

Dog shelters 'at breaking point'

Surge in abandoned and surrendered dogs leaves rescue centres in dire straits

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AN animal rescue service in Galway has said that shelters are at a "breaking point" due to the increase in abandoned and surrendered dogs.

"Every rescue in the country has been inundated," said Emma O'Brien, Kennel Manager at the Galway Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (GSPCA).

"We just feel like it's gone back 20 years. There was a stage there where we saw a bit of light and we thought 'this is great', but it's just gone backward again. Most rescues are at a breaking point emotionally and financially."

The majority of the dogs at the GSPCA sanctuary are abandoned or came from pounds.

Ms O'Brien said that managing abandonments at the shelter has become a "constant juggling game", and that although dog abandonment is illegal it happens "all over the place".

"We've had three litters in the last six weeks dumped. Two of



Cushla, who was found abandoned on the side of the road one morning with her siblings. One died and the other six survived and are thriving now after a wobbly start at MADRA. In the same week's MADRA had two litters of pups delivered to mums that had been dumped while pregnant.

those litters were five, six-week-old babies, all with parvo [parvovirus, the highly contagious and potentially fatal infection], and some of them died. We had a litter before that, eight weeks old, 10 weeks old, two of those

died from parvo. "We're the people having to go out and pick them up from the ditches where they're dying," she said.

Ms O'Brien said that there was a "huge problem" of people buy-

ing dogs from "backyard breeders" during the pandemic and that fixing the increase in dog abandonment should start with ending the practice.

"It's just too easy in this country to be able to go out and buy a backyard-bred dog. They are unregistered, nobody goes in those yards, there's dogs in there pumping out litter after litter, living in squalid conditions, and the pups are coming out sick," she said.

"It's going to take years to mop up the problem of animal cruelty and overbreeding and too many dogs in this country. But you've got to start somewhere, haven't you?"

MADRA (Mutts Anonymous Dog Rescue and Adoption) said that they have had to "slow down" on the number of dogs they take in.

Founder and Director Marina Fiddler said that the rescue centre deals specifically with local authority pounds and that they have had to be "more selective" with the dogs they accept from the pounds.

She said they have taken in 20 per cent more dogs than in pre-

vious years, and that applications for private surrenders have doubled.

Ms Fiddler said that most of the dogs being surrendered are ones that had a "difficult time" through Covid and are now trying to cope with their owners going back to work, as well as a lack of training.

"Everybody went out and got dogs during Covid, even though they were told to be careful, they still all went out and got dogs. That's human nature, but now the real world has kicked in and they are finding themselves struggling with these dogs, and as a result, they are trying to surrender them," she said.

She also said that the number of people adopting dogs has "dropped off of a cliff" after more people got dogs earlier than anticipated during the pandemic and that people want to travel without being "tied down" to a dog.

"All these things make perfect sense in the individual, but when you're dealing with the aftermath of it, it makes life very difficult."

Ms Fiddler said that the lack of

housing for people with pets has also led to more surrenders.

"We've had people having to surrender animals because they genuinely just can't get anywhere that will allow them to keep a pet. It's heart-breaking, it's like a death in the family for some of these people, and we have to cope with the human side of that and try and support them as best we can because they're good people, they just got themselves into a predicament."

Ms Fiddler said that around the Christmas season, the shelter usually has a backlog of dogs, but that this year it may be worse. The rescue has already temporarily stopped taking private surrenders, but she said that they may have to stop taking in all dogs at the beginning of December.

She added that funding to the shelter has been cut, and donations have been down because of the rising cost of living.

"It's an interesting scenario. In MADRA and most rescues, we're just trying to circle the wagons and hold tight until such a time as things resume to some kind of normality," she said.



GALWAY CITY JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE PUBLIC MEETING

A public meeting of the Galway City Joint Policing Committee will take place at 7.00pm on Tuesday, 22nd November 2022 in The Connacht Hotel, Dublin Road, Renmore, Galway, H91 K5DD.

All members of the public are invited to attend this public meeting. In order to attend in person, you must confirm your attendance by contacting Emma Johnston on (091) 536358 or email to candc@galwaycity.ie by Wednesday 9th November 2022.

The Joint Policing Committee was established under the Garda Síochána Act 2005 and includes members of An Garda Síochána, Elected Members of Galway City Council, Oireachtas Members representing Galway City, representatives from the community and voluntary sector and officials of Galway City Council. The function of the Committee is to serve as a forum for consultation, discussion and recommendations on matters affecting the policing of the Galway City area.

It is proposed that discussion at this meeting would focus on the 4 strategic aims as outlined in the Galway City Joint Policing Committee Strategic Plan, which can be accessed on www.galwaycity.ie/jpc-meeting-downloads. Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting, to have their views heard and to put questions to the committee. All questions concerning the general policing of Galway City should be submitted in writing to:

JPC Secretary, Community & Culture Department, Galway City Council, City Hall, College Road, Galway, H91 X4K8 or by email to candc@galwaycity.ie

Questions should be received in writing no later than Wednesday 9th November 2022 and must include the name and address of the person submitting the questions, which will not be published. Those who require alternative arrangements for the submission of questions may contact (091) 536358.

Please note that the Joint Policing Committee may not consider matters relating to a specific criminal investigation or prosecution or matters relating to the security of the State. In addition to this the Joint Policing Committee will not consider a matter if:

- It would endanger the security of one or more individuals.
- It relates to an individual.
- It involves information received by the Garda Síochána or the local authority in confidence.
- It would, or would be likely to, prejudice the prevention or detection of crime or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders.
- Individuals shall not be discussed or named. An individual's right to privacy and the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights Act 2003 must be adhered to.
- It is deemed prejudicial to a Garda operational matter.
- The public is advised that in some circumstances, for legal reasons, it may not be possible to provide information requested.

Brian Barrett
A/Director of Services, Housing (excluding capital), Ukraine Humanitarian Crisis, Community, Economic Development, Tourism & Culture.



COMHCHOISTE PÓILÍNEACHTA CHATHAIR NA GAILLIMHE CRUINIÚ POIBLÍ

Beidh cruinniú poiblí de chuid Chomhchoiste Póilíneachta Chathair na Gaillimhe ar aoiú ag 7.00in Dé Máirt, 22ú Samhain 2022 in Óstán Connacht, Seanbhothar Bhaile Átha Cliath, An Rinn Mhór, Gaillimh, H91 K5DD.

Tá fáilte roimh an bpobal ar fad freastal ar an gcrúinniú poiblí seo. Chun freastal go pearsanta, ní mór duit do thinneamh a dheimhniú trí theagmháil a dhéanamh le Emma Johnston ar (091) 536358 nó ríomhphost a sheoladh chuig candc@galwaycity.ie faoin gCéadaoin, 9ú Samhain 2022.

Bunaíodh an Comhchoiste Póilíneachta faoi Acht an Gharda Síochána 2005 agus cuimsíonn sé baill den Gharda Síochána, Comhaltaí Tofa Chomhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe, Baill Oireachtais thar ceann Chathair na Gaillimhe, ionadaithe ón bpobal agus ón earráil dheonach agus oifigeach Chomhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe. Is í feidhm an Choiste ná feidhmiú mar fhóram le haghaidh comhairliúcháin, plé agus moltaí ar ábhair a bhaineann le póilíneacht cheantar Chathair na Gaillimhe.

Tá sé beartaithe go ndíreoidh an plé ag an gcuinniú seo ar na 4 aidhm straitéiseach mar atá leagtha amach i bPlan Straitéiseach Chomhchoiste Póilíneachta Chathair na Gaillimhe, ar féidir teacht air ag www.galwaycity.ie/jpc-meeting-downloads. Tá fáilte roimh bhaill den phobal freastal ar an gcrúinniú, a dtuairimí a chur in iúl agus ceisteanna a chur ar an goiste. Ba cheart gach ceist a bhaineann le póilíneacht ghinearálta Chathair na Gaillimhe a chur isteach i scríbhinn chuig:

Rúnaí an CCP, An Roinn Pobail agus Cultúir, Comhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe, Halla na Cathrach, Bóthar an Choláiste, Gaillimh, H91 X4K8 nó trí ríomhphost a chur chuig candc@galwaycity.ie

Ba cheart ceisteanna a bheith faighte i scríbhinn tráth nach déanai ná Dé Céadaoin 9ú Samhain 2022 agus caithfear ainm agus seoladh an duine atá ag cur na gceisteanna isteach a chur san áireamh, rud nach bhfoilseofar. Is féidir leo siúd a dteastaíonn socrúithe eile uathu chun ceisteanna a chur isteach dul i dteagmháil le (091) 536358.

Tabhair na fios le do thoil go mb'fhéidir nach ndéanfaid an Comhchoiste Póilíneachta ábhair a bhaineann le himscrúidí coiritiúl sonrach nó le hionchúiseamh nó ábhair a bhaineann le slándáil an Stáit a bhreithniú. Ina theannta sin ní bhreithneoidh an Comhchoiste Póilíneachta ábhair sna cúinsí seo a leanas:

- Chuirfeadh sé slándáil duine aonair amháin nó níos mó i mbaol.
- Baineann sé le duine aonair.
- Baineann sé le faisnéis a fhaigheann An Garda Síochána nó an t-údarás áitiúil faoi rún.
- Go ndéanfaid sé, nó gur dócha go ndéanfaid sé, dochar do chosc nó do bhrath coireachta nó do ghabháil nó ionchúiseamh ciontóirí.
- Ní dhéanfa daoine aonair a phlé ná a ainmniú. Caithfear cloí le ceart príobháideachta an duine aonair agus forálacha an Achta fán gCoinbhinsiún Eorpach um Chearta an Duine 2003.
- Meastar go ndéanann sé dochar d'ábhar oibriúcháin de chuid an Gharda Síochána.
- Moltar don phobal i gcúinsí áirithe, ar chúiseanna dlí, go mb'fhéidir nach mbeifear in ann an faisnéis a iarrtar a sholáthar.

Brian Barrett
A/Stiúthóir Seirbhísí, Tithíocht (seachas caipiteal), Géarchéim Dhaonnúil na hUcráine, Pobal, Forbairt Eacnamaíochta, Turasóireacht & Cultúr.