

## ● SYMPATHISERS VOW TO BATTLE COUNCIL'S LATEST CLOSURE THREATS

# Fightback over animal sanctuary noise claim



■ **SUPPORTERS of the refuge gathered last week.**

By Brett Gibbons

PALMA

**O**FFICIALS at Palma's Centro Canino animal refuge are fighting back after council chiefs again threatened to close the sanctuary last week.

Palma City Council officers pounced on a gathering of the centre's supporters and issued a notice demanding the closure because of the alleged excessive noise from dogs housed in the former pig farm near Es Pilari.

However, sympathisers have retaliated and are taking their own noise level readings from around the centre and appealing to the courts for a last-minute stay of execution.

"It's all gone back to square one," said Centro Canino spokesperson Julie Ford.

"Just a handful of people who live near to the refuge claim that their sleep is interrupted by noise.

"But the readings were taken by the council at 11am when the dogs are out being exercised in the compound. The protestors say they can't sleep at night, but all the animals are housed in their pens so there is very little noise if there is any at all," she said.

Julie called the noise claims 'absurd' and accused

the protestors of deliberately trying to get the centre shut down. "These people are completely obsessed about it. They have lived there for years, but they had no complaints when it was an intensive pig farm. The reason we chose to move to Es Pilari was because of its relative isolation and the existing facilities it had to house animals," explained Julie.

"We do not cause any problems and the centre is a vast improvement on the pig farm. There are only about three people opposing the refuge and I wish they would leave us in peace," she said.

### EXPRESS THEIR SUPPORT

"It is in the hands of the courts again so we are taking our own measures because we do not agree with the findings of the council.

"We are gathering evidence and we will then let the courts decide the fate of the centre," claimed Julie.

"All the problems from the protestors and lack of co-operation from the council makes us more determined. It infuriates our supporters that these people can be so heartless. There is so much cruelty to animals in Majorca, so we have to do all we can to improve the lives of animals housed at the refuge," she

commented. Politicians from across Europe, including former UK Conservative Minister Ann Widdicombe and ex-BBC television presenter Selina Scott have been in touch with Centro Canino to express their support for the work of volunteers.

"It would be quite easy to sit back and allow the dogs to be mistreated and become homeless but we are not prepared to do so. The fight to protect the animals, who have harmed no-one, will continue," Julie explained.

Centro Canino also has hundreds of supporters across Majorca and Julie warned local politicians to take note of the strength of feeling about the refuge's problems.

"They should remember how sensitive people are towards animal cruelty and suffering. Meanwhile we are still doing everything we can to make sure that the animals housed at the refuge do not have to be moved.

"We would like it sorted because the uncertainty does not help anyone, least of all the animals," she added.

Centro Canino sympathisers are now waiting for a new ruling from a judge on the noise issue before they can resume their fight to obtain the necessary operating licences for the refuge.

## Palma vets discount for neutering

NEWS DESK

**A**BOUT 90 percent of veterinary clinics in Palma are supporting a cat and dog sterilisation campaign by offering a 20 percent discount on what they would normally charge for such an operation.

The main collaborators in the scheme are Palma City Council and the Balearic Official College of Veterinarians who have agreed on the need to control unbridled breeding. The campaign, which was presented yesterday by the City's Health Councillor, Begoña Sanchez, is the fourth in which the backing of veterinary surgeons has been sought. Up until the 8th April, clinics backing the



■ **VETS & councillors agreed the strategy.**

control programme, will be offering 20 percent off the fixed price for a neutering operation which can fluctuate between 100 euros in the case of cats and 200 euros for dogs. Palma's Animal Protection Centre at Son Reus picked up a total of 5,572 stray cats and dogs in 2007 but last year the number soared to 6,119. City Council sources said that the figures speak for themselves and that they have printed 2,000 posters to advertise the need to take measures to bring down the numbers of animals that end up on the streets with no-one to care for them. Neutering also stops the spread of gynaecological disease amongst stray cats and dogs.

The staff, students and parents of The Academy International School send their condolences and love to the family and friends of

**Ms. Hazel Stephen, Head teacher,**  
who sadly passed away on Sunday 8th March 2009.

Our thoughts are with them at this difficult time.

There will be a memorial service at The Academy on Wednesday at 3pm for staff, pupils, ex pupils and parents.

It is with great sadness that the family announces that on Sunday 8th March 2009

**Hazel Methven Stephen**

passed away, suddenly but peacefully, after a long and courageous battle.

Dearly loved Mother of Vicki,  
Dear Sister of Derek and Dale  
and a loving Aunt and Friend to many.

A funeral Service, to which all are welcome, will be held at Bon Sosec on Friday, March 13th at 5 p.m.

Family flowers only.  
Donations to: Sociedad Protectora de Animales