



Animal Protection Agency

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Council takes swift action to stop bird market

Animal campaigners have today welcomed news that a proposed bird market in Dorset on Sunday 13th February has been cancelled following the Local Authority's intervention. The Animal Protection Agency (APA), a national organisation campaigning against the trade in wild animals for pets, tipped off West Dorset District Council who took last minute action to uphold the law and protect animal welfare. The market was due to take place at Digby Hall in Sherborne, West Dorset.

Although West Dorset DC were originally informed by the market organisers that the event was a private sale, the Council saw through this when it was clear from the advertisement that the event was open to the public - subject to a £1 admission charge. According to the Pet Animals Act 1951, as amended in 1983, it is an offence to sell pet animals in markets or public places. The law was changed in 1983 to protect pet animals from being sold in stressful, temporary environments.

Says Elaine Toland, Director of APA;

"We are finding that animal dealers will go to any lengths to make quick profits through organised bird markets while at the same time attempting to circumvent the law. We attend many events around the country that are supposedly private but invariably we find that they are publicly accessible, commercially driven and stacked full of suffering birds. We are pleased that the Council acted so swiftly."

Bird markets around the UK have largely been stamped out but occasionally occur due to poor local authority enforcement. Venues can vary in size from scout huts to agricultural showgrounds. Many animal welfare groups including the RSPCA, IFAW, WSPA, BirdsFirst, Animal Aid and the Captive Animals' Protection Society have condemned pet markets, as have leading experts in exotic animal medicine, behaviour and welfare.

Anyone seeing an advertisement for a pet market – also sometimes referred to as 'pet fairs', 'breeders meetings', or even misleadingly 'exhibitions' should immediately contact their local authority and the Animal Protection Agency on 01273 674253.

* For more information, please contact Elaine Toland on 01273 674253

* We have an ISDN line for broadcast quality interviews.