



ANIMAL WELFARE CHARTER

March 2002

FOREWORD

1. This Charter has been produced by Ryedale District Council to set out how the Council endeavours to promote and influence animal welfare matters in the course of its everyday business and statutory duties. It reflects the concerns of local people who care about animal welfare and any cruel treatment, abuse or neglect of animals.
2. The Council consider that all animals have the right to enjoy five basic freedoms:
 - Freedom from fear and distress.
 - Freedom from hunger and thirst.
 - Freedom from discomfort
 - Freedom from pain, injury and disease.
 - Freedom to express normal behaviour.

The Council will have regard to these five freedoms for guidance when exercising its statutory powers in respect of animal health and welfare and the relevant licensing functions.

3. The Council supports and encourages where appropriate other animal welfare and conservation agencies, organisations and individuals.
4. The Council asks members of the public to support this Charter and to draw to the attention of the Council or other animal welfare agencies any contraventions or matters of concern.
5. The Council will publicise the Charter throughout the District and undertake any necessary review following changes in legislation or local circumstances.

Dogs

The Dog Warden and Animal Welfare Officer's aim is to promote responsible dog ownership and high standards of animal welfare through a combination of education and enforcement by:

- (i) Taking action against infringements of local bylaws and relevant legislation.
- (ii) Partnership and regular liaison with the police, animal welfare groups and other relevant individuals and organisations.
- (iii) Educational campaigns to support responsible dog ownership through talks, campaigns and use of the local media.
- (iv) Provision of dog-waste bins on relevant council owned land and liaison with Town and Parish Councils over provision elsewhere.
- (v) Giving a high priority to prevention and cleaning up dog faeces through education and cleansing campaigns
- (vi) Encouraging the permanent identification of dogs through the use of micro chipping.
- (vii) Returning stray dogs to their owners, if known, on the first offence and on any subsequent offence, impounding the stray. Every effort will be made in conjunction with the assistance of animal welfare organisations to re-home any unclaimed dog, unless the dog is considered unsuitable.

Feral Cats

Feral cats are the same species as the ordinary, domestic cat. The difference is the cats do not live with humans and have become wild. Feral cat colonies present practical problems on a scale which can no longer be dealt with by voluntary groups alone.

Where feral cats are considered a nuisance or no one can be found to attend to the welfare of such felines, the Council is of the opinion that the following action should be taken:

- all cats should be humanely trapped.
- new homes should be sought for kittens or adult cats which are not totally feral and are suitable for rehoming.
- cats should not be destroyed, except where:
 - (i) a veterinary surgeon advises such action is necessary due to injury or disease or
 - (ii) the Environmental Health Officer or Dog Warden and Animal Welfare Officer consider there to be a public health risk; or
 - (iii) no one is willing to feed or look out for the welfare of these animals.

where the land owner agrees to the presence of the colony, cats that are too wild to be rehomed should be neutered or spayed to limit further:

- expansion of the colony. Neutered cats should be ear-tipped.
- the Council will work with cat protection groups and animal welfare organisations to agree the best course of action in each case.

Animal Boarding and Dog Breeding Establishments

Ryedale District Council is responsible for enforcing the Animal Boarding Establishment Act 1963, Breeding of Dogs Act 1973/1991 and Sale of Dogs (Welfare) Act, 1999. Inspection of these premises requires high standards to be met before a licence is granted. Licence conditions are based on the model conditions of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and British Veterinary Association.

Pet Shops

Ryedale District Council has a statutory responsibility to licence Pet Shops under the provision of the Pet Animals Act 1951. Licence holders must comply with a set of standard licence conditions have been based on model conditions which have been drawn up by a working group comprising representatives of the Local Government Association, British Veterinary Association, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, Pet Care Trust and Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association Ltd. Licensing Officers will vigorously enforce conditions when an animal's health or welfare is at risk of being compromised. Pet Shop proprietors may also be asked to provide information relating to the source of their stock.

At the time of licensing inspections and subsequent visits, the opportunity will be taken to pass on to the pet shop proprietor current animal welfare information and to promote the City and Guilds Certificate in Pet Shop Management or its equivalent.

Exotic Pets

Ryedale District Council will do all it can to discourage the sale of exotic animals and their keeping in a domestic environment.

Dangerous Wild Animals

Ryedale District Council is responsible for enforcing the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976. The Council will ensure that the premises and animals are inspected annually by a vet and subject to suitable licence conditions

Horse Riding Establishments

Ryedale District Council is responsible for enforcing the Riding Establishments Acts 1964/1970. The Council will continue to ensure that each licensed premises and its horses used for riding lessons are inspected annually by an authorised vet and licence conditions adhered to.

Tethering of Horses

The Council will continue to monitor the tethering of horses within the district and report to the RSPCA any matters of concern relating to animal welfare.

Zoos

Ryedale District Council is responsible for licensing all zoos in its area under the provisions of the Zoo Licensing Act 1981. The Act requires regular formal inspection of zoos by a team, including three external inspectors, one being directly appointed by the local authority and two from the secretary of State's list of persons deemed competent to inspect zoos. All are qualified veterinarians with special expertise in the treatment and welfare of zoo animals.

The Council will ensure that the formal inspection covers all features of the zoo, which are directly or indirectly relevant to the health, welfare and safety of both the visiting public and the animals. The inspection shall have regard to the latest version of the Secretary of State's Standards of Modern Zoo Practice, which requires zoos to contribute in as many ways as possible to the education of visitors.

Pest Control

The Environmental Health Service provides a Pest Control Service responsible for the control of rats, mice and other pests. The Council accepts the need for the control of rodents, insects and other pests where public health, cost or nuisance can be demonstrated

The Council will ensure that all pest control treatments are carried out humanely, safely and in accordance with legal requirements and good practice, by trained and experienced personnel. The Council will continue to educate, advise and ensure that pest control treatments are only undertaken where appropriate.

Pesticides

The Council opposes the unnecessary use of pesticides. In furtherance of this policy the Council will:

- (i) Not permit its employees or their contractors to use strychnine as a method of controlling moles or other animals.
- (ii) Ensure that only approved rodenticides and insecticides are used in pest control with the minimum quantity relevant to the circumstances of the infestation.
- (iii) Ensure that any herbicide weedkillers used by the Council, are of a type having a minimum effect on the environment.

Wildlife

The Council supports measures to conserve wildlife. The Council through its local plan seeks to reconcile the conservation of the environment with development needs. The Council is committed to the conservation of species and habitats protected under national and international legislation and those of local or regional importance. The Council has carried out a Biodiversity Audit of the district in 1996 (updated in 1999) and plan a Biodiversity Action Plan aimed at protecting rare and threatened species and their habitats. The Ryedale Biodiversity Action Plan should be completed in Spring 2002.

The Council will support measures aimed at the conservation of wildlife through the establishment of new habitats and the creation of local nature reserves and trails. It will encourage appropriate management of existing wildlife sites and, in suitable circumstances, involve local communities in conservation and management. The Council's Countryside Officer/Ecologist will, on request provide advice to landowners on the management of existing habitats (assistance with management may be provided for public and major sites) and the establishment of new areas.

Close liaison will be maintained with the Police and other relevant organisations relating to any potentially illegal or other welfare issues in relation to wildlife that may be brought to their attention.

Enforcement and Education

The Council will:-

- ❖ Ensure suitably trained and experienced authority staff undertake inspection and enforcement.
- ❖ Provide help and advice on matters relating to animal welfare.
- ❖ Strengthen the partnership with North Yorkshire County Council Animal Health Service and report to them matters of concern relating to farm animals. North Yorkshire County Council Trading Standards and Regulatory Services has the responsibility for the enforcement of the Animal Health Act, 1981 in respect to welfare and disease control of livestock on farms, in transit and at markets.
- ❖ Liaise with other local authorities' enforcement agencies, voluntary animal welfare groups and other organisations to ensure a co-ordinated approach to animal welfare.
- ❖ Seek to encourage good practice by maximising publicity where prosecutions are brought.

For further information contact:

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