

Interview with Adrián Ruiz Codes, councillor for animal welfare in Teulada-Moraira.

Encouraged to see that more councils are giving animal welfare as a responsibility to specific councillors, we were curious to see what the title entail. How does a council view the problems in this area and what are their improvement plans?

To find out more we met up with Teulada-Moraira's first ever animal welfare councillor, Sr Adrián Ruiz Codes, over a coffee on a sunny March day in Teulada's Plaza de constitución.



It is early days Adrián told us, but they are working on several fronts to improve things. It is going to take time though as both public and governmental attitudes will not change overnight. The assigned budget of €29,000 per year is still very small compared to what needs to be done, and time and resources are also scarce. For example, Adrián himself is also responsible for larger areas such as tourism, commerce and occupation and sports. He has many things on his wish list long-term but for 2020 they will start initiatives such as managing of cat colonies (official feeders, maps and signs



asking people to not feed in the area, shelters etc.). Many people think feral cats could be left alone but there are areas with 30-50 cats which has contributed to poisoning cases being on the rise in Moraira as well Calpe and Benissa. Spanish people's attitudes to animals are behind the times but the 60% non-Spanish residents also add to the problem.

People returning to their original homes neither take their pets with them nor arrange for new homes, they just let them free thinking they will magically learn how to hunt for themselves. Spaying, castrating and microchipping is another area where awareness needs to improve.

Spanish traditions during fiestas is another thing Adrián would like to improve. Setting fire to bulls' horns and animal wellbeing during fiestas such as the Mercado Medieval.

Currently they are also searching for a veterinarian clinic that would be available 24/7. If police are called in the middle of the night because for example a dog has been run over, they have nowhere to take it. Many clinics offer 24/7 service but only for existing clients.



They would also love if charities could act quicker taking care of animals that have been handed in to the council. Often, they can be with the council for many days which they don't have facilities for.

Long-term he would also like to see a facility for more animals than dogs and cats. This as cows, goats, horses etc. are also abandoned or maltreated from time to time and in need of rescuing.

We thank Adrián for his time and encourage all animal charities to contact the equivalent councillor locally, to co-ordinate activities and share experiences. If your council have not yet appointed a “Concejal de Bienestar Animal”, try and lobby the council to do so.

¡Juntas podemos hacer la diferencia!

www.adoptapet.es

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Adrián Ruiz Codes