

Dear James Gibson-Watt,

I hope this letter finds you well. With families across Wales currently enjoying the summer holidays, I am writing to you on behalf of RSPCA Cymru to encourage your council to prohibit the giving of pets as prizes on your land. We have long called on Wales' 22 local authorities to introduce their own bans on this outdated practice on council-owned land - with twelve having taken such action already.

With the RSPCA still receiving numerous reports relating to animals - predominantly, goldfish - being given away as prizes every year, we are concerned this activity remains common practice across Wales and England.

As I am sure you will agree, animal ownership is a big responsibility and should always be pre-planned as part of a well thought out process. However, the acquisition of a pet as a prize is usually the result of a spontaneous event, meaning that animals often do not have their welfare needs met prior to, during, and after being given away. Sadly, many goldfish die before they even reach their new homes as a result of shock or changes in water temperature, with some illegally discarded in local waterways or by other means.

Goldfish are sentient animals that can make excellent pets - however, meeting their complex biological, environmental and behavioural needs requires a great deal of preparation, investment and care. As a result, prospective owners should thoroughly research their needs and what is required to care for them using expert sources, before they acquire any fish.

Under the provisions of the Animal Welfare Act 2006, it is illegal to give any animal as a prize to anyone under the age of sixteen, unless they are accompanied by an adult. However, RSPCA Cymru has received reports of fish being illegally given away to children younger than 16 in some cases in recent years.

With many fairgrounds continuing to give away pets as prizes in Wales, despite ongoing concerns, we are keen to work with Powys County Council to protect the welfare of these often forgotten animals. I have attached our ready-to-go motion to the email which accompanies this letter which would enable Powys County Council to become the latest local authority to prohibit the cruel and outdated of giving away pets as prizes on council land if passed.

If you have any questions about the contents of this letter or if any further information would be helpful, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

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Public Affairs Adviser - RSPCA Cymru