



Northumberland Dog Rescue

Registered Charity 1170022

Annual Report and Financial Statement

1st January 2022 – 31st December 2022

1. Administrative Details

Registered Charity Number	1170022
Working Name	Northumberland Dog Rescue
Address for charity correspondence	Patterson's Cottage, Charlton Mires, Alnwick, NE66 2TJ
Trustees (December 2022)	David Francis Chairman Russell Bambling Treasurer Samantha Gibson M David Young MRCVS Michelle Biddle Katherine Grant
Bankers	Barclays Bank Alnwick
Independent Financial Examiner	Nigel Jack, ACMA, MBA (from 2021)

2. Structure, Governance and Management

Our charitable dog rescue and rehoming service has been operating since the early 1990s, originally with the name of Alexa's Animals. We only adopted a constitution and became a registered charity much more recently, on 3 November 2016. The charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, governed by a constitution which follows the Charity Commission 'foundation model', which means that our trustees are also the sole members of the charity. Prior to the formation of the charity, a number of our fund-raising activities were undertaken under the auspices of the charity Community Action Northumberland.

The objects of NDR are to relieve the suffering of dogs in need of care, rescue and attention, and in particular to provide and maintain facilities and homes for the reception, care and treatment of such animals by such means that are exclusively charitable.

The trustees normally meet at roughly six-weekly intervals, sometimes in-person and sometimes by video call. There are no committees. It is likely that, in due course, it will be necessary to form a trading subsidiary company, which is wholly owned by the charity, in order to continue some of our income-generating activities, including our charity shops.

3. Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

At the start of the year, 3 of our trustees (including our founder, Alexa Nisbet) retired from the charity, and in the following months we were joined by two new trustees: Michelle Biddle and Katherine Grant. At the end of the year, as previously planned, 3 further trustees stood down, but we are pleased to report that they continue to provide support to the charity in a voluntary capacity. During the year, volunteer Annie Wallace provided the secretariat to the trustees. A further trustee, Lee Fraser, was appointed shortly after the year-end.

4. Review of Achievements and Performance

Following the establishment of our charity, we had an aspiration to have our own premises, and in February 2018 we finally took possession of and moved into Patterson's Cottage kennels at Charlton Mires, beside the A1 North of Alnwick. From the start, we have operated the kennels through two elements: our charitable dog-rescue activities, and a charged-for dog boarding and day-care service. More recently, we have also raised the profile of our work, and generated income, by running a charity shop: first in Wooler, then latterly moving to Amble.

- i) **New homes and new lives for dogs.** Our main charitable purpose is to rescue dogs who are facing ill-treatment or uncertainty, and to find appropriate and loving new homes for them. Dogs come to us for a variety of reasons, for example: family breakdown, owners going into residential care, household poverty, a change of home circumstances, owners not being able to care responsibly etc. We are also one of the few rehoming options that are open to the County Council's animal welfare and adult social care services.

During 2022 we rehomed only 27 dogs, compared with 30 in 2021 and 52 in 2020. Numbers coming into the rescue side had certainly not decreased. We believe the slow down in rehoming is due to an over-supply: the amount of dogs that were bred and purchased by households during the Covid pandemic. We are however expecting a lot of Covid lockdown bought dogs to show- up in rescue establishments such as ours, with people having returned to work and the dogs now being 'surplus to requirements'

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Our busiest month for rehoming was August when we rehomed 6 dogs while during April, May and July no dogs were rehomed .

A surprise for us was the influx of fox red Labradors that came in: we had a total of 5, from 8 weeks old to 3 years old . Fox red seem to be the fashionable colour of the moment , but they are like a different breed to the usual black , chocolate and yellow, and require a lot more exercise , they are more highly strung and take a lot more training . As a result, people were finding they had bitten off more than they could chew. Luckily we always have people willing to take on a Labrador.

No surprise was the usual number of lurchers , and we did see more saluki mixes this year. Unfortunately the element of people wanting to use these dogs for hunting and then disguarding them has not waned. People are often put- off from adopting these amazing dogs due to a lack of understanding about the dogs, thinking they will need lots of exercise and have a lust for blood.

We are hoping to change that attitude through education. Overall, 2022 saw significantly increased pressures for dogs needing rescue, but this was not matched by an increased demand for adoption and rehoming, so our kennels became full.

- ii) **Dog boarding and day care service.** The vitality of this service depends enormously on the state of the domestic and international holiday market. Most of our customers are either local people who board their dogs with us while going away on holiday, or they are visitors to the county who put their dogs in our day-care facility while visiting facilities which are unable to

accept dogs. In addition, local people use the service if, for example, they are working away from home, or are attending a hospital appointment or shopping trip.

5. Premises

We own and operate the premises which are known as Patterson's Cottage Boarding Kennels, which are located beside the A1 Road, some 5 miles North of Alnwick. They include 25 kennel units, each with its own 'run', an enclosed exercise paddock, various office and storage buildings, and the cottage itself which is let on an assured shorthold tenancy to our Kennels Manager. The kennel units are divided roughly 50-50 between those that are used for rescue and rehoming, and those that are used for commercial boarding and daycare.

During the year, with the help of our skilled and energetic volunteers we began a number of further maintenance and improvement tasks, including new pedestrian access facilities and the removal of oversized leylandii trees. We also benefited from an anonymous legacy, which enabled us to plan some more ambitious improvements at the front and rear of our premises, to be undertaken during 2023 and 2024. We also have ambitions to become 'greener': both through harnessing more energy-efficiency and renewable energy technology, and by composting more of our waste on-site.

During the year, we continued to follow the progress of the planned dualling of the A1 trunk road in our locality. Regrettably, this has now been delayed several times, presumably awaiting the Government to allocate the funding. The dualling, if it goes ahead, will have considerable benefits for us, by turning the current trunk road immediately in front of our kennels into a quiet cul-de-sac, and by creating a safe walking route in both directions, thus connecting us to the Newcastle-Alnwick-Berwick bus service. .

6. Voluntary activity

- i) **Overview** This year saw a significant uplift in our volunteering, from a low base at the start, but ending with a total of 34.
- ii) **Dog care and other help** During the Covid pandemic, we restricted the involvement of our dog walkers within the kennels themselves, and we carried out a certain amount of our rehoming activity at arms' length, making use of video calls and other remote means. Following the ending of these restrictions, we rebuilt our volunteer base, both with the return of

some 'trusted old hands' and the recruitment of fresh ones. We continued to receive much-valued help with a variety of services, including dog-grooming, grounds maintenance, joinery, general repairs, transport, gardening, veterinary advice, and much more.

- iii) **Fund-raising** As the result of a nationwide review by the Pets at Home foundation (formerly, Support Adoption for Pets) we became the chosen Charity Partner of the Morpeth Pets at Home store, having previously been linked with the Kingston Park store. . We undertook a number of fund-raising days in front of the store, some of them linked to specific campaigns, such as the Christmas Santa Paws appeal.. The staff there voluntarily raised much needed funds, and we were in receipt of donated pallets of food for our dogs, and many of their customers also donated food, toys, treats etc.

Although traditional on-street fund-raising has pretty-much come to an end, we have benefitted from the kind efforts of volunteers undertaking busking, café events, donations at dog-related events, and much more besides. We also receive donations of dog food with the kind support of local stores, including Sainsbury's in Alnwick and Morrison's in Amble.

- iv) **Charity shops** At the start of the year, we vacated our Wooler shop to concentrate on the shop which we had opened on the main street in Amble just 6 months earlier. This involved the recruitment of a new team of volunteers and we became fully operational again at the end of March 2022, receiving enthusiastic praise from local residents and holiday-makers. We also continued, on a modest scale, some on-line selling of donated goods.
- v) **Trustees** In addition, our trustees have contributed not only in the formalities of governance, but also in supplying professional input, accountancy, publicity, website administration, public education, staff training, fund-raising, grass cutting, dog care etc

7. Quality control

Surprisingly, charitable animal rescue services are subject to very few external monitoring or validation requirements. We had expected that the Government would address this by introducing an inspection and licensing regime as part of DEFRA's published work programme. However, this seems to have been dropped, during the turmoil experienced within the Government during the year. Fortunately, pet boarding businesses are subject to a strict regime of defined quality standards that are set by DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) and administered by the County Council through a licensing system. At the start of 2022, we received confirmation of a continuation of our 5-star licence status.

8. Name change

Shortly into the following year (2022) our founder Alexa Nisbet retired from the charity and, at her request and with the consent of the Charity Commission, we changed our formal title to Northumberland Dog Rescue. The Charity Commission continues to hold and retain control over our previous name of Alexa's Animals, Dog Rescue.

9. Financial Review

A change in our trustee composition early in the year also brought a lull in our income-generating activity, not least arising from the cessation of our Wooler shop and the temporary closure of our Amble shop, for nearly three months. Thankfully, the growth of a new team of volunteers has brought dividends not only from the heightened turnover at the now re-opened shop, but also from a range of other income-generating and enjoyable activities. These activities have hugely raised the profile of our charity and work, and have generated significantly more interest among people wishing to support us. However, 2022 was also a year of significant inflation in prices, not least the National Living Wage and utility bills. With a combination of reduced income during the first quarter, and higher costs throughout, we were not surprised to arrive at the year-end with a deficit of about £18k.

- i) **Income:** During the year, income derived from boarding and daycare at the kennels continued to do well and, as previously stated, we were able to recover during the year from the temporary closure of our shop. To a large extent, this retailing has taken over from our previous focus on street collections. We also introduced measures to make it easier to differentiate between various income streams, including achieving greater clarity over the income and the costs of our retail activity.
- ii) **Operational costs:** inevitably, staffing costs (ie salaries) are the single largest item of our expenditure, and these increased significantly from about £45k to £59k. This was due in part to significant rises in the National Living Wage, and two re-gradings, and also in a conscious decision to increase our staffing cover during pressured times of the working day. With fewer rescue dogs in our care, veterinary fees remained relatively unchanged from the previous year. As previously reported, we are keen to pursue the use of renewable energy, and of better energy efficiency: for

the good of the environment, to increase the comfort for our dogs and staff, and also to reduce our overall costs.

- iii) **Premises:** we undertook no major improvement work on the kennels during the year. However, with kennels and associated buildings that are forty years old, and a cottage which dates from the early 19th century, there are always repairs and improvements to be made. The premises are on an exposed site in the open countryside, and so attention is required from time to time to damage caused by high winds and flooding. Remarkably, the premises were not as badly affected by Storm Arwen, as some communities in Northumberland were, but we still had to incur a certain amount of clearance and building repairs..
- iv) **Capital and funds:** The closing bank balance at the end of the year was £57459. This may appear superficially as an improvement on the previous year's closing balance of just under £50k, but account should be taken of the receipt of a £41.6k legacy which is a restricted fund for capital expenditure, of which about £10k was spent before the year-end.

10. Thanks

We are extremely fortunate to benefit from an enormous number of friends and supporters, who have helped in so many ways: whether with caring for the dogs, financial help, practical work at the kennels, donations of dog food, co-operation with partner organisations, governance and management, technical expertise, and so much more. Our grateful thanks, to you all.

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Financial Statement, Income and Expenditure, 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022

Income

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
Donations Unrestricted	17,641	2,800
Adoptions	845	3,475
Fundraising (events)	0	14648
Grants	17,306	1000
Boarding - Kennels	3,953	42110
Rental Income	6,000	6,000
Shop & Boarding	71,326	30034
Gift Aid	593	0
Other Incoming Resources	<u>273</u>	<u>149</u>
Total	<u>117,937</u>	<u>100,218</u>

Expenditure			
Kennels	Insurance	3,233	3898
	Vet Fees	13,417	13488
	Kennel Consumables	2,613	662
			720
	Shop Expenditure	11,301	8086
Marketing/PR	Fund Raising Expenses		293
	Marketing Costs	247	697
Admin	Bank Charges	457	601
	Card Charges	105	
	Wages and Salaries	41,154	59150
	Pension Costs	3,748	
	Staff Training and Welfare	1,236	854
	Motor Expenses	4,282	902
	Office Supplies	166	87
	Licences		34
	Telephone and Internet	1,821	1,328
	Other	2,259	
Premises	Loan Repayments	16,675	13,340
	Repairs and Maintenance	4,673	
	Electric Costs	10,486	16563
	Water Rates	1,113	
Sub-total		118,986	118451

Restricted income for capital improvements £41776. Capital expenditure £23359



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INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF
Northumberland Dog Rescue

I report on the Income & Expenditure of the Trust for the year ended 31st December 2022.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The Charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The Charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- Follow the procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act;
- State whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and, seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts represent a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - To keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act;
 - To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or
- (2) To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn on order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signature:

N. Jack

Name:

NIGEL JACK

Date:

29/10/23