



April 26th 2009

Dear Valued Supporter,

I am writing to you in my role as Chair of Greyhound Rescue Wales after it has been drawn to my attention that some members of Greyhound Rescue Wales have been contacted by a Regional Representative who wanted to campaign regarding his personal concerns over a potential Greyhound Rescue Wales kennelling option.

Firstly, I'd like to clarify that Greyhound Rescue Wales works hard to ensure that its on-going success as one of the leading greyhound welfare charities is assured by having a unified, democratic and progressive team of valued volunteers. Everyone involved in Greyhound Rescue Wales feels very passionately about improving the lives of greyhounds and many volunteers dedicate a significant amount of their time in unpaid effort to meet this end. Unfortunately, this kind of passionate energy can occasionally be misdirected, which risks undermining the work of the organisation as a whole.

As Chair of Greyhound Rescue Wales, like other people in this role before me, I do my utmost to ensure all volunteers in whatever area, all work together to maximise the benefits to welfare. It is my regret, that in this instance, one volunteer acted outside his role's remit and I apologise for the upset this may have caused.

Secondly, I would like to take this opportunity to reassure greyhound lovers everywhere that welfare is at the forefront in everything we do in Greyhound Rescue Wales. We would never compromise on the welfare of any greyhound. Everyone involved in the organisation loves these dogs and works tirelessly to ensure that their welfare is protected on both a practical level and also at policy and governmental level. It is the excellent developments at these levels which leads us to seek more kennel space.

As a leading greyhound welfare organisation, we are working co-operatively with other national animal welfare organisations to pool resources and expertise to safeguard the future of hundreds of ex-racing dogs that may suddenly be 'unwanted' in the event of track closures. We do not want this fantastic development in partnership working for long-term greyhound welfare to be undermined by the actions of a well intentioned, but misguided personal campaign.

To reassure you further, before we make any decisions regarding where dogs are boarded for rehabilitation before we find them new homes we carry out full investigations using local knowledge from other welfare groups, Local Authority records and licencing reports. We undertake thorough investigative visits by Greyhound Rescue Wales volunteers themselves to ensure every welfare standard is met or exceeded.

All kennelling decisions are made by a skilled dedicated team who deal specifically with kennelling issues. Furthermore, these decisions are then scrutinised by the Executive Committee before being approved. I stress that no decision has yet been taken in respect of the kennels in question.

In addition, wherever we board our dogs, we have a set protocol of checks and balances including regular visits by Greyhound Rescue Wales volunteers to ensure best practice throughout the time the dog is in kennels. Greyhound Rescue Wales volunteers assess dogs regularly and introduce them to prospective new adopters, so that any concern, however small, gets noted very quickly and action is taken to ensure the highest standards of welfare at all times.

I would also like to address the concern you may have regarding how your contact details came to be used in this case. As a former Executive Committee member, the individual who contacted you, would have had access to certain data lists so that he can call on those who have nominated themselves to help as required with street collections, events etc. The misuse of this information is something we take very seriously and we shall be taking appropriate action.

As the structure of Greyhound Rescue Wales has developed significantly in the past couple of years, we have also taken this opportunity to review our data handling and usage to ensure your information is afforded every protection we can offer within our control.

I do hope this letter has gone some way to reassure you on every level about the integrity of Greyhound Rescue Wales and confirmed in your mind that welfare drives everything we do, from day-to-day practical dog care to national discussions regarding policy and regulation at the Welsh Assembly.

It is unfortunate that an individual's misguided good intentions have actually cost Greyhound Rescue Wales dearly to send out the correct, full and balanced situation to our members. We will continue to be transparent in our procedures and reasons behind all decisions made as an organisation. It is my hope this will ensure this incident will not jeopardise the longer term prospect for many greyhounds yet to come into our care.

I hope I can call on you for your continued and dedicated support of our work. Supporters like you are the very life blood that enables Greyhound Rescue Wales to achieve all it does. I would like to reassure you that we take great care and considerations to ensure every donated pound is spent to get the best welfare results for the greatest number of greyhounds. I hope you'll continue to participate in our events and fundraising activities, volunteer your valuable time whenever you can, and be proud to be a member of Greyhound Rescue Wales as we lead the way to a better future for greyhounds.

Kindest regards

Penny Hard

Chair of Greyhound Rescue Wales

To give them the life they deserve
Rhoi gwell bywyd iddynt

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