

# NOTTS & DERBY DISTRICT STAFFORDSHIRE BULL TERRIER CLUB



You, Your Staffordshire Bull Terrier

&

The Dangerous Dogs Act

Some information to help you deal with situations which may arise. If you encounter any problems please contact the club secretary, Helen Reaney (01543 684422) email [helen.reaney@btinternet.com](mailto:helen.reaney@btinternet.com). Alternatively contact us on our web site – [www.nddsbtc.co.uk](http://www.nddsbtc.co.uk) or any NDDSBTC committee member.

VZ.08/2009

There has been considerable media and public attention regarding the rapid growth in the numbers of so called 'status dogs' on our streets in the last few years. Irresponsible dog ownership is largely to blame for problems caused when dogs are used as fashion accessories or weapons as part of the urban sub-culture. The use of 'Pit Bull Type' dogs has reached worrying epidemic proportions.

The Staffordshire Bull Terrier is the 5th most popular dog in the UK and therefore owners must promote all that is good about our beloved breed. It's friendly nature, loyalty and solid stoic temperament make it such a wonderful pet. Whenever you have the opportunity you should promote the virtues of the breed.

You will encounter those people who have a pre-conceived idea about the SBT and their prejudices may be difficult to overcome, however do not be drawn into any arguments. The only way to deal with negativity is to demonstrate by your actions that SBT owners are responsible and caring people. When you are out in public it is always wise to keep your dog on a lead and under control. (This is a **legal requirement of all breeds** of dogs). If your dog is not happy around other dogs, ensure that it is kept on a lead at all times. No SBT should be aggressive with people. If you are at all concerned about your dog's behaviour, seek professional advice.

Your dog may be trustworthy but should problems arise, it may be that your dog will be held accountable and under these circumstances would come under the remit of the DDA. Fewer incidents of SBT's involved in altercations will, hopefully in time, have the effect that the prejudices some people may have, are examined and everyone will have a better appreciation /understanding of these loyal companions.

## PLEASE REMEMBER - WE ARE ALL AMBASSADORS OF OUR GREAT BREED

In response to the meteoric rise in the number of banned dangerous dogs in the UK, the Metropolitan Police formed the 'Status Dog Unit' (SDU) in early 2009. The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 refers to **Pitbull Terrier Type, Dogo Argentino Type, Fila Brazilia Type and Japanese Tosa Type**. The important thing here is to recognize the word 'Type'.

The Dangerous Dogs Act **should not** affect the majority of Staffordshire Bull Terrier Owners but there are some important facts to be aware of:

### How might I become in contact with the Status Dog Unit? (SDU)

The Status Dog Unit is obliged to investigate when or if:

1. Should your dog stray and then be placed into an RSPCA centre or handed into a Dog Warden. They will report the incident to the **SDU** if they have any suspicions of the dog being of a banned breed type.
2. If you are confronted by a Police Officer who is suspicious that your dog may be of a banned breed type, or is of any type or breed that appears to be 'dangerously out of control in a public place'. This offence is aggravated if the dog injures a person whilst out of control. The SDU will then be called in to assess the dog.

### What is the Procedure Relating To the Seizure of Any Dog?

If a Police Officer makes the assessment that your dog is banned under the DDA and decides to seize it, **you must allow** the Official to remove the dog – failure to do so means you could be arrested under public disturbance and obstructing justice laws.

You are **NOT required by Law and NOR should you sign over control** of your dog. If you are in any doubt seek urgent advice from Stafford Welfare as only a court decision can determine the eventual outcome involving the future of any dog. You are entitled to be informed of the name of the Police Officer dealing with the impending case.

An Officer from the Status Dog Unit will make an assessment of your dog and if **he decides** that it is in fact a Staffordshire Bull Terrier, the dog will be returned to you at the earliest convenience.

**Should the DSDU Officer** decide that the dog is in fact of a 'Pit bull type' the dog will be removed and placed in kennels under section 1 of the DDA.

If the SDU Officer believes that the dog **has not** been used in the process of criminal activity or been used protecting the assets of crime and you are deemed a responsible owner he will apply to the courts to place the dog on the 'Index of Exempt Dogs under 4b of the DDA 1997 amendment'.

Your dog will be neutered (regardless of the fact it may be a CC winning stud dog or your loving family pet), tattooed and or micro-chipped, the full cost to be met by the SDU. You will be obligated to ensure that the **dog is muzzled** in a public place and is never, whilst in public, under the care/control of a Minor.

Your dog will require valid insurance and the insurer **must be** made aware of the dog's **IED, (Index of Exempt Dog)** status, you will receive an exemption certificate valid for the remainder of the life of the dog. You will have to notify IED of any changes to your circumstances such as a change of address and upon the death of the said dog.

The certificate relates to a specific dog and is not transferable. A Police Officer or Dog Warden may ask for the certificate to be produced on request, to which request you must adhere. Failure to comply with any of the requirements will mean you are in breach of a court order and therefore liable to further prosecution.

This process should take approximately 21 days from the time of Application by the SDU and your dog will remain in kennels until the completion of the process. The SDU do **NOT** accept KC registration papers, DNA profiling or the opinion of a Championship Show judge as proof that your dog is a SBT.

The remaining action left open to you is to take the case to court. A date will be set, the SDU Officer will appear as the prosecutions expert witness and the onus will be on you to find your own expert witness. This is where KC papers, DNA profiling and micro-chipped dogs may prove to be invaluable evidence to counter the argument put forward by the SDU. The fate of your dog **will be decided by the court** and at the time of writing, the timescale for this course of action is not known. However **your dog will remain** in kennels until the matter is resolved by the court.

We have been reliably informed that the Metropolitan Police **do not** intend to hold a Dangerous Dogs Amnesty for Pit Bull Type Dogs, such as the Amnesty held in Merseyside two years ago. We are also informed that both **Birmingham** and **Manchester** Police Forces have formed Status Dog Units, with other regional forces expected to follow suit.

### A couple of points for you to consider and hopefully act upon

#### **Control of Dogs Act 1992.**

**At all times in Public Places** your dog must wear a collar with a tag showing your name and address on it. Failure to do so could result in your dog being seized by the Local Authority. You would then be liable to face prosecution and be fined up to £5000 if you are found guilty. If your dog does go astray or missing and you are subsequently notified by a Dog Warden that it has been found and placed in care you must respond within 7 days or the dogs returned to you. Failure to do so would mean you would no longer be the legal owner of the dog and would have no further claim to the dogs ownership.

**Animal Welfare Act 2006.** All the relevant information is contained in the Clubs Code of Ethics which all members are expected to abide by.

#### **Breed Council's Official statement on Breed specific legislation:**

We oppose the entire principle of breed specific legislation believing that this deflects the debate about Public Safety away from human and dog behaviour, focusing instead on appearance.

Where breed specific legislation is imposed by the Government, we reserve the right to explain why the Staffordshire Bull Terrier should not be proscribed.

*This is very real, your dog could be the next one on death row.*

*Please be a responsible owner don't allow your dog to get loose from your garden, adhere to the Control of Dogs Act 1992 and look after our breed.*