

## editorscomment

## Absolutely nuts!

AN ELDERLY couple feared they would be evicted from their home of 42 years – for feeding the birds! Whatever would Mary Poppins say?

According to press reports, Eric Goleby, 74, and his wife, Sally, have left mixed corn outside their bungalow in Hickling, Norfolk, for the four decades they have lived there.

But the housing trust that owns and manages the social housing, was apparently concerned because of damage allegedly caused to local vehicles by birds.

Eric was warned in a letter headlined 'anti-social behaviour case' that if he continued to feed wildlife they could face legal action, prosecution or even be evicted.

The resident, who cares for his disabled wife around the clock, said: "After living in Hickling all my life this really hurts. Feeding the birds as we do is not anti-social – far from it. It's a real privilege to be able to see the birds come here to feed."

The retired factory worker, who says he buys his bird feed from a pet shop in nearby Stalham, added: "Our lives would be bare without the birds. We have always fed them throughout the years because we love wildlife."

Common sense eventually prevailed and a spokesman for the housing trust conceded that the original letter to the couple was 'unnecessarily harsh' and emphasised that it had 'no problem at all' with residents feeding birds in their gardens.

Apart from the sheer lunacy of this incident, it highlights how important interacting with animals is to old people, both mentally and physically (see our report on page 26).

I DON'T know whether it's coincidence or a worrying trend, but this month's magazine carries an unprecedented number of reports about armed robberies from pet shops. Be aware!

FINALLY, with this issue you will have received the official PATS catalogue, produced for show organisers Impact by the team at pbwnews. If you're a retailer and haven't been to PATS before, it really is well worth a visit, providing the ideal opportunity to see practically all of the UK's pet product suppliers under one roof. Come and see us at Sandown Park on stand F5 in Surrey Hall.



Karen Pickwick

www.petbusinessworld.co.uk

# Supreme loses trademark battle with Mr Johnson's

**SUPREME Petfoods has lost a High Court battle against Henry Bell & Co over an allegation of trade mark infringement over the word 'supreme'.**

Delivering his judgment after the week-long hearing, the Honorable Mr Justice Arnold said Henry Bell (maker of the Mr Johnson's range of small animal foods) had NOT infringed the trade mark Supreme, both in its plain word and stylised form, for a number of reasons.

The High Court also held that three of Supreme Petfood's marks were invalidly registered, save in relation to small animal food.

Christopher Childs, managing director of Supreme Petfoods, told pbwnews: "While we were disappointed with the outcome of this case, the Judge did uphold all of our trade marks for Supreme in relation to small animal foods and this was a big positive for us. He said, however, that on this occasion he did not think that Henry Bell's activities infringed that trademark."

"This was obviously a decision on the facts of this present case and it would not prevent us pursuing other people who use our brand without permission."

"The Supreme corporate brand is a very well-known and respected name within the industry and is loved and trusted by retailers and consumers alike. We will continue to promote both our Selective range and the exciting new Tiny Friends Farm range of food, treats and bedding which in its first few weeks has broken all sales records at Supreme."

## REBRANDING

Supreme Petfoods had brought proceedings for trade mark infringement under the Trade Marks Act 1994, following the 2012 re-branding of Mr Johnson's.

Henry Bell contended, however, that its and its predecessor's use of the sign 'Supreme' amounted to 'honest concurrent use' and had done so for more than 20 years without causing confusion.

Thomas Lee, of Henry Bell, said: "I am astounded that this case had to go to the High Court in London simply to enable Mr Johnson's to continue doing what it has been doing for over 20 years, that is using the descriptive word 'supreme' on their packaging."

"Throughout the proceedings, several attempts were made to try and negotiate with Supreme Petfoods Limited in order to come to an amicable agreement and avoid the very costly expense of going to court but unfortunately that was not possible."

"We are very pleased with the outcome, it completely vindicated us and the decisions we took in 2012 to rebrand. As a family business we pride ourselves on our honesty and integrity and believe that the judgment and comments of the Honourable Mr Justice Arnold were true and fair."

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those in the industry who supported us and were prepared to speak on our behalf."

Supreme Petfoods is considering whether or not to appeal the decision.

## Retail chain bags £10,000 for charity

**CHANGE totted up from Pets Corner store collection pots plus 10p from every eco bag sold and additional donations from senior management have amounted to £10,000 for Canine Partners over the past year.**

**But it's not just donations that the fast-growing retail chain provides – Canine Partners dog owners receive a 10% discount and Pets**

**Corner staff brandish the Canine Partners logo on their uniforms to further pledge their support.**

**This year Canine Partners celebrates its 25th anniversary and so far has matched 530 disabled people with assistance dogs.**

**Dean Richmond, managing director at Pets Corner, said: "Canine Partners is a fantastic charity and we are delighted that our customers feel the same and give so generously to this worthy cause. Pets become a family member and a friend for many pet owners but for those living with disabilities, these dogs become a life-line."**

**Canine Partners is currently looking for volunteers to become puppy parents and take part in the early training of its dogs.**

**For more information visit [www.caninepartners.org.uk](http://www.caninepartners.org.uk)**



Canine Partners puppy Maisy

## Pet store robbed at gunpoint

**POLICE** are hunting a man who robbed a West Yorkshire pet shop armed with a handgun.

The bearded man escaped with 'a small amount' of cash from the till at the Pet Supplies store in Lee Green, Mirfield, at around 2.30pm on February 10. The suspect is described as a white man, in his late teens to early 20s, wearing a dark hooded top and dark grey scarf over his face.

Detective Constable Kris Roberts, of Kirklees CID, said: "We believe the man involved in this armed robbery may have been loitering around the shop shortly beforehand. We would urge anyone who believes they saw this man or who has information about his identity to call Kirklees CID on 101."

The area was sealed off as police and forensic experts were called to the shop.

Newsdesk 01234 714644 Sales & subscriptions 01234 714404 FAX 01234 714633 e-mail [info@pbwnews.com](mailto:info@pbwnews.com)