

## SHG Press Release

### **The SHG challenges the RSPCA to help a sick animal in distress after the RSPCA's insurance company refuses to pay out.**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

19<sup>th</sup> April 2007

**The Self Help Group for Farmers, Pet Owners and Others experiencing difficulties with the RSPCA** (The SHG) is challenging the RSPCA to live up to the reasons behind its charitable status and help a sick animal which has been left to suffer following a refusal by an RSPCA insurance company to pay for its treatment due to a technicality.

Ernest Vine of the SHG explained "Freeway, a cocker spaniel, needs urgent veterinary treatment. He needs an operation to prevent him going blind and veterinary treatment for a heart murmur. Unfortunately, although his previous owner, who has moved to Malaysia, had taken out pet insurance with the RSPCA, his current owner, Annette Mills who took in Freeway in May last year has been told she cannot make a claim as her name is not on the policy. Frantic calls from the previous owner in Malaysia to the RSPCA have failed to help. When Annette approached the RSPCA for an e-mail address to try and reduce the cost of the international calls she was told that they don't have e-mails."

"The SHG believes that the RSPCA is under a moral obligation to help Freeway. Why should he go blind and suffer like this?"

Anne Kasica of the SHG said "This case shows that pet insurance is not the answer to the spiralling cost of veterinary treatment. The SHG has been campaigning for an Animal NHS for the animals of pensioners for some years now. Just as people's income drops, their animals reach the age when insurances refuse to cover them any more. There is a huge gap in services because charities like the PDSA will only provide help if people are in receipt of housing or council tax benefit."

"Whatever happens do not ask the RSPCA for help if your animal is ill or injured. We have had a series of people who have done just that, believing they were acting for the best, and the RSPCA have prosecuted them instead of helping."

Mr. Vine explained that in a recently reported case a woman from Cambridge who had not noticed her pup's collar had become too tight took him to the RSPCA looking for help and was prosecuted and banned from having custody of animals for three years.

"This means that the family's lurcher, which has been with them since 1995, must be rehomed."

"Do the RSPCA intend to reason with this poor animal and explain to him why he is being made homeless because of the first mistake his owners made in over ten years? Do they care about the dog's grief and heartbreak at losing the home and people he loves?"

"Did the magistrates in that case actually think about the devastating consequences their decision would have on other family pets? Did they even consider the fact that if the poor lurcher went into RSPCA care, the RSPCA's own statistics show that any living animal coming into their care has only a 50% chance of life?"

Anne Kasica said “On top of this, time after time the RSPCA are prosecuting people who simply do not have the money to pay for private veterinary treatment.”

“The SHG calls on everyone who was intending to donate money to the RSPCA to instead send it to Annette Mills to pay for Freeway’s veterinary treatment and give him the gifts of sight and life which the RSPCA are denying him.”

### **Conclusion**

**The SHG urges government to introduce a National Animal Health Service which we believe would do more to reduce animal suffering than all of the animal welfare legislation that has been passed while this government has been in power.**

**Notes to Editors: -**

### **References**

The Weston Mercury - Rough deal for Freeway

<http://www.thewestonmercury.co.uk/content/twm/news/story.aspx?brand=Westonmercury&category=news&tBrand=westonmercury&tCategory=znews&itemid=WeED18%20Apr%202007%2014%3A40%3A48%3A323>

or

<http://tinyurl.com/3ylsg7>

The SHG Response to the EIG consultation

<http://the-shg.org/Consultation%20responses.htm>

CEN News : City Edition : Pup's neck gash leads to pet ban for owner

<http://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/news/city/2007/04/11/d4614327-fc59-4fdb-a57f-5e9c03f15b12.lpf>

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The SHG was officially formed in June 1990 and has been helping people to defend themselves and their animals from the RSPCA ever since. The national help line number is **08700 72 66 89**

A copy of this and previous press releases from The SHG are online at

<http://www.the-shg.org/SHGPressReleases.htm>

Background information on the Self Help Group for Farmers Pet Owners and Other Experiencing Difficulties with the RSPCA can be found at <http://www.the-shg.org>

Details of further criticisms of the RSPCA can be found at the RSPCA-Animadversion website:

<http://cheetah.webtribe.net/~animadversion>

**ENDS**