

STREETVET

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StreetVet Conference 2024

The Art of StreetVetting

Hello!

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The John Chadwick Pet Policy



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I am truly humbled to be here today, to present The John Chadwick Pet Policy – In Loving Memory

Affectionally known as my Hun, this is John, Theo, Tinkerbell & their feline best friend Gizmo. John was a gentle and kind man.

The bond he had with his Pets, I am unable to describe by words alone. No-one can take these memories from me.....



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The Early Years

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John was born in Salford, and due to unforeseen events, had become Street Homeless in London for 2 years. He was found wandering, by St Mungos Homeless Charity and later transferred to Kenward Trusts Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation, in Yalding, Kent in 2007. He completed a 6 month Alcohol Treatment Programme and later secured a tenancy with a Private Landlord, in Maidstone, Kent.

I met John at the latter end of 2007. I was so inspired by his journey, I later became employed with Kenward Trust on 2nd December 2010. I am still employed with them today.

I acquired Gizmo as a kitten for John, to assist with his recovery and mental well being. He then later acquired Theo and then Tinkerbelle. His family was complete. They were his babies, his lifelines, his everything.

John had a life with us here in Maidstone, he worked, had friends, and was part of “my family”. He adored my grandchildren, and would spend Christmas with us, so he wasn’t alone.



Section 21 in 2016

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John was served with a Section 21 at the latter end of 2016, the private landlord wanted to sell the property. He was evicted on 6th March 2017, separated from his Pets, and placed in a B&B by Maidstone Borough Council. He was later given one offer only of permanent housing, with a No Pet Policy.

If John had declined the offer, he would become intentionally homeless. Most cannot imagine becoming homeless once in their lifetime, this was John homeless for the 2nd time, during his.

John died by Suicide on 16th March 2017, 10 days after being separated from his Pets. This was also the Anniversary of his Mothers passing.



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New Pet Policy 2018

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I channelled my grief into a Platform Of Change, to ensure this tragedy didn't happen again. The support given by the media and charities, both here in the UK and abroad, was truly overwhelming.

In July 2018, a New Pet Policy for Emergency Accommodation, was implemented by Maidstone Borough Council. Those now facing homelessness, being able to take their pets with them, if the properties were suitable to do so.



New Pet Policy Review 2019

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In November 2019, I requested Maidstone Borough Council and The Communities, Housing and Environment Committee to review the clause in the New Pet Policy. I had become a lot stronger and wiser by then.

I also contacted Councillor Malcolm McKay, who was honest to say he was not a pet lover. However, he listened and agreed further change was needed within the Policy.

We began a journey of our own together, were filmed on BBC South East News (my 2nd time!). We attended numerous panel meetings at the Town Hall.

The clause within the Policy had stated, MBC would not deem it an unreasonable offer, should permanent housing be offered with a No Pet Policy. I had viewed this as assisting those already at their most vulnerable with their pets, being helped half-way up the ladder into emergency accommodation, and then either becoming intentionally homeless, should they refuse the permanent offer, or face the dilemma of giving up their Pets.



Pet Pilot Scheme 2020

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The Communities, Housing and Environment Committee Panel took my request on board.

At the Town Hall on 25th August 2020, the Panel voted for a 1 year Pilot Scheme to be implemented.

This would allow those residing in emergency accommodation with their pets, to be able to decline the 1st offer of permanent accommodation, on the grounds the accommodation being unsuitable for the pet or came with a No Pet Policy.

I understood the concerns raised by the Panel, as to whether this may affect the waiting list for emergency accommodation.

A further review would be conducted at the end of the 1 year period, where we would go back to Panel once more.





The John Chadwick Pet Policy

Maidstone Borough Council's approach to accommodating homeless applicants and their pets.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Maidstone Borough Council recognises that our homeless applicants may need to keep pets whilst being housed in accommodation under the Homelessness statute. Where possible Maidstone Council will endeavour to accommodate the household where it is suitable and permitted for pets.
- 1.2. At all times we will endeavour to keep households and their pets together, as we understand that they play an important and supportive role, to households facing this stressful situation.
- 1.3. However, it is noted that the current legal position regarding the homelessness legislation does not consider pets to be part of the household. This could mean that in an emergency, if no properties are available where a pet is allowed to reside, then the pet may not be taken into consideration when making a suitable offer of temporary accommodation. By way of explanation the Homelessness Code of Guidance states:
"Housing authorities will need to be sensitive to importance of pets to some applicant, particularly elderly people, rough sleepers who may rely on pets for companionship. Although it will not always be possible to make provisions for pets, the secretary of state recommends that housing authorities give careful consideration to this aspect when making provision for applicants who wish to retain their pet"
- 1.4. Under this policy we will seek to keep pet(s) with the applicant in their temporary accommodation and when making an offer of accommodation to end the homelessness duty. In making the final offer, officers will take into consideration whether the landlord permits pets at the property and exercise their judgement as to whether the offer would be suitable. The Council acknowledges that housing providers (including private landlords) are likely to have their own policy as to whether pets are permitted in their accommodation and the Council does not have the authority to overrule their decision.
- 1.5. In normal circumstances if the applicant were offered accommodation where pets are not permitted, the offer of accommodation would not normally be considered as unsuitable on the basis that the pet not being able to join the applicant. Whilst the approach outlined in this policy is not an overriding consideration when examining the suitability of an offer, the officer may accept up to one refusal of a suitable offer under the John Chadwick Pet Policy without penalising the applicant.

The John Chadwick Pet Policy 2021

On 6th April 2021, I attended a further Panel meeting with Councillor Malcom McKay, to request the Pilot Scheme to be implemented as a Pet Policy.

I also made a further request, as to naming the Pilot Scheme and the Pet Policy for Emergency Accommodation after John Chadwick.

On 6th October 2021, I attended the Town Hall once more. On this evening, Councillor McKay was sitting on the actual Panel.

The Panel voted unanimously for the Pet Pilot Scheme to become a permanent Policy and for this and the Policy for Emergency Accommodation, to be named The John Chadwick Pet Policy.

Maidstone Borough Council confirmed, there had been no issues as feared previously. The waiting list for Emergency Accommodation, had not been affected in the numbers they had thought, by pet owners waiting for suitable permanent accommodation.

Kenward Trust Street Reach 2022

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In June 2022, Kenward Trust implemented a Street Outreach Service in Memory of John Chadwick.

The Street Reach is managed by myself and Paula, who is here with me today. We assist soup kitchens and the community, by providing a floating support service. We are experienced in addiction, housing, benefits and referral pathways.

My vision is to have StreetVet in Partnership with us in Maidstone. I am working on this!!!!

We are looking for extra funding to expand the service further, to enable us to support more people.

Our Just Giving Link is below - also in memory of John Chadwick

https://www.justgiving.com/page/kenward-trust-street-reach?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR0gYAL70UUIJ4G3tJV4d4ExKNgCg2-2Vv_CeMe1AEfC-Nb9RgtcewXIs_Y_aem_L8Xo-oDdlhKf4YRyyxBTIw



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THE JOHN CHADWICK HOUSE

Kenward Trust

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In October 2022, my dad came to stay with me for respite. As a family, we decided it was safer for dad to stay permanently. We agreed to keep our “family home”. My vision had been to have a “Johns House” for homeless people and their Pets. I approached Maidstone Borough Council initially, under “The John Chadwick Pet Policy”. As the Pet Policy belonged to MBC, I then felt I needed a “little something for me”.

This journey will always begin with Kenward in 2007, we decided to lease our family home to them. The house officially opened in July 2024 for 3 of “our” gents. There are no time constraints to move to the housing register, as with our other Move On Projects. The John Chadwick House is their “home” for however long. This gives us as the Street Reach Team, an opportunity to provide clothes, food and a pop in, without being intrusive. So I now have that “little something for me” too.

And Little Rocky in the photo with me, is now living his best life with his human!!



Feature Wall & Memories

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I would like to end today, by sharing photos of the Feature Wall in The John Chadwick House. The wall includes the Official Plaque for the house – there are even paws in the letter O for John and House!!

The wall includes some of the more important outcomes achieved over the years. These have been lovingly framed by myself. There are just too many articles to be able to share all.

I would also like to share some of the personal photos of my Hun with you and some of the other outcomes achieved.

A further tribute to his life and our loss, both in the North where his life started, and then ended so tragically with us here in the South.

Being here today means so much to me, to continue keeping my Huns Memory alive xxx



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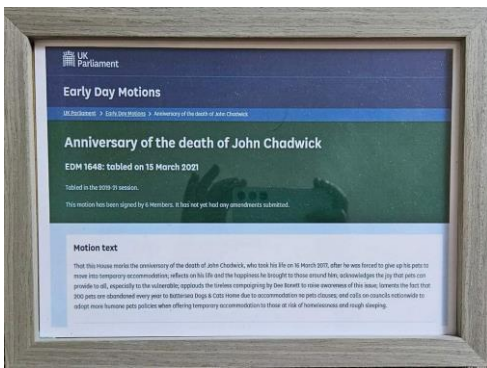
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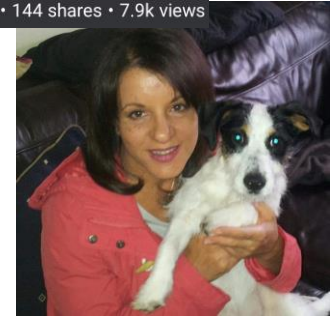
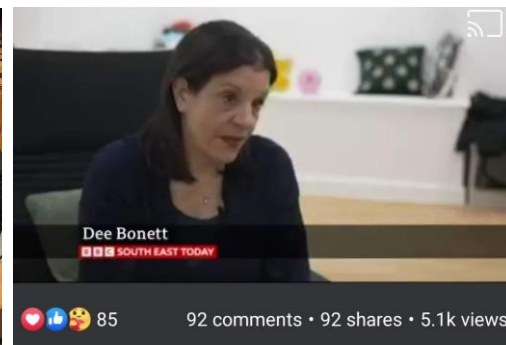
Feature Wall

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Memory Wall

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The John Chadwick Pet Policy Presentation with Maidstone Borough Council

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If I could thank everyone individually, for supporting me, encouraging me, believing in me, and picking me up off the floor, during my countless meltdowns over the years, I would. There are just too many of you, both here in the UK and abroad.

So, I am dedicating this presentation, from the 2022 SCAS (Society of Companion Animal Studies) Annual Pets in Housing Conference, to you all instead, to watch in your own time. The link is below.

I introduce the Policy, John Littlemore speaks directly after me. We were astounded when he sent his presentation through – with tears from myself (having become abnormally good at crying on this journey!!)

<https://youtu.be/dfjUsgmTSBs?si=hiTXa0dtY-9FKg4D>

What usually comes of tragedy is change for others.....

Much love to all, Dee xxx



Thank you

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