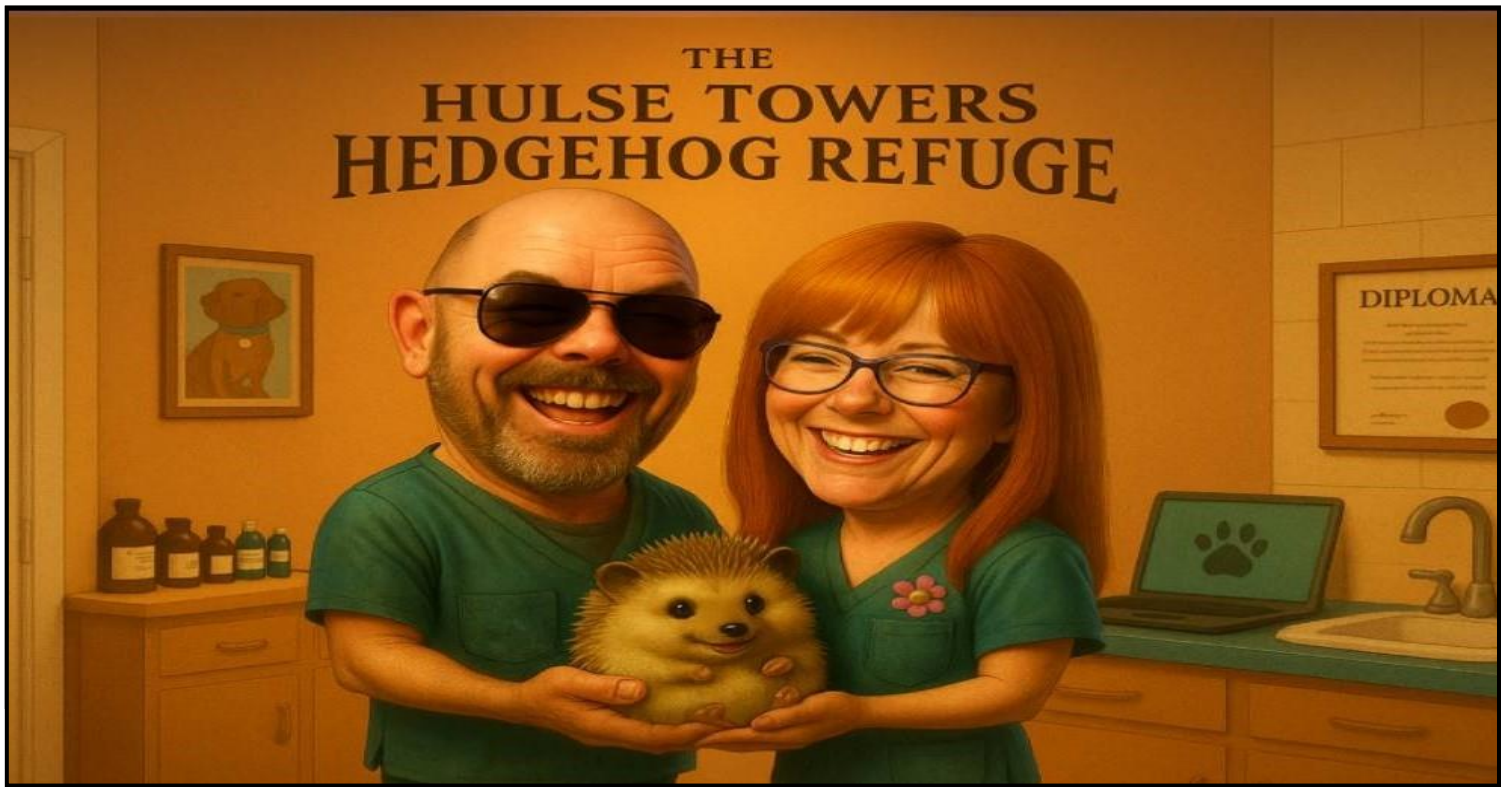


THE HULSE TOWERS HEDGEHOG REFUGE



The Hulse Towers Hedgehog Refuge

Trustees Annual Report

01/04/2023 – 31/03/2024



Registered Charity No. 1197174

The Hulse Towers Hedgehog Refuge achieved a 64% survival rate, successfully releasing 65 hedgehogs out of 102 admissions during the period from the 1st of April 2023 to the 31st of March 2024

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		
	01	04	2023		31	03	2024
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

M22 0JU

Contact Information

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Social media	https://www.facebook.com/hulses.hedgehogs/	

Names of Trustees Who Manage the Charity

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

Names of Honorary Trustees

Trustee Name	Office	Date Acted (if not for entire 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 Aims 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, resolute 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 satisfactory 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.

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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.

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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 a lot of 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 relatively common 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.

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Section D

Performance and Achievements

Over the past seven years we had built an excellent working relationship with our local independent veterinary clinic. They were very understanding of our limited resources, which was reflected in their billing, and they were confident enough in our expertise to provide us with prescriptions that allowed us to purchase medications cheaper online and maintain a stock.

We were thrown into existential turmoil when a large US corporation acquired the clinic. Seemingly, in the blink of an eye, the staff had changed and the prices almost doubled! The new vets insisted we must pay for prescribed medications on a case-by-case basis and our next bill left us utterly shocked and appalled!

In response, we sought help from another veterinary clinic but a quote for £300.00 became a bill for £840.00 (which we contested until they agreed to accept the original £300.00 they had quoted).

We then arranged a meeting with the new manager of our local clinic in a bid to demonstrate our level of expertise and explain the constraints we have to work with. Eventually we reached an amicable arrangement about keeping medications in stock and we have begun to build a good working relationship with them.

The hedgehog hospital was already busy by the start of this fiscal year. By the end of April, we had the first of three closures to new admissions, due to being full to capacity. We remain resolute in not repeating the mistake of taking in more hedgehogs than we can adequately care for.

The range of illnesses and injuries we dealt with were as eclectic as ever and the emotional rollercoaster of losses and victories was as capricious as ever. The only thing that you can be certain of with hedgehogs is their unpredictability!

From 01/04/2023 to 31/03/2024 (the period covered by this report) we had 102 admissions, these were:

- 13 abandoned or orphaned unweaned baby hoglets.
- 1 Summer family (mother & 3 two-day-old babies).
- 15 Spring juveniles.
- 7 Summer/Autumn juveniles.
- 1 late autumn family (mother and 4 two-hour-old babies).
- 31 late-autumn juveniles (most in extremely poor condition).
- 27 adults (not including the two mothers).

Of these 102 admissions:

- 15 died within 24-hours of arrival.
- 1 summer baby died (the other two survived & released in September).
- 8 were euthanised within 24-hours.
- 3 were euthanised when they failed to respond to treatment or secondary problems were identified.
- 7 died during or after a course of treatment, despite our best efforts.
- 3 of the autumn babies were killed & recycled by their mother (we rescued the 4th, which survived).
- 65 were successfully treated, rehabilitated and returned to the wild.

This gave The Hulse Towers Hedgehog Refuge a 64% success/survival rate, which was a slight improvement over the previous year.

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 several of them have become annual visits.

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Section E

Financial Information

Brief Statement of the Charity's Policy on Reserves

If we ever amass any reserves, our initial policy will be to create a savings account to serve as a buffer against unforeseen expenses or the need for more investment in the hospital and facilities.

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 01/04/2023 – 31/03/2024

Income: **£ £3,814.00**

Expenditure: **£ £3,253.00**

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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 1st of April 2023 to the 31st of March 2024, The Hulse Towers Hedgehog Refuge achieved a 64% survival rate, successfully rehabilitating and releasing 65 hedgehogs out of 102 admissions, which is above the UK average for similar rescues.

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

	
Rick Hulse	Amanda Hulse
Chairman	Secretary
12/01/2026	12/01/2026