



PRESS RELEASE

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Government to Introduce DNA Fingerprinting for Dogs

HM Government of Gibraltar is preparing legislation that will require DNA fingerprinting of dogs. This is one of several wide-ranging changes to laws relating to the keeping of pets, and builds on the widely-welcomed recent introduction of compulsory microchipping of dogs.

Minister for the Environment, the Hon Dr John Cortes, has been meeting regularly with stakeholders including pet owners, the Gibraltar veterinary clinic, the RGP and the Environment Agency to discuss matters relating to pets, including the issue of dog fouling.

In relation to this, the Environment Agency has been working in schools to increase awareness of the dangers, and has been conducting joint patrols with the RGP in dog fouling hot-spots. CCTV cameras have also been deployed. These measures have resulted in less dog fouling in areas where there are such patrols or cameras – but irresponsible pet owners then just move elsewhere.

Other measures, such as posters designed by children and flagging up dog excrement, have also been carried out.

Unfortunately, as successful prosecutions are only possible if a dog owner is caught with the dog ‘in the act’, irresponsible owners know they can get away with it if they are not directly seen or caught on camera.

By introducing DNA fingerprinting it will be possible to identify the registered owner of the dog even a while after the event. Legislation is being revised to make the registered owner liable to prosecution and/or fine. It is expected that the new procedures will be effective within the next few months.

Minister for the Environment, the Hon Dr Cortes, said: “We have been working hard over the past couple of years to tackle the problem of dog fouling with some, but limited success. The cost of DNA fingerprinting has now drastically reduced and we are now able to introduce a system where offending dog owners will know they just cannot get away with this irresponsible and anti-social behaviour”.

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