

# 'Justify hike in dog licence fee'

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Paws Animal Welfare Society of Malaysia (Paws) wants the Kulim Municipal Council to justify increasing the licence fee for dogs.

Paws Shelter manager Edward Lim said if the council wanted to raise the fee, it should provide benefits for the animals.

The council's licensing department has come up with a list of conditions for dog ownership.

All dog owners, except those with Rottweilers, German Shepherds, Dobermans, Bullmastifs, Bull Terriers and Perro De Presa Canario, are required to pay a RM50 licence fee per animal (non-neutered) or RM40 (neutered).

Each dog must also be vaccinated yearly at the Veterinary Services Department (VSD) at RM40 and a padded muzzle must be used on the dogs at all times.

Lim said the current fee was RM20 in the Klang Valley, and RM10 in Penang.

"For the amount of money that owners have to fork out yearly, it's only fair that the council helps by contributing to the dog's welfare."

Lim said while the advantage of enforcing these conditions meant that all dogs would be vaccinated and taken care of, it was not right for the council to only acknowledge the VSD for vaccinations.

"This implies that other clinics are unqualified to supply immunisation to pets," said Lim, adding that the government should come up with more clinics for neutering besides those recognised by the VSD.

Dogs, he said, should not be victimised when it came to pet licensing and the new rules could result in more strays as many owners might be tempted to abandon their dogs.

"The council should help to curb the problem of strays," he said, and called for a neutering rate subsidy which would encourage more to neuter their pets.

Isuru Sirisinghe, 20, who has a one-year old English Beagle called Milo, said if dog owners could afford to take care of a pet properly, a licence fee should not be much by comparison.

The fifth-year medical student, however, said the payment should be a one-off, as the amount would add up to a hefty sum over the years.

"But I think the council should give neutering discount to those who adopt pets from animal shelters."

He added it would be inconvenient if all dog owners had to obtain their dog licence with the VDS, instead of their preferred reg-



*The Paws Animal Welfare Society of Malaysia says if the Kulim Municipal Council wanted to raise the fee, it should provide benefits for the animals. Pic by Mokhsin Abidin*

istered clinic.

Deepak Sidhu, 21, the owner of two dogs, a Golden Retriever and a Miniature Pincher, said the conditions made owning a dog very tedious.

"The new licence fee is exorbitant compared to what others in Malaysia are paying," he said, adding that owners should have a say in where they wanted to vaccinate their pets.