

Media release

Councillor's shame over Stafford Bird Market horror

The Animal Protection Agency (APA) has slammed the decision by Stafford Borough Council's elected members to license a giant bird market at the Staffordshire County Showground - against the recommendations of its own licensing officers. APA attended the event along with two vets and gathered filmed evidence of gross animal suffering, which they have described as a 'video nasty'.

APA claims that the event was unlawful and that the Council did not have the power to grant the licence. But even after giving it the go ahead, no council inspectors were present during the whole day. APA found birds kept in shocking conditions, in tiny, overcrowded and filthy cages. Sick birds were on sale, and some with blood visible on the inside of their cages.

The Parrot Society, who organised the event, employed a team of lawyers to suppress the evidence gathered by APA but despite their best efforts the undercover film headlined yesterday's six o'clock news on ITV. The Parrot Society's reputation is now arguably in tatters as the film shows widespread animal abuse.

Says Elaine Toland, Director of the Animal Protection Agency;

"Searching questions now need to be asked as to why this event was allowed in the first place. Our investigators were extremely disturbed at what they found and the harrowing footage speaks for itself. We are determined to ensure that this event is never allowed again."

The Animal Protection Agency is a brand new organisation to fight the trafficking in wild animals. APA works with local authorities in closing down illegal pet markets. Today APA has commended a neighbouring authority, North West Leicestershire District Council, for taking prompt and purposeful action to prevent further unlawful bird markets in their area. The North West Leicestershire ban also followed an undercover investigation by APA where evidence was gathered of unlawful animal trading and poor welfare conditions at a bird market held in a leisure centre.

The Animal Protection Agency is also lobbying MPs to ensure that the current ban on pet markets remains in place.

- For more information, please contact Elaine Toland on 01273 674253.

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