



Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel

Draft Dogs Law (Jersey) Amendment Regulations 202-

Witness: Comité des Connétables

Friday, 24th October 2025

Panel:

Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (Chair)

Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South (Vice-Chair)

Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement

Connétable D. Johnson of St. Mary

Witnesses:

Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade, Chairman, Comité des Connétables, and Assistant Minister for the Environment

Ms. S. Parkin, Secretary, Comité des Connétables (1)

Ms. S. de Gruchy, Secretary, Comité des Connétables (2)

Ms. S. Ramos, Chief States Veterinary Officer

[09:12]

Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (Chair):

Welcome to this hearing of the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel, specifically looking at the Dog Law Amendments. Today is 24th October 2025 and we have Connétable Mike Jackson, who is the Chair of the Comité des Connétables, to talk to us today about the Dog Licence and the Dog Law Amendments. I would like to draw everyone's attention to the following. This hearing will be filmed and streamed live. The recording and transcript will be published afterwards

on the States Assembly website. Please ensure all electronic devices are switched to silence. I would like to ask that any members of the public who have joined us in the room to not interfere with the proceedings. Also, before we do introductions, I would just like for those who are maybe listening online and in the room, that though we have scheduled this hearing to finish at 10.15 a.m., we will have to finish a little earlier because of the Bailiff's swearing in, we need to be in the States Chamber for 10.00 a.m. So we hope we can get through all the questions, Connétable, before 10.00 a.m. So I hope that our questions and the answers can be as concise as possible. So I would like to start by introductions. My name is Deputy Hilary Jeune and I am the Chair of the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel.

Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South (Vice-Chair):

Deputy Tom Coles, Vice-Chair.

Connétable D. Johnson of St. Mary:

Constable David Johnson, a panel Member.

Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:

Deputy Alex Curtis, panel Member.

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

Mike Jackson, Chair of Comité des Connétables.

Secretary, Comité des Connétables (2):

Sue de Gruchy, Secretary to the Committee.

Chief States Veterinary Officer:

Susana Ramos, Chief States Veterinary Officer.

Secretary, Comité des Connétables (1):

Sarah Parkin, Secretary for the Committee as well.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you very much. So, Connétable, please, can you start by explaining why the Committee has brought forward these amendments to the Dogs Law 1961 at this time and what issues they are intended to address?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

Well, first of all, just to answer that question, there has been a change in legislation in the U.K. (United Kingdom) and it seemed correct that we follow it. So I am going to ask Susana just to expand on that particular issue.

Chief States Veterinary Officer:

Do you want me to start or do you want to?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

Well, if you can just talk about the reasons.

Chief States Veterinary Officer:

So the idea of, regarding, the bit regarding dangerous dogs is to implement conditions for dogs of this type that already are living in Jersey. And we know that there is a number already in Jersey. And what we are trying to do is prevent any serious incidents from happening in Jersey involving these types of dogs.

[09:15]

And the reason why we are worried about this type of dogs at the moment is that they do have a higher ability to cause a bigger impact when they bite. So they can cause serious injury in people and they are really hard to remove once the incident has started. We started by requiring an amendment to the Customs Law to try to avoid any more dogs to enter the Island. But because we know we have dogs in the Island, we feel we need to do something to prevent any future incidents with the dogs we already have in.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I do not know if you want to add anything else?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

In terms of, would you add to that?

Secretary, Comité des Connétables (2):

Well, as the States Veterinary Officer said, in 2006, controls were imposed for import and export licences on a certain number of breeds. It was the XL bully that was added in 2024. But that has been the only control in terms of an import or export licence. But we know that there are those dogs here and there are no other controls on them being out in the public domain. So this is intended to address that and to register those dogs and to impose conditions.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Did you consult upon these? I understand that what you are saying is that the evidence has originated from the fact that the U.K. has done those changes and you feel that you need to do that in Jersey as well. But was there any consultation that has been an engagement process in Jersey on this issue?

Chief States Veterinary Officer:

We did not consult directly on these issues, but it is not just U.K.. A lot of other countries have very similar legislation. France is an example. We are not saying that we are only doing this because we are following the U.K. We are doing this because it is a real concern for us. So, as we said, in the U.K., England and Wales, in 2023, after 16 fatalities caused by dogs, more than half were caused by XL bully type dogs. So, I think instead of waiting for something like that happening in Jersey, we have the opportunity to act to prevent situations like this from happening.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Of course, in the Dogs Law, there are other elements, not just inserting about dangerous dogs, why was that not also deemed at this moment to consult on that and see if there were other elements that needed to be changed within the Dogs Law?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

I think, in truth, we have consulted obviously with the Comité and that has cascaded down to parishioners who have interest in the matter. It has been quite clear, and it is outlined in the Children's Rights Impact Assessment, that we do have to move. The delays to date have effectively allowed breeding of XL bully dogs in the Island, whereas we had 4 at the start of the conversation, we have got significantly more now. There is always a risk of crossbreeding, which is of concern. It might be for you, Sarah, just to speak to the rationale.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I think what we are talking about is that there are other amendments within the Dog Law that do not just affect those who have dangerous, or the definition of dangerous dogs. There are other elements that the Comité has done amendments for that affect all dog owners. But of course there are other elements that have not necessarily been reviewed. So that the question is, why were there some amendments that have been?

Secretary, Comité des Connétables (2):

I think maybe you are relating to the information on the collar and dog tag specifically. That was one area. That was raised by a dog owner in terms of personal data that is displayed at the moment because the dog tag has to include the owner's name and address. As we are all more concerned

now with data protection, the view was taken that perhaps address no longer needs to be on there. It has been a requirement since 1961 because that was the easiest way to return a lost dog to its owner because there was an address. Most people in those days did not have a telephone. Telephone number was added as a requirement on the dog tag in 2016 when amendments were done in relation to dogs dangerously out of control. But nothing further has been done in relation to the other personal data. So this was an opportunity to say perhaps we should bring that up to date and by including the dog licence number, which is now a fixed number for that dog, it would be possible for the parish to find the address.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

So that licence number is going to be fixed permanently to that dog. So previously with getting a licence, it used to be a piece of paper came through and it might have had a number at the top.

Secretary, Comité des Connétables (2):

Absolutely, 2 years ago the parishes worked together to introduce a new dog licence scheme, which is available online with a very high take up online, very popular. That allots a serial number to the licence and to the dog, so that dog licence number is fixed for that dog.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

And a chip number can be applied to that licence as well.

Secretary, Comité des Connétables (2):

So we can record the microchip number in the database. We have not gone down the route in Jersey of compulsory microchipping. The reason the U.K. introduced that was for a different reason. It does not have a licence scheme and it was found that the charities and local authorities were spending millions on stray dogs each year, having to house them because they could not identify the owner. Hence, they brought in compulsory microchipping. We have not got that problem here. We have perhaps had 100 stray dogs a year, but they are normally reclaimed within 24 hours because the owners have just lost them rather than being stray. So the Committee did previously consider whether we should introduce compulsory microchipping, but decided it was not needed in Jersey because we do not have that problem with the stray lost dogs.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Maybe just coming back, because you mentioned that it was because a particular dog owner had raised their concerns. Was there an idea then, because that obviously was one particular concerned individual, but maybe others have other concerns with the Dog Law, and was it not deemed that maybe there should be that wider consultation to understand how people interact with the Dog Law

before doing amendments? Because that seemed a very particular issue. Was there not a decision, you know, was there a decision to specifically not do consultation to widen that review?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

There are a lot of dog owners in the Island. What the numbers are, probably 10,000.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

We have got 10,000 here.

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

So it is a lot of people. I do not think there are any particular coordination groups. Obviously, there are vets who the Veterinary Officer will be in touch with on a regular basis. The practicality side was one thing that was paramount in our minds. Now, effectively, the Law said you had to have the full name of dog, name, address and telephone number.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I was just talking about the Dog Law as a whole, so not just the collar, because we have a Dog Law that is from 1961. There have been some amendments, as you mentioned before, going back a bit, 2016, I think. Now, we are doing a bit more amendments, mainly focussing on dangerous dogs, but there have been tweaks to other elements of the Articles and we are just wanting to understand that those tweaks seem to have come because of certain members of the public mentioning and raising those concerns. I was wondering why the Committee did not open that up so that other members, instead of it being, it feels, ad hoc, why was there not an opening up to a wider consultation to really understand if there are other elements of the Dog Law that needed to be amended at this time?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

We are receptive to any suggestions that there may be other changes needed, but we are not conscious of any having been made, and we have been very open about making those changes all the way along, which have been going on for some time now. I suppose it is the process of a States consultation; one has to try to establish what the ultimate desire is in terms of what one might ask the general public. But we have had some good feedback on the basis of what has been put out so far, which I am quite content with.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

We, of course, as a Committee, have been looking at the kind of spread of legal frameworks around dogs, and this goes across the Dogs Law, Animal Welfare Law, policing of beaches, parks regulations. Do you feel, Connétable, that this has become a bit over-complex with the amount of laws that touch on dogs and dog owners?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

I think you are probably right. The issue of this and the Animal Welfare Law has become, I suppose, conflated in some ways, or can be perceived as being conflated. Although when you get down to the nitty-gritty of it, it is not. We are proposing to, in conjunction with the Environment Department, to review the Animal Welfare Law, so that will be done.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Finally, on my questions, have you worked to ensure that there is not any gaps or inconsistencies between this kind of framework of different laws that cover dogs? Have you done an analysis and been able to ensure that, where there potentially could be gaps within this current Dog Law, that it will be picked up in the Animal Welfare Law, or there needs to be amendments maybe to the other Laws around beaches and parks regulations; has there been that kind of work and how do you ensure that there is no gaps?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

I think it is fair to say that we have identified where the Animal Welfare Law needs to change. I know the Constable of St. Mary has issues with regard to the management of dog walkers. That comes into the animal welfare side of it, rather than a dangerous dogs element. So we are conscious of that. With regard to dog walking on beaches and the seasonality of that, that is always, as you will be aware, a contentious issue, which we discuss every year at the Comité to decide whether we stay with the existing laws on that, the May to September laws. So these are, I suppose, reviewed every year, depending on the mood of the public at the time. But generally we tended to remain with the status quo, because that has been the message that has come across to us. Would you have anything to add on that, Sue?

Secretary, Comité des Connétables (2):

No, I think the other thing was that the main purpose of this amendment was to deal with the dangerous dogs. There was a certain urgency to deal with that. So while there was the opportunity to put a couple of little bits in, the collar one being one that had been raised, I think we were all hoping that the dangerous dog side of it would have been prepared much quicker. Therefore, a more formal consultation was not considered or factored in, because we were concerned to manage the dangerous dogs.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Okay, thank you.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Picking back up on the collars, obviously the provision is changing with these new requirements. So there is now going to be a level 2 fine of up to £1,000 as an appropriate response to the cases of non-compliance. But if we are not tying in chipping, if a dog is without a collar or without ID, how is this going to be enforceable?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

As Sue mentioned, the consideration of microchipping, which we did not feel was justified over here, it could be, but we do not feel that there is the need in terms of the experience from the U.K. that we need to follow that. Yes, you are right that there are times when dogs slip their collars, and a number of dogs are as a result of that. But it is surprising the evidence is not there that indicates that those dogs are completely abandoned. There was one relatively recent one.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

This is about the non-compliance of people who are out walking their dogs without a lead, without a collar, without a harness, and without that identification, because that is still a problem over here. It is supposed to be that dogs are on the leads within the ring road or against the side of the road, but people still do not do this.

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

Coming back from the police, that is not evidence they have put through to us at all. In each of the parishes, we have a monthly police meeting where all that sort of commentary comes through, and there has been nothing coming through about dogs wandering without leads. I cannot speak for St. Helier, but certainly in my parish, and the Constable of St. Mary will comment about his. Dogs tend to have a collar. They slip out from home very often, might escape from their confined situation. But generally speaking, they are picked up on that basis.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

But I think it is not really the collar that is the issue. It is the tag, is it not, that has the information?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

Yes, the tag on the collar, sometimes the ...

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Yes, and is there any moments where the police or the Honoraries take it to look to see if the dogs have that particular identification (ID) on them?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

They have 2 opportunities, if you like. Yes, they can look at the collar, look at the tag on the collar, look at sometimes the collar will have an engraved plate. They have a microchip reading tool for those dogs that are microchipped, and they usually find the owners pretty quickly, I have to say. Going back to the tags and the reason for the step back from the full name and address is a matter of space. If you get a small dog, and I have experience of this, the size of a tag on a small dog's collar will be the size of a penny. Now, there is a number of limited amount of information you can put on that in all practicality, so it seems sensible to use the number within the existing registration scheme, which we recently developed, which has got all the information on it. By reading that number, which is about the same length in digital terms as a mobile telephone number, it seemed a logical way to go forward.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

So it is going to be a 10-digit number on the licence?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

It might have the phone number on one side and the digital number on the other.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

So can I just ask on that then, if a person finds a dog and manages to secure the dog in their car or in their home, and they need to find the owner, they would then have to phone a parish hall, and that parish hall will be able to give that? How will they then phone the owner to say who that the person is, instead of directly seeing the number and then being able to phone the owner directly?

[09:30]

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

The duty Centeniers would have access to the poodle system, as we call it, so that that can be quickly identified. So they will have the out-of-hours access as well as the parish officers having the daytime access to it.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

So can I confirm then, so you said these were like little minor amendments while doing the dangerous dogs part, so there has been no further consideration about reviewing the existing dog licencing scheme as a whole, just these small little elements?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

Yes.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

There is a question as well, it has been mentioned about the fee, that there is a change in the Draft Law about order-making powers for the Minister for the Environment to the prescribed fee for registering dogs, for the dog licence, which is then paid to the parish.

Secretary, Comité des Connétables (2):

No, it is for the registration of a dangerous dog, so when the dangerous dog scheme comes in and it has to be registered with the States Veterinary Officer, the Minister for the Environment could set a fee to register a dangerous dog that is separate from the annual dog licence fee, which still goes to the parish.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Okay, but the ability to change that fee, is that set? Because there has been talk, and I thought I read it in the amendments, that there is a point by the Minister may by order adjust the licence fee.

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

You are talking about the dangerous dog bit or the parish bit?

Deputy T.A. Coles:

I just saw it as the licence fee. It did not say the licence for a dangerous dog.

Secretary, Comité des Connétables (2):

It is the licence fee for the dangerous dog that the Minister for the Environment would set, the Comité des Connétables would set the fee for the dog licence, the annual dog licence.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

But is that fee staying the same?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

At the moment, there is a bit of do not know in terms of the numbers, but there will be a requirement for dangerous dogs to be separately inspected by the Veterinary Officer.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

But your average, everyday dog?

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

The licence fee will be the same in January; there will be no change. Just finally coming back to that collar, the economic impact, was that assessed in the changes that will be made? At the moment

in the current amendments it says that all dog owners will have to change their collar by February. Has there been an economic impact assessment?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

We reviewed that, I picked up on a couple of comments that were made. So, that was one of the reasons for deferring the amendment so that we could amend it to change the Regulation to apply only to new dogs registered after 1st February, I think we said, was it not?

Secretary, Comité des Connétables (2):

Well, for any dog registered where the first licence is purchased after the amendments come through, or if the owner's name or address or phone number changes, then that would be the point to apply the new information to the tag, because you would have to change the address anyway. If you happen to replace your collar badge or plate, then that would be a logical point to put the new information on it. So, yes, that is the amendment.

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

There is no change for existing dog owners at all.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

That is the line that says that a collar also meets the requirements if it was created before 1st February 2026. So that allows those who do not replace it to continue, is that correct?

Secretary, Comité des Connétables (2):

Yes, and in fact there is a further amendment the Committee is looking at to lodge by Tuesday, which would enable the current collars and tags to continue if the owner wishes to. They can change it if they wish, but they can keep it until such time as they do change an address, for example.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Moving to one of the other small elements that is not to do with dangerous dogs in the Dogs Law Amendment is Article 9, which amends worrying of livestock by dogs. Specifically, it inserts a few clauses, but they are around damage to land. Would it be possible to outline why the amendments in Article 9 regarding livestock worrying have been brought?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

Can you speak to that?

Chief States Veterinary Officer:

Yes, so currently there is a lot of concerns about dogs being walked in agricultural land where livestock is being raised. There is the link between dog excrement and cattle and potential transmission of disease. So the idea behind that one was try to break the link between the dog and the livestock when dogs are walked very close to livestock. So, it was more about preventing disease than the physical damage to land.

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

So, I mean, to be quite frank, we will amend that in this proposed amendment because, personally, I felt that the definition of damage to land was a little bit too loose and I think we had this discussion. So, there are concerns from farmers and there was particularly one I know from the Constable of Grouville who referred to an incident whereby a crop that was supplied to a supermarket was rejected on the basis of being contaminated by dog faeces. So, there has to be a degree of responsibility held by the dog owner on agricultural land.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Is it possible to update the panel1 on that, it sounds like some consultation after the lodging of the Law has come in, or at least feedback. Could you just briefly summarise maybe a little more what the amendment will do to change the wording of the Law to tighten it up to achieve the aims that you plan with livestock worrying?

Secretary, Comité des Connétables (2):

I think the suggestion the Constable said is that perhaps to remove that amendment to Article 9 at this point and to have a wider review of the issues and consider what could be done and what might need to be done. The introduction of the damage to agricultural land concept was specifically linked to it being a hazard to the health of animals. So, it was all about the livestock and worrying as the States Vet has said. It may well be that we could look at that in a wider context and the Constables are going to.

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

I think there was reference to sheep on the north coast being worried by dogs, but we are trying to get to a better definition, and the advice that came from the Law Drafters took us to this point. But I think we will need to dig a bit deeper and to try to get a finite view of that. So, should we say the Centeniers, the Honorary Police who may have to charge, have got the proper vires or boundaries in which they can properly do it.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

So, should Members be expecting that when we debate this later in the year or whenever this comes before the Order Paper that the provisions to do with livestock worrying being expanded will not form

part of it? So, Article 9 in its form will not come forward and perhaps the debate will not have any amendments to Article 9; is that the current plan?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

That could well be. You might find, there are 2 elements, one is animal welfare. If dogs are worrying, shall we say, sheep or cattle on land, that is more likely to be an Animal Welfare Law, whereas if it is damaging land in terms of faeces on agricultural land, that is probably a different channel which we will have to follow. Would you have any further thoughts, Susana, on that?

Chief States Veterinary Officer:

Yes, we have discussed this. There is certain things we can certainly consider under the Animal Welfare Law, but again it has to go within the spirit of the law. The current draft has a number of possibilities that could be created by order, but it cannot create orders that are not directly under animal welfare or do not go within the spirit of animal welfare. So, while we work and are considering a part of an order potentially looking at the responsibility of dog owners, it has to be something that is directly connected to welfare or preventing welfare damage. So we are certainly considering that, but there may be more that could be done with a review of the Dogs Law in the future.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Of course, the Dogs Law has already the worrying of livestock by dogs within it. So in a way that is where it logically should be sitting in any amendments done in those elements, it has to really be in the Dog Law because it is already an Article in there.

Secretary, Comité des Connétables (2):

Yes. In terms of P.63, the amendments the Committee is looking to put in by Tuesday would be to remove the amendments to Article 9. So if that amendment to the proposition is accepted, then there would not be any extension of Article 9 at this point, in relation to damage to land.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

But with the understanding that you will come back.

Secretary, Comité des Connétables (2):

With the understanding that the Committee ...

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Yes, and is it currently expected though that the requirements to address the wider damage by dogs to agricultural land or the products created on it would still live in the Dogs Law and so would be within the purview of the Comité and not necessarily a Minister?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

Indeed, yes. As you know, I wear 2 hats, so I am ducking between the 2.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. We will move on to dangerous dogs.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

I mean, you referred to a draft Animal Welfare Law. I appreciate that P.63 is primarily focused on dangerous dogs. But to make sure that the 2 run hand in hand almost, where are we in the overall scheme of things about the presentation of a draft Animal Welfare Law?

Chief States Veterinary Officer:

The draft Animal Welfare Law is very close to finishing, and I think we share the latest version yesterday or the day before. Our intention is to have it ready to lodge for the December debate. But it is out of my hands at the moment. But that is still the hope and intention. It may not happen, but I am still hopeful.

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

Is this all with the Law Drafters?

Chief States Veterinary Officer:

It is with L.O.D. (Law Officers' Department).

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

Yes, okay.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Sorry, another point I would have raised later, will that cover the aspect of professional dog walkers?

Chief States Veterinary Officer:

So the law itself does not cover the ...

The Connétable of St. Mary:

That we know, yes.

Chief States Veterinary Officer:

Yes, it does not cover it. So the Animal Welfare Law itself is quite broad and looks at all the species, all the general kind of concepts. Again, it is the ability to then do an order for licencing that would then have the licence activities on it, which will include the licencing of dog walkers. But that should come quite closely after.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

But this is professional dog walkers?

Chief States Veterinary Officer:

Professional dog walkers, yes. Because that is the ones we are going to licence. We cannot licence everyone that walks a dog I am afraid.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Okay, so that would then, we have no need to deal with it in this Law, is what I am getting at.

Chief States Veterinary Officer:

Yes, yes. The professional dog walkers will be dealt with. So the requirement to licence professional dog walkers will come under the licencing order under the Animal Welfare Law.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

And their code of conduct will be covered?

Chief States Veterinary Officer:

There is already a code of conduct for dog walkers, but it will be tightened up and reviewed.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Okay, going back to the general question, I think you already defined this. The current Law and the amendments are based on the principle that it is the dogs themselves that can be deemed dangerous rather than the owners. You are just following the U.K. approach on that, I take it; is that right?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

Effectively, yes. I mean, I am not saying ...

Chief States Veterinary Officer:

It is not just the dogs are dangerous. I think what we are saying is that these dogs have the ability to cause bigger harm, okay, because of the way they are bred and because of their physiology, strength and ability to bite. So it is more about the impact of a bite. So, yes, any dog can be

potentially dangerous. We can go to the extreme of seeing a chihuahua, it probably sometimes behaves in a more uncontrolled way than an XL bully. But, you know, a chihuahua is unlikely to kill you and an XL bully, it has been proved that can. I think that is the point.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

If I really get it, the framework as we are now discussing is based on the breed of dog, et cetera.

Chief States Veterinary Officer:

The type, so XL bully is not a recognised breed and that is another difficulty. So the definition is based on the way the dog presents, the size of the head, et cetera, et cetera.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Yes. So the alternative way of looking at it is to say: "Owners, you are responsible for making sure that a dog does not act dangerously." So you are convinced that your approach is the right one rather than focusing on the owners?

Chief States Veterinary Officer:

This is quite a contentious issue. I am not convinced that there is a right answer. But I think that, with the evidence and the stuff we have at the moment, I think it is the best approach we can do at the moment. The other thing as well is it is very difficult to licence, are you going to licence every dog owner? Are you going to inspect, train, you know, have controls on any dog owners for everyone that owns a dog? That is really, really difficult to achieve. So what we are trying to do here is to do something pragmatic that we think can have a significant effect on reducing the risk.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Leading on from that, there has been a petition opposing 3 specific measures which you are aware of. What engagement has the Comité undertaken with those who have signed this petition or are involved in this petition?

Secretary, Comité des Connétables (1):

If I may, just joining up with the question before. These are not new measures. These have been implemented in other countries such as France, U.K., this is nothing new. Other countries are doing it.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

It may not be new elsewhere, but for Jersey it is.

Secretary, Comité des Connétables (1):

Yes. If we do not do anything in terms of the breeding, the restrictions, we allow those dogs to continue and to come to Jersey. This is in terms of the muzzling, the lead, these are all safety measures for the greater good of the public. I would just like to reinforce that, which has been shown from the C.R.I.A. (Children's Rights Impact Assessment). We have so many children on the Island and, if the understanding is that they will encounter these dogs, and this is, again, reiterating for the greater safety of the public.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Yes, I understand that. Again, my earlier question, the petitioners, has there been much engagement with them as to justifying it?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

We have not had any direct engagement as such, but we are conscious of it. Principally, it was just objecting to the changes in the Law, as I read it. I have got no more information.

[09:45]

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Their argument that there has been no fatal thing, so why change?

Chief States Veterinary Officer:

You should not have to wait for a fatality to act.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Somebody asked a question.

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

I think it is useful to say that I think all States Members were circulated with a document from a member of the public with stats on it, which I thought was quite helpful.

Chief States Veterinary Officer:

If I may add, I do not know if those are the petitioners or not, but we have engaged with XL bully owners on the Island when the first changes happened in the U.K. We advised, we wrote to the ones we knew, advising, so exactly the same restrictions, the conditions we have here, we wrote to the people we knew had XL bullies to advise because we could not do anything else. That was over a year ago and, since then, there have been litters born in Jersey. So, advising the owners, it has not seemed to work. So that is another reason why I think we have to go stronger.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Okay. If I may, going back to my theme of control, provisions affecting the owners rather than the dogs. So I can accept there are provisions under Article 1C for the dogs dangerously out of control. That is quite a high bar to establish danger. It does mean that my concern is that, as matters stand, if a dog has not reached a stage where it could be regarded as dangerously out of control, but it is deemed upsetting other dog walkers or other people, should that not be addressed in this Law so that there is a lower bar and more power given to the Parish Halls to deal with those offences? Or is the argument that this is already well covered by the existing policing regulations?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

Have you got any comment on that, Sue?

Secretary, Comité des Connétables (2):

Yes, in terms of dogs that are dangerously out of control, they are defined in Article 11, and that includes where a dog causes or its behaviour gives or has given rise to alarm or apprehension on the part of an owner. That is already in the Law. There is a clear route through for any such person to make a representation to the Magistrates Court for such a dog to be kept under control. Now, it has been raised with us recently how easy is that to do, and we are taking it up with the Magistrates Court Greffier, because one would hope that it would be relatively easy. I understand that they have downloadable practice directions and templates, for example, for petty debts. So individuals can deal with petty debts themselves. It would be nice to think that there is an easy route in for somebody to make a representation to the Magistrates Court if they are concerned about the behaviour of a dog, which they regard as dangerously out of control. So we are following that up to make sure that that route is easy to follow.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

It is a basic point though, is that I accept the point about Magistrates Court and where there is a dog dangerously out of control, but there are circumstances where the dog might not in common parlance be deemed to be dangerously out of control, but causing fear, et cetera, to other dog walkers. My point is that this is quite a high standard to achieve and should there not be a provision which would enable less minor offences, less serious offences to be dealt with at the Parish Hall level?

Chief States Veterinary Officer:

So, I think there is one in terms of if the behaviour shows aggressiveness, it does not have to happen. That is the way I understand it, but I think you can cover that.

Secretary, Comité des Connétables (2):

I think that is probably in the definition of this dangerously out of control.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

I am trying to avoid a case going to Magistrates Court, which might be a cost.

Secretary, Comité des Connétables (2):

I understand. So I am not totally familiar with the process, but I think if an order has to be given to keep a dog under control, then it probably has to rest with the Magistrates Court. There is a dog worrying livestock offence. I am not sure that that would go so far as causing alarm for an individual by way of an offence, other than giving rise to the opportunity to make a representation, but we can certainly explore that.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Yes, what I am really saying is, yes, could a step back be taken from the Magistrates Court, so for less serious offences to be dealt with more locally, which would be beneficial for the community.

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

Can I just go back to the petition briefly, because I just spotted the figure there. I do not know what date this was. It is fairly recent. There were 491 signatures to it and there is about 500, so at 1,000 we would respond. I think that is the process of a petition, which obviously we would follow, but I think what is outlined in the petition is probably not something we would entirely agree with.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

No, as explained, we are presently an outlier on this. We wish to conform internationally. Thank you.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. Coming back to what the Connétable was talking about, about I suppose it is enforcement and of course we are looking at, not only the dangerously out-of-control dogs, but also then the dangerous dogs, and those are obviously different kinds of enforcement. First of all, to understand a bit more about enforcement in dangerously out-of-control dogs, we see often on Facebook people making concerns about other dog walkers and their perceived concerns about the dog that they have seen in the area. What happens, it feels that that seems to be the main thing, is that people tell each other which dog to be aware of, but then there is not any steps after that, which comes to the Connétable. Where does it go from there? How are people able to realistically follow up with a potentially dangerously out-of-control dog?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

For my part, in experience, I would suggest that the call to the duty Centenier is the way forward, because they will in fact bring the dog owner in and have discussions on the situation, and they will take evidence from the complainant and can deal with it however they wish. They have the tools to deal with this, and I think that is the best way. Just reporting it on social media without any evidence whatsoever is not really very effective, and if there is an identification of the particular dog by the complainant, if you like, which there usually is, and they probably know who the owner is too, might be even a licence plate registration, which they have spotted, it can be taken further forward.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Will this also be with dangerous dogs as well, being that if there is a concern that is potentially a dangerous dog not complying to the extra controls being put in this amendment, again is that a duty Centenier is the first port of call, or is it the States Police? So where would these enforcements happen?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

I think that the duty Centenier is probably the best. The Chief Veterinary Officer has tools as well to be able to carry out inspections, and it may be that complainants will be referred to her because your department has the expertise to be able to evaluate whether a particular dog is of a dangerous breed, because there are ways of doing that. You might just outline the methodology.

Chief States Veterinary Officer:

Yes, I think the initial, if it is something relatively low risk, then we would certainly be involved and happy to contribute. If it is referred to a specific dog to assess, we would do that. But then when it comes to a serious non-compliance with conditions, et cetera, then you would go to either the Centeniers or the Police, and we would support as required.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Have the States of Jersey Police been consulted and do they understand what capacity they have to take up these extra enforcements?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

I think, Sue, if you mention, please.

Secretary, Comité des Connétables (2):

We had a discussion a few weeks ago with 2 of the senior officers there. So they are aware of the amendments. I think their concerns are more specific around the situation we currently have with a potential dog that is dangerously out of control. It has to be said that, just because we have labelled some dogs as dangerous dogs, does not mean that they are dangerously out of control or will

become. So it is good to distinguish between the 2. We do accept that we need to look at the provisions around dogs dangerously out of control and what happens to say, we have got one route through to the Magistrates Court, but clearly what do we do in practice if there is that situation? It is like any other animal that might be dangerously out of control. What provisions do we have?

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

So are you saying this is something that also needs to probably be looked at?

Secretary, Comité des Connétables (2):

It does need to be addressed in terms, but we have that situation now, and it has not been raised until now. It has been raised with us because of the dangerous dogs amendment, but it relates more to dangerously out-of-control dogs.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Absolutely. Have the States of Jersey Police been consulted?

Secretary, Comité des Connétables (2):

I have seen a note from them that they have a few concerns, as I said, about the practicalities of where you put a dangerously out-of-control dog, but they summed up that in terms of the dangerous dog provisions, they are supportive.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

They are supportive, okay. As we talked before maybe about how the public understand voluntary compliance and understanding these amendments, will there be a public education awareness campaign to understand, not only those amendments around dangerous dogs and understanding the extra compliance that will be on owners, but also the wider amendments, particularly, especially around the new collars, et cetera?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

I think it is essential that we do that. A lot of the complaints around dogs out of control are the result of ignorance, truthfully. I think the obligation is on the Comité to do more in terms of that.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

So it will be up to the Connétables to be doing more education awareness.

Secretary, Comité des Connétables (2):

Yes, and in fact the States Vet, as she said, has a list of a number of people who have got dogs that they have raised with her and she will be contacting them direct.

Chief States Veterinary Officer:

The initial point of, if the changes on legislation are approved, we will be writing to the ones who we already know have dogs that are of this type and change the advice letter to a slightly stronger word. We have good intelligence and good links within the dog community. We should be able to identify the majority.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

And do you feel that, in Jersey, in talking about enforcement, that the dog owners do get a licence and do follow that, and is it enforced enough? Just going back to the basics of what the Dog Law entails, which it is a licence and we have then, of course, we are talking about different levels of licence now. But the basics of that, do you feel that those who have dogs do apply for a licence, do get it, and then that there is a good enough enforcement to ensure that it is carried through?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

I think, in terms of what we know, is that the greater part of dog owners are very compliant, if you like, and they love their animals and we fully support that. There will always be one or 2 who evade whatever laws we put in place or requirements we put in place. It is quite difficult to pick up on those until something happens. But the dog-owning public are quite good at policing the dog community, if you like, and they are soon brought to light. So, at this stage, I am quite comfortable that the dog-owning community are quite good.

Secretary, Comité des Connétables (2):

Just to add, in terms of one of the other introductions in the Law, is the opportunity to revoke a licence and that is specifically in relation to the dangerous dogs where the owner has not complied with the conditions that are imposed, for example, keeping it muzzled or on a lead or having it neutered. So that is something that we do not have at the moment and will be available if conditions are not complied with.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. I am just turning to my fellow panel member to see if we have got any more. I think we have covered most of the points. Is there anything else from your side, Connétable?

Chair, Comité des Connétables:

Quickly, there is one of my principal concerns is the risk to children in the Island and the C.R.I.A. as set out has gone quite extensively into that. I think that for me there is a prime responsibility to act on the basis of the knowledge we have got and the information we received from the U.K., and we have to take this forward.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. We look forward to also seeing some of those amendments as well. Ahead of that, if you could keep the panel informed to help us also with our comments, just to help the States Members when they start to deliberate on this issue, and especially what we have heard about what will be the next stage, as you have identified, on the dog licence and then more amendments potentially could be coming on some of the areas that we have identified and you have identified today. So thank you very much for coming today and thank you, panel, as well. Thank you, officers.

Secretary, Comité des Connétables (2):

Thank you for fitting us in around all the other things as well.

[09:59]