2014)

MC advised that all scheme members have been invited to the South Wales Animal Welfare AGM at 6:15pm in Waterton on 3rd June 2014. We were advised that there is usually a demonstration with the dogs and horses at these meetings, and that there will also be an opportunity to visit the kennels whilst in attendance. If anyone is interested in attending please can they contact MC to confirm their place.

ALL

5 Any Other Business

Councillor Winnett queried if there was a process in place in respect of dangerous dogs as Blaenau Gwent Council have been informed on a number of occasions that people are reporting dangerous dogs to the police via 101 who are referring them onto Local Authorities. Local Authorities are then referring the same people back to the police. JP advised that if there are no issues with a dog (e.g. they are deemed safe or well behaved) then it is the local authorities responsibility to collect it. However if the Local Authority deem a dog as dangerous then it is a matter for the police and is the Dog Handlers responsibility to collect it. There are two dog legislation officers in the Dog Section who are trained to identify prohibited breeds, and that all dog handlers are trained to deal with dangerous dogs.

We were informed that if the dog is a prohibited breed an exemption can be applied for by the owner to have it back if they have it neutered and tattooed. Once the protocols have been met the owner can have the dog back if they are deemed an appropriate person. If the individual is not appropriate or the dog too dangerous then the dog must be destroyed. There is no option to rehome or rehabilitate the dog.

JP advised that the dangerous dog procedure has just been revised and that it appears there may be a misunderstanding in the Control Room in respect of dangerous dogs. JP will look into the opportunity of providing a presentation or training to staff in the Communication Suite.

JP

Mr Harris advised that the Commissioner had actually raised this issue with the Chief Constable today. It is clear that Gwent Police do have set procedures in place but that training needs to be rolled out.

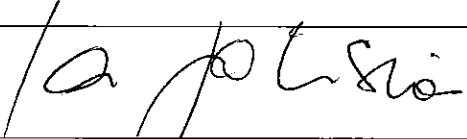
Mr Harris expressed how pleased he was to see so many members at

the recent dog trials especially given the bad weather conditions. He advised that discussions are on-going to get more publicity around the regional trials when they take place. There is a lot of public interest in the dog section and it would be beneficial to promote such a good news story. JP advised that the dog section have been liaising with Corporate Communications to see how to better publicise their work. They are looking at doing something along the lines of "A Dogs Tail" whereby an incident is relayed as if the dog is telling the story of what has happened whilst ensuring no specific details are divulged. It was suggested by Mrs Buchanan-Smith that there could be opportunities of getting coverage via the South Wales Argus Grass Roots column which goes is published on Monday's.

Councillor Winnett queried if there was any potential to hold a joint show in the summer in Blaina that includes the ambulance service and helicopter etc. Mr Harris advised that they are currently discussing the possibility of re-instituting the Police Open Day. The Chief Constable has agreed it is a good idea but it will not take place this year due to NATO. The plan is that it will be reintroduced next year, the venue for which will be decided nearer the time. It was noted that during the Waterton visit South Wales had offered the possibility of using their horses as part of any show that may be organised in Gwent providing enough notification is given, this is an avenue that could be explored as a possible option.

6 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 1st May 2014 at 4pm in Conference Room 1 at Police Headquarters. Please can all visitors note that they will be required to go to the main Police Headquarters reception to gain access to this meeting room. Attendance before 4pm is advisable as the main reception doors are locked from 4pm.

Ian Johnston QPM, Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent	
I have monitored the Animal Welfare Scheme Minutes and am satisfied with progress.	
Signed 	Date 19-3-14

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Background papers	None

