



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL
www.stroud.gov.uk

Animal Welfare Charter



Reviewed June 2024

Stroud District Council supports the view that all animals have the right to a life free from cruel treatment and unnecessary suffering.

The Council recognises that animals are capable of feeling, capable of enjoying a state of well being and equally capable of suffering and therefore considers animals have the right to five basic needs:

- The need for a suitable environment
- The need for a suitable diet
- The need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns
- The need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals
- The need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease

This charter does not cover every aspect of animal welfare, but it does aim to detail those areas that the Council considers important and where it feels it can have some influence as a responsible and representative public body. The Charter will be reviewed at a minimum of annually and will be updated with any new and relevant legislation.

The Council supports all current animal welfare legislation.

Statutory Duties

The Council has a statutory duty to licence certain establishments within the District, these being:-

- Pet Shops.
- Dog Breeding Establishments.
- Dog and Cat Boarding Establishments (incl Home Boarders & Doggy Day Care).
- Hiring of Horses.
- Exhibition Animals
- Zoos.
- Owners of Dangerous Wild Animals.

Stroud District Council will continue to ensure that the Council's Animal Welfare Officers, and a qualified Veterinary Surgeon where necessary, inspect these premises and that the conditions of such premises will be in line with published guidance and model licence conditions. It will carry out inspections when licences are granted or renewed and unannounced inspections to ensure that the licence conditions are being adhered to.

Council Policies

Blood Sports

It is Council Policy that all forms of hunting with hounds, including trail hunting, are not allowed on Council-owned Land.

Circuses, Performances, Exhibitions and Displays of Animals

Stroud District Council does not permit Circuses using performing animals on its land and premises, either owned or managed. All other applications for performances, exhibitions or displays of animals will be individually considered and the decision to grant or refuse permission will be based on a wide range of considerations, including animal welfare. Anyone operating a business of exhibiting animals must be licensed by their home authority under the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018.

Giving Animals as Prizes

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 made it an offence for any animal to be sold or given as a prize to anyone under the age of 16 years. It is also Council policy that the conditions for hiring or letting any of the Council's facilities, premises or land shall include a clause specifically banning the provision of live animals, including fish, as prizes. The Council encourages other private premises or landowners to follow its lead.

Horse, Pony and Donkey Rides

Anyone offering pony rides on Council-owned land must meet strict conditions as laid down by the Council. The Council encourages other landowners to apply similar strict conditions.

Pet Shops

In accordance with the introduction of 'Lucy's Law', Stroud District Council prohibits the sale of puppies and kittens not bred by the licence holder at any pet shops within the District. The Council prohibits the sale of non-human primates from any licensed pet shop within the district. It is also a licence condition of pet shops within the District that animals must not be sold to anyone under the age of 16 years.

Domestic and Captive Animals

Dogs

The Council liaises with other organisations to promote responsible dog ownership by:-

- providing dog faeces bins;
- promoting animal health education on dog faeces bins; and
- promoting animal health and welfare, training and education through annual campaigns.

Stray Dogs

The Council has a legal responsibility to deal with stray dogs. All stray dogs will be thoroughly checked for identification in an attempt to re-unite the dog with its owner. It is Council policy to re-home all unclaimed stray dogs after the statutory seven days, unless there is veterinary advice to the contrary.

Puppy Farming

The Council opposes puppy farming and supports the RSPCA in recommending that prospective dog owners only purchase puppies that are seen with their mothers and, if possible, their sires. The Council would also encourage residents to consider homing a rescue dog rather than a puppy, in an effort to reduce the population of unwanted dogs.

Cats

The Council encourages residents to be responsible cat owners and supports local animal welfare organisations in their efforts to educate and assist cat owners.

Responsible Pet Ownership

The Council strongly advises that anyone thinking of getting a pet should have a good knowledge and/or take professional advice on the care of such animals before getting the pet. Once the pet has been acquired, responsible pet ownership should include means of identification (e.g. microchipping), regular health checks, including vaccinations, where required and the safe and hygienic disposal of all animal waste. Pet owners are encouraged to control their animals properly to avoid the possibility of them causing

annoyance or distress to members of the public or other animals. The Council is committed to enforcing The Microchipping of Cats and Dogs (England) Regulations 2023.

Population Control

The Council, working with other agencies, encourages the neutering of domestic cats and dogs, which plays an important part in countering irresponsible pet ownership. This should be carried out as early as possible to reduce the number of unwanted animals born each year.

Animal Hoarding

An increasing number of cases are coming to light nationally where individuals, including some private animal sanctuaries, keep many animals in unsuitable conditions. Anyone keeping large numbers of animals needs to consider carefully whether they have adequate, suitable facilities and sufficient knowledge and resources to care properly for all the animals. Professional advice should be sought. People are encouraged to report any suspected instances of animal hoarding to the Council or the RSPCA.

Civil Contingency

The Council realises the importance of pets within family life and has therefore given them full consideration in its Emergency Plan. In the event of an evacuation, owners will be given the option of bringing their pets with them to the rest centre where an Officer will be on hand to arrange suitable, temporary accommodation for their pet as well as safe and secure transport to the arranged destination. Full details of the Emergency Plan can be found on the Council's website.

Pet Sitting Services

The Council encourages responsible pet ownership and recommends that pet owners use only licensed boarding establishments that have met the conditions set out by the Council and the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 and, if using pet sitting services, take up references, visit the service provider and contact animal welfare organisations for advice.

Horses

The Council supports the introduction of the Horse Passports Regulations (England) 2004. The Council also supports the Protection Against Cruel Tethering Act 1988 and will not allow the long term tethering of horses or ponies, in an open environment, on any land owned or managed by the Council. In line with the RSPCA, the Council does not oppose an animal being tethered for short periods, e.g. for grooming, having a short break in a journey or working period, or in a field whilst boundary fencing is being installed or repaired. The Council would remind owners that a tethered horse requires adequate feed and, particularly, water.

Dangerous Wild Animals

The Council enforces the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976. Anyone keeping animals listed on the schedule should be licensed, have specialist knowledge and seek professional advice on the care of the animals. Anyone selling an animal listed on the schedule must ensure that the buyer has the required licence. Anyone applying to keep a non-human primate will need to demonstrate they can meet the conditions set out in the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Privately Kept Non-Human Primates. The Council encourages the Government to continue to periodically review the animals listed on the schedule of Dangerous Wild Animals and supports the rigorous enforcement of the legislation.

Wildlife

The Council supports measures to conserve wildlife and, in particular, draws attention to its concern at the potential threat to British wildlife by the release of non-native animals into the wild. Expert advice should be sought so that appropriate control can be taken. The Council is also opposed to the use of traps and

snare. Where traps and snares are employed, the Council encourages the Government to strengthen legislation so as to reduce the suffering of target species and the capture of non-target species.

Bats

The Council supports legislation that protects bats and their roosts.

Angling

The Council recommends that anglers follow the Code of Practice based on the recommendations of the Medway Report. The key points being:-

- The use of double and treble hooks should be kept to a minimum and avoided entirely when the intention is to return the catch alive to the water;
- Fish intended for food should be killed humanely;
- Unhooking a fish humanely and safely is one of the most important skills for an angler to learn. All anglers should be equipped with disgorgers and unhooking mats and be properly trained in their use;
- Employment of the pike-gag should take fully into account the size of the fish for which it is used;
- Barbless hooks should be favoured; and
- Holding periods in keep-nets should be as brief as possible.

The Council considers the safe disposal of fishing tackle as essential; this is to prevent injury to both domestic and wild animals.

All anglers are asked to ensure that they comply with national and regional bylaws relating to angling. Details of this legislation can be found by contacting the Environment Agency.

Pest Control

The Council promotes and supports the use of safe and humane methods of pest control only. The Council encourages householders to seek professional advice on pest control, rather than using over the counter preparations, to prevent harm to non-target species. The Council provides a Pest Control service to households, for a fee, to ensure that a professional and safe treatment is readily available (01453 754459).

Pigeons

Overpopulation of pigeons in built up areas can cause health and safety problems. The Council encourages the safe and hygienic disposal of all waste, especially fast food waste products to prevent such overpopulation. Where the pigeon population has to be controlled, only humane methods will be used.

Planning

The Council is committed to using the mechanisms in the planning system to ensure that animals, plants and their habitats are afforded the appropriate level of protection in accordance with their protected status.

Animal Cruelty

Those dealing with children or vulnerable adults who have suffered physical and/or mental abuse recognise that there is a link between animal and 'people' cruelty. Indeed, a protocol exists between social services staff and the RSPCA in some local authority areas, whereby there is an exchange of information and careful monitoring of those will follow.

This Council, and others within Gloucestershire, along with Gloucestershire Constabulary and the RSPCA are members of the Gloucestershire Animal Welfare Technical Sub-Committee. The Committee formed an agreement in April 2014 that all information relating to 'animal neglect' where there are children or

vulnerable persons also present at the property, or *vice versa*, will be shared between the relevant authorities.

The Council encourages the Government to support all research by other agencies on the link between animal/child and vulnerable adult abuse in an effort to reduce both animal cruelty and serious crime.

The Council's Animal Welfare Officers are authorised officers under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and will thoroughly investigate any reports of animal neglect with assistance from partner agencies such as the RSPCA whenever necessary.

Council Purchasing/Education

Meals

It is the personal choice of a person to eat meat or not. In respect of this, the Council aims to have a vegetarian option on all menus within the Council restaurants.

Fireworks

The Council supports the introduction and enforcement of legislation such as the licensing of shops selling fireworks and the limit of hours that fireworks are permitted to be used. The Council also supports the RSPCA's campaign to introduce legislation limiting the permitted noise level to 90dB in order to minimise the distress caused to animals by the use of such fireworks.

<https://www.rspca.org.uk/getinvolved/campaign/fireworks>

Where possible, we ask that those planning to let off fireworks either use silent ones or notify their neighbours well in advance of the event. The Council also actively encourages the responsible use of fireworks around animals in accordance with **guidance** issued by DEFRA and supported by the Blue Cross.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/218678/fireworks.pdf

Publicity

The Council regularly updates the information it provides to promote animal welfare through articles in the Stroud District Council News, the Council's website www.stroud.gov.uk, through Parish Council magazines and Social Media platforms.