



## **The John Chadwick Pet Policy – a Landmark in Housing Policy**

The Society for Companion Animal Studies (SCAS) applauds the outstanding and determined efforts of Dee Bonett who successfully advocated for this policy, John Littlemore, Head of Housing, who recommended it to the Council, and the councillors of Maidstone Borough Council who then voted to enact the John Chadwick Pet Policy.

Pet keepers in Maidstone will no longer be deemed to be making themselves “intentionally homeless” if they reject a home that prohibits pets, due to the tireless work of Dee Bonett.

In 2017 John Chadwick, a man with vulnerable mental health, required temporary housing from his local authority as his rental home tenancy came to an end. The flat he was offered by Maidstone Borough Council did not allow pets. Therefore, John had to choose between keeping his two wee Jack Russell terriers and kitten or having a roof over his head. If he rejected the flat, he would be “making himself intentionally homeless”. Sadly, this is the situation throughout the UK.

What a terrible situation. A stark choice – being safe, or being on the streets with one’s companion animals? No-one should be put in this egregious position.

John moved into the flat and bereft of his companions, was lost to suicide 10 days later. John’s good friend Dee Bonett has tirelessly raised awareness about the need to change housing policy to help prevent such tragedies.

Maidstone Borough Council introduced a pilot policy in 2020 that allowed pet owners to reject their first offered accommodation if this did not permit pets. Due to the success of the pilot, the Council then enacted the John Chadwick Policy. Their pet keeping tenants are no longer be deemed to have made themselves “intentionally homeless” if they refuse the first home offered if this does not permit pets.

**Following this landmark decision, we trust that other Local Authorities will also adopt the John Chadwick Pet Policy.**

**Dr Elizabeth Ormerod, BVMS CF  
Chairman of The Society for Companion Animal Studies**

