

30 May 2024



To all Town and Parish Councils

Chief Executive
West Berkshire District Council
Council Offices
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Dear Sir/Madam

Motion Banning of Pets as Prizes Across the District

I am writing to invite all Parish and Town Council's across West Berkshire to support West Berkshire Council in its endeavours to ban the giving of pets as prizes on all land owned and events organised by parish councils and town councils in the district.

It may surprise you to learn that although it is an offence to give animals away as a prize to anyone under the age of 16, unless accompanied by an adult in England and Wales there is not an outright ban on giving animals away as prizes. This differs from laws in other countries, for example Scotland, where it's an offence in almost all circumstances to give an animal away as a prize to anyone regardless of age.

At the full Council meeting on the [26th March 2024](#) Councillor Justin Pemberton tabled a motion which was seconded by Councillor Louise Sturgess seeking to ban the giving of pets as prizes across the District.

The Motion asked the Council to note that:

- “• Animal ownership is a big responsibility, one that should be planned and well thought out. Animals – primarily goldfish, but also any other potential household pet – often do not have their welfare needs met both prior to, during and after being given as a prize, for example at fairs and other social events (licenced or otherwise).
- West Berkshire Council is to be applauded for having implemented a policy that precludes animals being given away as prizes on Council owned land, ensuring that the welfare of these animals is not compromised, as well as raising public awareness of the issue and leading the way on ending this outdated practice.
- The legislation in its current form is not fit for purpose and does not go far enough to ban (or otherwise address) a clearly outdated and barbaric practice.

- The Council should do all it can to promote good practice by urging the District's Town and Parish Councils to adopt our current policy of banning pets as prizes on land which they own and/or events which they manage."

Following a debate at the meeting it was agreed that I would write to:

- 1) "the Chairpersons of all Town and Parish Councils across the district to notify them that the Council already bans outright the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, on West Berkshire Council land and events run or managed by it, and asks them to consider adopting the same policy, standards and guidelines.
- 2) the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, urging that an outright ban on the giving of live animals as prizes on both public and private land be legislated for."

While the Council is not aware that the giving away of pets as prizes is taking place within the district there is still some public concern about the outdated practice and we would therefore urge you to support us in taking collective action in advocating for animal welfare on this important matter.

The Council has banned outright the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, on West Berkshire Council land and events run or managed by it. We have written to those operating on our land to let them know that we do not permit this practice. Officers visiting the sites would check for this activity. We also include information to this effect in our hirer's agreements for anyone seeking permission to use our land.

Thank you for your support on this matter.

Yours faithfully



Nigel Lynn
Chief Executive



Jeff Brooks
Leader of the Council