

**The Self Help Group for Farmers, Pet Owners and Others  
Experiencing Difficulties with the RSPCA (The SHG)**

**Press Release**

For Immediate Release  
17th December 2008

**RSPCA fails to help a poor young mother with a sick dog - now she is told she'll be jailed for cruelty**

When Nicola Bayford faced the choice of feeding her young children, or taking her dog to the vet, she chose to feed her children. However, she also did everything possible to try to get treatment for Julie, her elderly 16 year old collie.

This included asking the RSPCA, and several other charities, for help. The RSPCA, of course, refused.

When Julie went missing, Nicola showed how much she cared. She walked the streets searching and put posters on lamp posts to try to find her family's much-loved dog.

When Julie was found, suffering from fleas, she was taken to the RSPCA. A complaint was made about Nicola to the local Council, who decided to prosecute her for cruelty.

Nicola pleaded guilty, trusting that no serious penalty would be exacted. However, she has now been told that she faces jail in the New Year.

Anne Kasica of the SHG said:

"Since the RSPCA and others were approached for help to get veterinary treatment for this animal, why were they not standing next to Ms. Bayford in the dock?"

"The RSPCA not only knew about, but had the resources to alleviate, the alleged suffering. Instead they wilfully allowed it continue."

"Why did they not turn up as witnesses for the defence when Nicola was prosecuted by the council?"

"All we get from the RSPCA is a bizarre statement that the inspector was 'too busy to prepare a prosecution'. Would the RSPCA accept that as an excuse from anyone they were investigating?"

Ernest Vine, also of the SHG, commented:

"we are seeing an alarming rise in the numbers of people being prosecuted after having approached the RSPCA for help, although it is usually the RSPCA who do the prosecuting."

"Animal keepers are in a Catch 22 situation."

"If they ask for help they are likely to be prosecuted by the RSPCA."

"If they don't ask for help and are prosecuted, the magistrates will be told by the RSPCA that help is always available and failing to ask for help has caused unnecessary suffering. Ms. Bayford's case clearly shows that these claims are incorrect."

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References:

WITHAM: Mum faces jail for dog cruelty

<http://www.thisistotalessex.co.uk/news/WITHAM-Mum-faces-jail-dog-cruelty/article-534729-detail/article.html>

or

<http://tinyurl.com/5c4zea>

Notes to Editors: -

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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 0844 700 66 90

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>