

SANTERPAWS BULGARIAN RESCUE

Justine Bowyer; Director

Peter Emes, Treasurer

Santerpaws Bulgarian Rescue
Staroseltsi
Skobolov 7
Pleven,
Bulgaria 5865



Amanda Hitchcock;

Secretary

Santerpaws Bulgarian Rescue
8 Jubilee Terrace
Middle Street
Strood Green
Betchworth
Surrey
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GU24 0JZ

Santerpaws Bulgarian Rescue Fifth Annual General Meeting

Held on 7th February 2022 @ 11:00 via Virtual Platform

Present

Justine Bowyer – Trustee and Director

Peter Emes – Trustee and Treasurer

Amanda Hitchcock – Trustee and Secretary

This 5th AGM is held only six months after the previous AGM, due to COVID 19 virus pandemic restrictions and associated difficulties, which meant no AGM was held in 2020. Santerpaws Bulgarian Rescue is seeking to catch up with the reporting cycle.

The 4th September 2021 AGM reported on the accounts from the year 2019/2020.

This 5th AGM will report the accounts from the year 2020/2021.

Previous AGMs were held 18.08.16; 09.01.18; 26.03.2019; (additional Extraordinary AGM held 09.04.2019); 04.09.2021.

It is intended that these 5th AGM Notes serve as the Annual Report for 2020/2021, as they provide an account of all functions of the Charity.

Financial Overview 2020/2021:

Income Donations Adoption 2020/2021 (2019/2020)	from and Fees	£243,053 (£42,650)		
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	Expenditure		
	Buildings (previous year)	£62,550 (£11,845)	
	Credit Card (previous year)	£9,600 (£4,400)	
	Animal Feed (previous year)	£14,675 (£11,602)	
	Advertising / Stationary (previous year)	£2,940 (£2,230)	
	Transport	£86,473 (£4,870)	
	Vehicles	£8,995 (£1,082)	
	Vet Services - contract	£52,900 (£6,102)	
	Vet Services - non- contract	£1,800 (£489)	
	Staff Salary	£11,555 (£000.00)	
	Rehabilitation kennels Bulgaria	£3,000 (£000.00)	
		TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£254,488 (£42,620)
		LOSSES	£11,435 (not reported)

The table above shows a summary of income received and how that income was used.

As in 2019/2020 Santerpaws Bulgarian Rescue's expenditure exceeds income and continues to be subsidised by the Chairman and Treasurers own private incomes. The last report did not specify losses incurred and these were simply 'absorbed' and not reclaimed by the Chairman or Treasurer. This report shows the losses incurred 2020/2021, standing at £11,435; it is planned for this to be seen as a private loan and repaid at a suitable point in time. Again, losses have been incurred by the continuation of the now completed building works, non-contract vet fees and vehicle fuel and vehicle servicing. Additionally, there has been the additional pressure of hugely increased transportation costs when moving adopting animals during the Covid 19 Global Pandemic and also due to the increased financial impact of Brexit in the form of new permits and taxes. It is hoped that with the building work completed and the Global Pandemic receding, allowing self-transportation of animals once again, that the Charity will be in a more viable and stable financial position and able to repay some of the private loan made by the Chairman and Treasurer.

The Charity is fortunate that volunteers in the UK continue, as previously, to frequently subsidise Santerpaws Bulgarian Rescue by privately covering fuel or vet costs (for animals in foster care in UK) alongside giving up their time to assist the Charity.

Santerpaws Bulgarian Rescue would confirm that none of the three Trustees claim any salary. Neither do any of the three Trustees claim expenses such as fuel costs incurred when on Charity business. It must be recognised that Santerpaws Bulgarian Rescue is a very small Charity, the survival of which depends entirely on the hard work of the Trustees and their determination to reduce the evident cruelty to the multitude of stray dogs (and other animals) abandoned in Bulgaria.

Whilst Mr Peter Emes serves as Treasurer, in reality he functions as a builder, maintenance manager, cleaner, and driver. The Chairman, Ms Justine Bowyer, also serves as cleaner and animal care provider alongside being the shelter manager, adoption coordinator and liaison officer for the local Municipal Office (read Council). Mr Emes and Ms Bowyer live alongside the shelter and are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Secretary, Mrs Amanda Hitchcock, resides in the UK and provides all administrative functions, coordinates all home checks and oversees the UK Rescue Back Up Service (securing new adoptions where initial placements have failed) as well as providing emergency advice and support to UK adopters and including coordination of local search teams if a dog is reported missing. Mrs Hitchcock's responsibilities to the Charity are undertaken in her free time when not working; she is employed full time in a demanding, high-pressure job and also has direct family care commitments.

The Charity is grateful to have a Senior Volunteer and several other volunteers who give up their time as available and when required and who support various functions of the Charity.

The Charity's only income remains solely derived from donations from private persons and the payment of an adoption fee for each animal rehomed. The increased income, from £42,650 to £243,053 eloquently illustrates the immense increase in the number of dogs who have been successfully adopted.

Review of Charity since March/April 2019:

Home Checks:

The relationship between Santerpaws Bulgarian Rescue and The ATeam (a separate Charity dedicated to providing safe, efficient and effective home checks for prospective adopters) is now firmly embedded and, excepting a

hiatus during the Covid 19 virus related Lockdown periods, The ATeam are used to vet all prospective new homes.

Current Transport Arrangements and New Animal Transporter/Van:
COVID 19 virus travel restrictions and new regulations following the UK leaving the European Union has resulted in the need to use a commercial Pet Transporter rather than self-transport as before.

These changes have resulted in huge additional costs that have had a huge negative financial impact on the Charity, both in terms of transport and increased import costs; this is seen clearly in the increase of transport costs from £4870 in 2019/2020 to £86,482. Transport costs encompass the journey itself and also the costs of required health checks and documentation needed. In effect each current transport run (there are 2 transport runs each month on average) now costs the equivalent of the total transport costs for 2019, as previously the only costs incurred were fuel, Euro Tunnel costs, animal feed, van maintenance and cleaning costs etc.

Alternative pet transporters have been considered but none are competitive in terms of cost. More importantly the transport company used currently is reliable and scrupulous in terms of animal care and ensuring the correct documentation and legal requirements are place.

Brexit:

Upon leaving the European Union UK import duties were increased and subsequently further raised. The Charity is now required to pay import tax for each dog homed into the UK. It has been difficult but at all times Santerpaws Bulgarian Rescue has kept abreast of the fast pace of changing regulations and ensured that the Charity remains compliant with all lawful transportation requirements.

Adoption Fee:

This was increased from £290 to £350 in January 2020 to try to combat the increased expenditure in preparing and transporting a dog to a new home. The £350 still does not cover all costs, and this deficit is increased where an animal has been a long-term resident at the shelter or has needed veterinary treatment in excess of neutering and vaccinations.

Adopters are made aware of the increased costs and a voluntary extra donation is suggested, with some new families opting to support this. It is not considered viable to further increase the adoption fee, as £350 is in line with the majority of adoption fees requested by other rescues for dogs.

Administration:

Changed regulations post-Brexit have impacted on the documentation required for transport and the amount of official paperwork requiring completion is much increased, with only Ms Bowyer herself able to complete much of this.

Staffing at the Shelter has been increased, and therefore staffing costs of £11,555, a new expenditure, are incurred for the year 2020/2021. This has allowed Ms Bowyer to have some additional administration time. Currently on average 150 - 233 dogs are being cared for at any one time and to ensure there is a safe, nurturing and enriching environment for the animals 4 workers are a minimum requirement. 'Turnover' of dogs is necessarily high, with 20 - 40 being homed and transported each month. However, it is not uncommon for the number of dogs admitted to far exceed the number of dogs homed and transported in any given month.

It is a continued plan for a Shelter Manager to be recruited during 2021/22, with the explicit intention of releasing Ms Bowyer from the majority of daily dog care tasks. Accommodation and a small wage (a reasonable living in view of Bulgarian cost of living) can be offered. It may be feasible to offer this on a trial basis before commitment.

Additional UK Admin have been recruited and it is hope to further expand the UK back-up team to support The Secretary and Senior Volunteer who both undertake their Charity roles balanced alongside work and family commitments. There has continued to be an increase in the need for re-homing/emergency fostering of dogs already in UK who are relinquished by owners. Full Rescue Back Up is provided but covering this is increasingly difficult with the current level of volunteers and the recruitment of more volunteers is an urgently need. The new expenditure of £3,000 for rehabilitation kennels has been incurred by two dogs returned as 'unsuitable' for UK family life. One dog is now re-settled into a different UK family following rehabilitation.

Daily financial issues:

As the shelter has expanded in size the positive reputation of our commitment to seeking healthcare, which is regularly life-saving for that animal, has spread too. We are now well known for saving the lives of very unwell or injured animals, as well as for successfully finding safe homes for abused and abandoned dogs. This has in turn led to raised expectations of local people and local officials; increased numbers of stray dogs and cats have been brought to the shelter, all requiring neutering and vaccinations etc.

The Charity remains committed to supporting local people within the immediate area of the shelter, which is rural and impoverished, to better care for their animals. Vaccination and neutering services for village dogs and cats has significantly increased in the year 2020/2021, improving the health and welfare of local animals and also building a trusting relationship with our neighbours. This important work does not generate any revenue and thus the associated costs for veterinarian care, typically for vaccinations and neutering of village animals, together with meeting the health needs of the higher number of animals in the care of Santerpaws Bulgarian Rescue, has dramatically increased from £6,102 to £52,900.

Donations are mainly received in pound sterling, occasionally US Dollars. The Charity account and PayPal are sterling accounts. All expenditure is in Bulgarian Lev. Currency exchange rates and bank charges for currency conversion when making withdrawals makes accurate bookkeeping a challenge. Roughly £1 sterling is equivalent to 2 Bulgarian Lev. For example, 12 months vet services show as £6,102 and 12,000 Bulgarian Lev.

Receipts are extremely difficult to obtain in Bulgaria, even for formal transactions such as vet services, where a Charity rate is kindly offered, or building services. Providing receipts for service remains unusual in Bulgarian culture.

Building costs were the biggest expenditure in 2019/2020 and are the second biggest expenditure in 2020/2021. The Shelter is now fully compliant with local regulations and exceeds expected standards when inspected by the authorities. It is hoped building and maintenance costs will be significantly lower in 2021/2022.

Spreadsheets for 2019/20 and 2020/21 have now been provided to The Charity Commission to accompany the AGM reports and a UK-based Auditor is being sought going forwards; initial enquiries have not yet identified a suitable qualified person with availability to take on this role. This is a priority action for 2022.

This record of meeting prepared by Amanda Hitchcock Trustee and Secretary.

This record of meeting agreed and signed (virtually) as an accurate record of the meeting and representation of the current position of the Charity by all three Trustees:

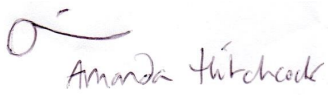


S. J. Bowyer

Director



Treasurer



Secretary

07.02.2021