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The Scottish Parliament
Public Petitions Committee
T3.40
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Contact: John Gillespie

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Our ref: JG/MMcW

Your ref:

Date: 13th December 2011

F.T.A.O. Alison Wilson
Assistant Clerk to the Public Petitions
Committee

Dear Sir/Madam,

Response to Petition PE1396

I refer to your letter of 17th November in regard to the above petition and as requested here is the response from Clackmannanshire Council in relation to the following question asked:

'The NDWA (Scotland) brought to the attention of the Committee the scheme you previously had in place along with local vets to provide free or reduced cost neutering/spaying of dogs. The Committee would be interested to hear from you on how the scheme worked and its level of success'

With regard to the above question the Clackmannanshire Council neutering/spaying scheme ran from approximately 1990 to 2004, it was a partnership with the Scottish Society Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SSPCA) and a local vet.

The scheme was set up where local residents who received benefits were entitled to have their dog neutered or spayed for a substantially reduced cost to them. The dog owner paid a small amount depending on the breed, size and gender of the dog. Typically, this could range from £20 - £50, with Clackmannanshire Council and the SSPCA paying equally the rest of the cost. The local vet gave their time and services to support the scheme. The scheme came to an end when the SSPCA decided to cease paying their share of the cost.

The scheme was open to any breed of dog and initially the scheme uptake was primarily bitches, however, as the scheme ran, there was an increase in the uptake of male dogs.

The scheme ran for approximately 14 years. There is no actual documented evidence that the scheme was a success, in that it substantially reduced the numbers of strays, re-homing of dogs etc. The evidence of the scheme can only be anecdotal in nature with every dog neutered or spayed, resulting in no other dog who could potentially be a stray or need to be re-homed. During the life of the scheme, there was a shift in attitude of the owners from getting bitches spayed to getting males neutered.

This scheme was for all dog breeds and not just a specific dog species that are fashionable breeds of the time i.e. Alsatians, Staffordshire Bull Terriers where owners may be less willing to take up such an offer.

However, this scheme does not work in isolation alone and requires education on responsible dog ownership. Clackmannanshire Council uses the approach of working with and educating dog owners by giving low cost dog training classes and ensuring that dog owners feel they can contact the Council's Animal Welfare Officer for assistance and advice on any aspect of owning a dog.

Yours faithfully

Elaine McPherson
Chief Executive