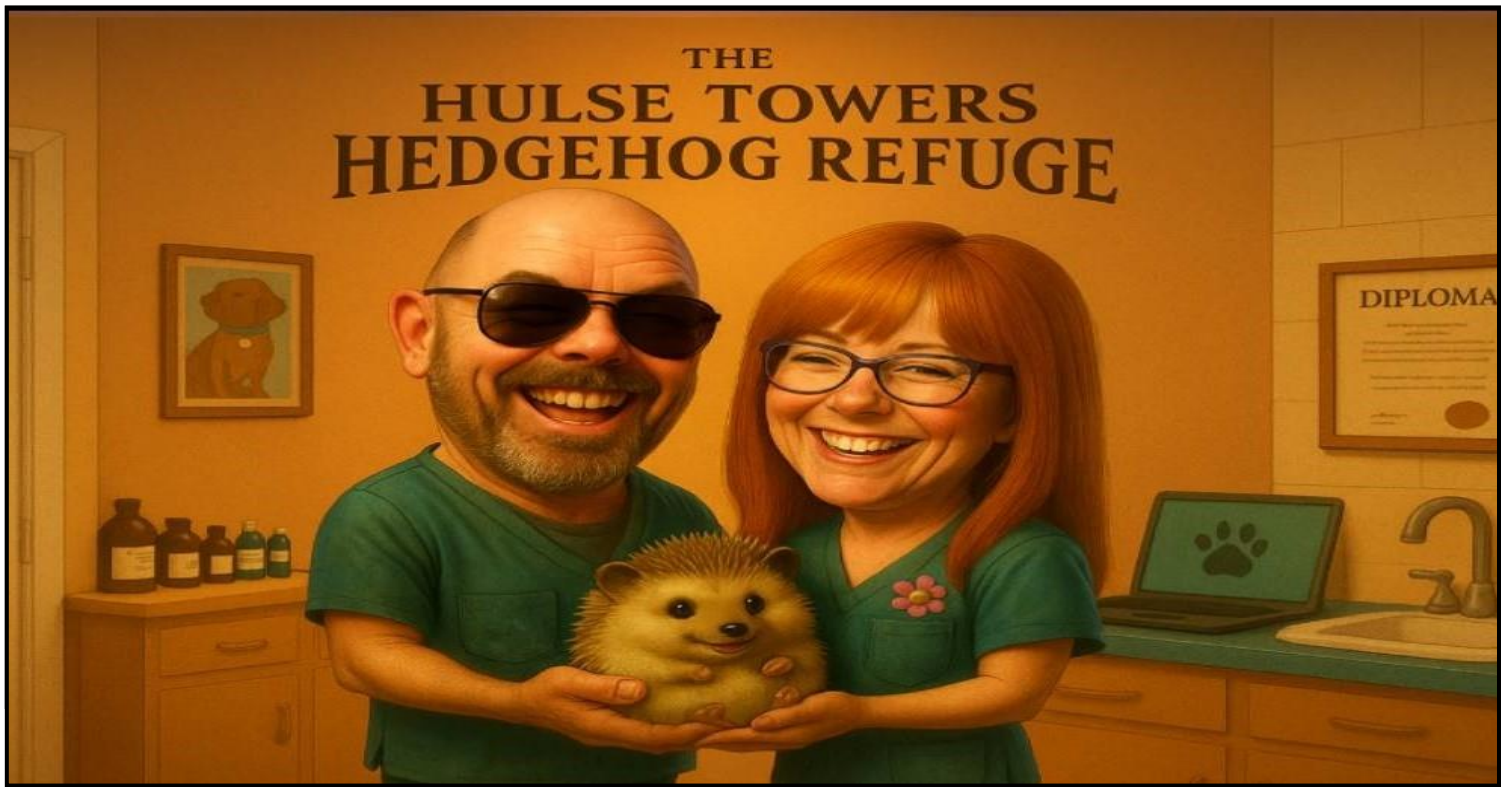


THE HULSE TOWERS HEDGEHOG REFUGE



The Hulse Towers Hedgehog Refuge



Registered Charity No. 1197174

Trustees Annual Report 16/12/2021 – 31/03/2023

The Hulse Towers Hedgehog Refuge achieved a 61% survival rate, successfully releasing 87 hedgehogs out of 142 admissions during the period from the 16th of December 2021 to the 31st of March 2023

Rick Hulse

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The Hulse Towers Hedgehog Refuge – Annual Trustees Report

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Trustees Annual Report for the period

From	Period Start Date			To	Period End Date		
	16	12	2021		31	03	2023
Charity Name: The Hulse Towers Hedgehog Refuge							
Also Known as: Hulse’s Hedgehogs							
Charity Registration Number:				1197174			

Address of Charity

39 Lownorth Road

Wythenshawe

Manchester

Postcode

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Contact Information

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Names of Trustees Who Manage the Charity

Trustee Name	Office	Date Acted (if not for whole year)
Rick Hulse	Chairman	
Amanda Hulse	Secretary	

Names of Honorary Trustees

Trustee Name	Office	Date Acted (if not for whole year)
Bill Hulse	(Hon) Treasurer	

Section B Structure, Governance & Management

Description of the Charity's Trusts

Governing Document	Constitution
How the charity is constituted	Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Trustee selection methods	Appointed

The Hulse Towers Hedgehog Refuge – Annual Trustees Report

Brief History:

The refuge was originally set-up in December 2016 by Rick & Mandy Hulse.

They have run it ever since as unpaid volunteers who carry out the daily care and treatment of sick and injured hedgehogs while also holding down full-time jobs.

In late December 2017 they began to dig out the footings of what was to become a purpose-built hedgehog hospital, when sharing their home with 28 poorly hedgehogs had become a little bit too pungent for comfort.

By the end of February, the digging, back-filling, concreting and flagging were complete and the erection of the big steel shed began, it was snowing throughout most of the four-day build.

By July 2018 the hospital was finished and fully kitted out with purpose-made hutches, a treatment area, a washing area and lots of storage space (but never enough). The house began to smell better...

Section C Objectives and Activities

Objectives

To relieve the suffering and distress of hedgehogs in need of care and attention by providing a rescue, treatment and rehabilitation service for sick, injured, or orphaned hedgehogs with the aim of releasing them back into the wild when they are fit and well.

To advance the education of the general public concerning hedgehog welfare and conservation through the provision of information and advice designed to increase the understanding of the needs of hedgehogs in their natural habitats with the aim of improving the survival rate of the species.

Volunteers:

We are truly blessed to have the support of a small number of good-hearted, dedicated volunteers who, once we have completed all medical treatment, will foster hedgehogs where they need time to recuperate and build themselves up to a safe release weight.

- Fosterers most commonly overwinter hedgehogs when medical treatment has been completed too late to release the hedgehogs due to winter conditions or where autumn juveniles are simply too small to survive hibernation in the wild.
- New fosterers are given full instruction and reference notes on the care, feeding and monitoring of hedgehogs.
- We also ensure that each fosterer has the correct facilities and equipment to provide adequate accommodation and a good level of care to hedgehogs in their charge.

Public Support:

We initially funded our rescue work from our own earnings and savings, however, as demand grew, that became unsustainable and we now rely heavily on support from members of the public.

Fortunately, hedgehogs hold a special place in the hearts of many people in the UK and we have built-up a small but dedicated group of supporters who make regular donations, either direct debit, or through one of our donation portals:

- <https://www.peoplesfundraising.com/donation/hulse-towers-hedgehog-refuge->
- https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=72F8HKGVG7VQ4

Or by purchasing items for us off our Amazon Wish List:

- <https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/>

NB. Items purchased from the Amazon wish list are dispatched directly to The Hulse Towers Hedgehog Refuge.

Without the continued support of such good-hearted people, we would not be able to continue.

The Hulse Towers Hedgehog Refuge – Annual Trustees Report

The Hospital

Injured and/or sick hedgehogs are treated and cared for in our purpose-built hospital. We provide the majority of medical procedures and therapies in-house, including:

- assessments
- diagnostics
- treatment plans
- rehydration
- eye care
- wound care
- antibiotics
- antiparasitic treatments
- antifungal treatments
- subcutaneous injections
- nutritional care
- monitoring
- every hutch has a heating facility, when needed
- the hospital is air-conditioned

For more specialised procedures that are beyond our means, we defer to our vets. They provide:

- x-ray imaging
- anaesthesia
- surgical procedures
- suturing
- splinting
- euthanasia

We also care for abandoned and/or orphaned hoglets, initially hand-feeding every 90-minutes or 2-hours day and night until they begin to eat for themselves.

The hospital is predominantly lit with natural light to help the hedgehogs to maintain their crepuscular activity patterns.

Euthanasia Policy

We, at the Hulse Towers Hedgehog Refuge, do not euthanise hedgehogs.

When euthanasia is judged to be the only humane option for a sick or injured hedgehog, the procedure is carried-out on our behalf by our qualified veterinarians.

We will only have a hedgehog euthanised when we and our vets agree that it is the most humane option and in the best interest of the hedgehog.

Euthanasia is only ever considered when:

- It is the only humane option to relieve pain and suffering
- A hedgehog's illness or injuries are deemed unsurvivable
- Permanent disabilities preclude the hedgehog being able to survive in the wild
- When there is deemed to be no realistic chance of the hedgehog experiencing an acceptable quality of life in the wild after treatment and rehabilitation

We will never have a hedgehog euthanised due to lack of accommodation space or resources, or as a matter of expediency.

The Hulse Towers Hedgehog Refuge – Annual Trustees Report

Release Policy:

NB. This is a dynamic policy that has changed and evolved much over recent years and will continue to do so as new research improves our knowledge of hedgehogs in the wild. We are also guided by the policies and recommendations of The British Hedgehog Preservation Society (BHPS), The Vale Wildlife Hospital, and a small number of other hedgehog rescuers who have long experience and a supportive disposition.

- Hedgehogs are never kept in captivity longer than is absolutely necessary.
- Generally, hedgehogs are housed in outdoor hutches for five days prior to release to allow them to re-acclimatise to natural sounds, smells, temperatures and time of dusk etc. prior to release.
- We always return hedgehogs to the wild once they are fit, well and of a suitable weight to have the best chance of survival (this varies from 450g to 600g dependent on the time of year).
- Hedgehogs are returned to their original habitat, except where there is an inherent danger in doing so, or where that original habitat is no-longer a safe/suitable habitat for hedgehogs, or where the hedgehog's origin is not known.
- Where healthy hedgehogs cannot be returned to their original habitat, we give preference to release sites where water and supplementary food are known to be provided in a feeding station.
- Whenever possible we will try to ensure that hedgehogs are released into habitats where wild hedgehogs are already known to visit because this is the best indication that the habitat is suitable for hedgehogs. However, we are also mindful of the negative effects of overpopulating a habitat.
- We will never knowingly release hedgehogs into areas populated by badgers (a natural predator of hedgehogs) or frequently used by large numbers of dog walkers.
- Where hedgehogs are to be released into a garden, we will always ensure that the garden gives easy access to an extended network of gardens or areas of land with good cover and plenty of natural food.

Release Conditions:

- Hedgehogs will only be released when local night temperatures are forecast to be 5-degrees or above for five-days following release.
- Once the heavy frosts have started in the winter and natural food has become scarce (this varies from place to place) hedgehogs will be overwintered indoors at The Hulse Towers Hedgehog Refuge and/or by one of our trusted fosterers, until they can be safely released in Spring.

Identification Marking:

- Hedgehogs are not marked prior to release except when monitoring is required as part of a study, in which case a 1-cm identification mark will be made with a non-toxic white emulsion that will naturally disappear after 3 to 4 weeks but remain visible on infra-red night vision cameras for 6 to 8 weeks.
- We strongly advise members of the public not to mark hedgehogs in any way because this can be detrimental to the hedgehog's survival.

Public Involvement:

- Whenever possible we involve the original rescuers in the release process so they can see, at first hand, the end result of their original compassionate action.
- If the release site is the rescuers garden, we encourage them to build a feeding station and advise them on the supply of supplementary food and water.
- Whenever releasing into a garden network, we encourage people to speak to their neighbours to generate wider interest in the welfare of the local hedgehog population.

Albino Hedgehogs:

- Wild albino hedgehogs are not uncommon in the UK. Albinism does not appear to disadvantage European hedgehogs in the wild to any known extent; therefore, we treat, rehabilitate and release wild albino hedgehogs exactly the same as other wild hedgehogs.

The Hulse Towers Hedgehog Refuge – Annual Trustees Report

Section D Achievements and Performance

Once the wild population go into hibernation (generally in early December at our latitude) we don't get any new admissions unless it is a very mild winter.

Over the first couple of months in 2022 we only had seven new admissions, these were mostly cases of hibernation being interrupted when nests were inadvertently disturbed by builders, though two of these admissions had been disturbed when found nesting in 'inappropriate' places.

One was cosily ensconced in an ALDI bag-for-life amongst somebody's fishing tackle in a garden shed, the other had built a nice cosy nest in a lady's polythene motorcycle cover in a domestic garage. Hedgehogs do seem attracted to plastic when nest building!

Displaced hedgehogs don't fare very well in the wild during the hibernation period because there is very little natural food available and often there is no liquid water to be had, so we generally take them in and look after them until we see evidence of the wild population emerging from hibernation.

Things began to get busier from late March 2022 and by the end of April we were running flat-out until early December. We had to close to new admissions three times in the busiest months due to being full to capacity.

We had learned in the early years, not to allow ourselves to take in more than we can cope with. That just reduces the standard of care for all admissions and leads to levels of stress and fatigue that can adversely affect our ability to earn a living.

Caring for abandoned or orphaned tiny hoglets, some of them less than a day old on arrival, can be quite intense, with the need for syringe-feeding every 90-minutes day and night initially (this decreases to two-hourly then three hourly over a couple of weeks) and it inevitably results in moving incubators into our bedroom to maximise our meagre hours of sleep.

From 16/12/2021 to 31/03/2023 (the period covered by this report) we had 142 admissions, these were:

- 11 abandoned or orphaned unweaned baby hoglets
- 1 Spring family (mother & five three-day-old babies)
- 15 Spring juveniles
- 12 Summer/Autumn juveniles
- 1 early autumn family (mother gave birth to six babies in a hospital hutch)
- 26 late-autumn juveniles (generally in very poor condition)
- 65 adults (not including the two mothers)

Of these 142 admissions:

- 16 were euthanised within 24-hours
- 9 were euthanised when they failed to respond to treatment or secondary problems were identified
- 13 died within 24-hours of arrival
- 17 died during or after a course of treatment, despite our best efforts
- 87 were successfully treated, rehabilitated and returned to the wild

This gave The Hulse Towers Hedgehog Refuge a 61% success/survival rate.

Apparently, this is a little above the average for hedgehog rescues in the UK, but that doesn't make the losses any less painful or upsetting.

Public Engagement

We have given hedgehog talks to a number of groups ranging from Methodist pensioners lunch clubs and junior school classes to Brownie packs and biker groups. Each presentation was tailored to the specific audience and all have been well received.

Rather than concentrating on fundraising, the focus of these presentations has always been to spread awareness of the decimation of the UK hedgehog population and to encourage people to get actively involved in the welfare of their local hedgehogs and local wildlife in general.

By making the presentations entertaining as well as informative we have had good responses and we are often invited back for another visit the following year.

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Section E

Financial Information

Brief Statement of the Charity's Policy on Reserves

As yet, we haven't had much in the way of reserves, if the occasion arises when we do, our initial policy will be to create a savings account to serve as a buffer against unforeseen expenses or the need for more investment.

General Finances

Income:

The Hulse Towers Hedgehog Refuge is completely reliant on donations from Rick and Mandy Hulse, a small but dedicated group of regular donors, and general donations from members of the public.

Expenditure:

The cost of treating and caring for sick, injured or orphaned hedgehogs, can vary markedly but it averages out at approximately £40.00 per hedgehog over the year.

Outgoing expenditure includes:

- Utilities (electricity, gas & water)
- Medications (antibiotics, anticoccidial drugs, anti-inflammatories, antiparasitic treatments, antifungals, antiseptics, hydration fluids, wound care medications, saline, etc.)
- Veterinary Bills
- Medical Supplies (syringes, hypodermic needles, spatulas, dressings, mediwipes, tic hooks, sharps bins, medical waste bags, microscope slides, pipettes, etc.)
- Monitoring equipment
- Incubator filters
- Insecticidal shampoos & sprays
- Hedgehog Foods
- Infant hedgehog formulas, weaning foods, feeder tips,
- Hedgehog Bedding
- Cleaning equipment
- Cleaning Products
- Blue Rolls
- Waste disposal equipment
- Flystrike protections
- Hospital Maintenance
- Equipment Maintenance & Replacement
- Administration consumables
- Fuel costs

Section F

Accounts 16/12/21 – 31/03/2023

Income: £ 6,297.00

Expenditure: £ 5,874.00

The Hulse Towers Hedgehog Refuge – Annual Trustees Report

Conclusion



Despite the challenges, the achievements of The Hulse Towers Hedgehog Refuge during this period, as detailed in this Trustees Annual Report, reflect the dedication of its trustees, volunteers, and supporters.

The above-average survival rate, successful public engagement, and continued commitment to high standards of care demonstrate the charity's positive impact on hedgehog welfare in the region.

Summary of Achievements

During the period 16 December 2021 to 31 March 2023, The Hulse Towers Hedgehog Refuge achieved a 61% survival rate, successfully rehabilitating and releasing 87 hedgehogs out of 142 admissions, above the UK average for similar rescues.

The charity maintained high standards of care, relied on dedicated volunteers, and engaged the public through educational talks and outreach. Continued public support and prudent financial management enabled the refuge to sustain its operations and positive impact on hedgehog welfare.

	
Rick Hulse	Amanda Hulse
Chairman	Secretary
10/01/2026	10/01/2026