



### Animal Welfare, the Good, the Bad and the Ugly

Jules Bradburn, Linda Cannon, Randle Stonier and Stewart Broome

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### FOI REQUEST OUTCOMES

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### Over Rated Premises

Linda Cannon IoL

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### Over Rated Premises (Linda)


History

- 2018 cattery inspected - 5 star rating awarded.
- 2022 inspected by newer officer – 1 star awarded.
- Licence holder made allegations about the newer officer.

• Requested that I carry out an independent inspection of behalf of the authority. LA would deal with the allegations.

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### The Cattery

- Traditional outdoor build. Singles, doubles and blocks.
- Wooden construction.
- Most tall vertical, some horizontally stacked.
- All had lobby/corridors.
- 180 Cats.
- 8 FTE +8 PTE.



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### Cattery Photos



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### Outcome

Local Authority

- Council sending out original (out of date) boarding guidance dated 2018.
- Same version on website for downloading.
- Inadequate checklist. Lacked detail for officer to inspect against. Open to interpretation and inconsistency.

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### Inspection Outcome

- No animal welfare concerns.
- Caring and committed LH and staff. Best intentions.
- Many units non compliant in structure, maintenance and size.
- Horizontal cat units for elderly cats far too small and small exercise run. All non compliant.
- Higher standards awarded for dimensions. None met the higher standard.

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### Works Required - Summary

- Reduce cats from 180 to 130.
- Written training policy & record in house training.
- Sealing to gaps inside sleeping and exercise areas.
- Maintain rough wood – Improve maintenance surveys and repairs programme.
- Fill gaps to prevent paws being trapped in holes around pipes.
- Improve temperature monitoring/recording, particularly in Winter.
- Add cat flaps to sleeping units.
- Add additional handwash sink for staff.

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### Works required - Continued

- Update emergency plan to add procedure for suspension/revocation of licence.
- Add availability and use of fans/cooling mats in hot weather.
- Repair/rebuild/remove isolation pens.
- Reroof units with partial roofs.
- Remove/build new units for elderly or infirm cats.
- Side screens/sneeze barriers to single units closer the 0.6m.
- Provide scratching posts.
- Provide preventative healthcare plan.

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### Conclusion

- 2018 Inspection award of 5 stars – Inappropriate. Created a false situation.
- 2022 inspection award of 1 star - Appropriate. Caused huge upset
- My inspection broadly confirmed 2022 inspection.
- LH keen to engage and undertake additional works to achieve higher star rating.
- LA now provides links to correct guidance documents.

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### Lessons Learned on serving a Warrant

Stewart Broome, East Cambridgeshire District Council

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### Lessons Learned on serving a warrant 1

- Section 23 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 – Entry and search in connection with offences.
  - Magistrate must be satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for believing a relevant offence has been committed, or that evidence to prove an offence has been committed can be found on the premises.
- Section 52 – Conditions for grant of warrant.
  - 52(5) inappropriate to inform the occupier, defeat the objective of the search, or entry is required as a matter of urgency.
- Schedule 2 – Powers of entry supplementary.
  - Sets out the additional procedural matters to be observed before, during and after the serving of the warrant.

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### Lessons Learned on serving a warrant 2

- Before...
  - Ensure management are aware of your intentions – cost implications.
  - Make sure you have partner agencies on board for the day you serve.
    - Police, RSPCA, Dog Warden, Appointed Vet, Locksmith, Housing Officer.
  - Ensure sufficient animal accommodation is on stand-by should the need to remove animals present itself.
  - Make sure you have suitable equipment for the task being undertaken.
    - Micro-chip reader, laptop, phone, camera, evidence bags/tags, PACE paperwork, pens, clipboard, P.S.E, shoe covers.
  - Complete a risk assessment.
  - Have a plan, ensure everyone knows their role on the day.

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### Lessons Learned on serving a warrant 3

- During...
  - Remain calm.
  - Ensure any aggressive animals are controlled before all officers enter.
  - Serve the paperwork - explain the paperwork!
  - Explain the nature of the evidence you'll be looking for, seek co-operation.
  - Commence search – be methodical, search in pairs room by room.
  - Go at a pace that suits your allocated exhibit's officer – they are the most important person on the day!
  - Ensure search is commensurate with the nature of evidence being sought – PACE.

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### Lessons Learned on serving a warrant 4

- During continued....
  - Take sufficient photographs.
  - Look to obtain only enough evidence – do not get carried away.
  - Animal welfare concerns – try to seek voluntary handover of animals first.
  - Section 18 – permits an inspector to take immediate steps to alleviate an animals suffering.
    - 18(5) vet certified suffering, places animal in the possession of the Council.
    - Cannot be rehomed/sold etc unless court order obtained giving permission.
  - Complete all necessary paperwork before leaving.
  - You only get one shot per warrant!

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### Lessons Learned on serving a warrant 5

- After....
  - Debrief.
  - Ensure all participants jot down contemporaneous notes straightaway to aid with statement writing.
  - Save copies of the signed warrant paperwork, and then arrange the return of the warrant to the Court Officer.
  - Get ready to spend a great deal of time dealing with the prosecution, and any animals taken into your possession.

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### Dog Boarding Issues

Randle Stonier, Association of Dog Boarders

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### Dog Boarding Issues

- Positives.
- Public Awareness & Understanding.
- The Root of all Evils.
- Licensing Guidance.
- Fees.
- The Great, The Good & The Unlicensed.
- Questions.

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### Positives from Home Boarding

- Better Inspector standards.
- Greater consistency.
- More Inspectors seen as ‘can do’.

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### Public Awareness & Understanding

- Limited awareness



72%

No knowledge of licensing

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Licensing Guidance

- “Off Piste”
  - Boarding trial inconsistency of guidance
  - Poo chart
  - Thermometer chart/record
  - Permissible rooms/size

What is your dog's poo telling you?

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Fees

- Single Household Licenced Carer > Large Commercial Operation
- Annual licence fee variance - £95-£850 pa
- Local Authority ‘creative’ cost bolt-ons eg Interim Inspection charge
- 1,2,3 year sliding scale – disappearing savings benefit

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The Great. The Good. The Unlicensed

- Very limited enforcement
- No Licensing/Enforcement/Prosecutions PR
- Little public awareness of the need to be licenced
- Lack of easy accessibility to registers listing licenced establishments on LA websites
  - Hinders the Public
  - Encourages the Unlicensed
  - Inconsistent GDPR excuse

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