



RSPCA.

Crewe, Nantwich & District Branch

A charity registered in England and Wales: Charity Number: 1207034

Trustees' Annual Report

For the Year Ending 31 December 2024

Charity Registration number 1207034 (previously 256976)



Trustees' Annual Report And Financial Statements

Year Ending 31st December 2024

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Report of the Trustees

The Trustees of RSPCA Crewe, Nantwich and District Branch have pleasure in presenting their annual report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st December 2024.

The financial statements comply with the Charities Act, the Charity's Constitution and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (updated 1 January 2019).

Our Charitable Objectives

The objects of the Branch (with particular reference to the area of the Branch, and in accordance with the policies of the Society) are to:

- promote the work and objects of the Society.
- promote kindness and prevent or suppress cruelty to animals by all lawful means.

Our Strategic Aims

We are a small branch of the RSPCA staffed entirely by volunteers. We take in and re-home cats, dogs and rabbits. We operate in line with RSPCA requirements and standards in that all our animals are vet checked, vaccinated and microchipped. We ensure that all our animals are re-homed to safe, caring homes. We support our local communities by engaging with specific projects and other charities and organisations.

Public Benefit

We have complied with our duty under Chapter 1 Section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission. Under the Charities Act 2011, the advancement of animal welfare is recognised as a distinct statutory charitable purpose. This legislation, together with the Animal Welfare Act 2006, indicates an acceptance by society that treating living creatures with compassion has a moral benefit for the public as a whole.

Our animal welfare work, whilst local in nature, benefits society at large and also aims to help people in need with the care of their animals. Our charitable activities, outlined within this report, demonstrate the benefit provided to the public. All of our charitable activities focus on promoting kindness and preventing or suppressing cruelty to animals and are undertaken to further these purposes for the public benefit.



Charity Activities

We carry out the following charitable activities for the public benefit across Crewe, Nantwich and surrounding areas:

- We support the Society's Inspectorate by taking in, free of charge, mistreated or abandoned cats, dogs and rabbits including those whose owners suffer ill health or financial difficulties. The Society's Inspectorate rescues animals in distress and enforces laws against the cruel mistreatment of animals in England and Wales by bringing prosecutions. This work is essential to the prevention and suppression of cruelty, forms part of the RSPCA objects, and promotes humane sentiments towards animals that involve moral benefit to humankind as a whole.
- We rehome dogs, cats and rabbits at reasonable cost to suitable adopters. Whilst we recognise that such companion animals provide measurable benefits to physical and mental health, we consider the provision of pets as subsidiary to the main charitable aim of this service, which is to reduce animal suffering. We have a policy of charging a reasonable adoption fee for our animals to highlight the on-going personal and financial commitment of pet ownership. It would not be in the best interests of the animals, and therefore would fall outside our objects, to rehome animals to adopters who cannot afford to care for them.
- The dogs, cats and rabbits in our care receive veterinary treatment, vaccination, neutering and micro-chipping and are assessed for rehoming requirements. This reduces the incidence and spread of disease, helps to control dog, cat and rabbit populations, and reduces potential suffering due to the lack, or loss, of suitable homes.
- We offer subsidised neutering of companion animals for owners on low incomes via specific schemes. This helps to control dog, cat and rabbit populations, promotes responsible pet ownership and benefits pet owners on means-tested benefits by providing financial help. During 2024 we also worked in partnership with two local food banks, helping vulnerable members of our local communities.
- We offer free advice on pet care to promote responsible pet ownership and to educate the public.
- We offer volunteering opportunities to people from all sectors of the local community who wish to support our work, including trusteeship, pre-adoption home visiting, dog/cat socialisation, fostering and fundraising. This benefits the local community by providing opportunities for doing work that is compassionate and rewarding.



Chair's Foreword

It is our pleasure to be presenting this report on our Branch's achievements in 2024, and summary of our aims for 2025. We continue to be a small Branch, staffed entirely by volunteers. We do not have an animal centre, instead relying on volunteer fosterers and a Private Boarding Establishment (PBE) to house our animals. Despite this limit to our resources, and the many challenges we face, we continue to thrive.

It would be remiss of us not to begin this report by paying tribute to our friend and colleague, Mrs. Pamela Parkes who passed away on 9 February 2024. Pam was a trustee and volunteer for the Branch for 38 years; her contribution to our work and animal welfare was immeasurable, and she will be very much missed by us all. By way of tribute to Pam, and her husband Ken (also a dedicated and longstanding trustee for the Branch), we named our kennels in their honour, and of Mr Terence Dunne. The Branch has benefited in recent years from a legacy bequeathed to us by Mr. Dunne, a local resident of Crewe, and a staunch supporter of animal welfare.

We must also draw attention to the huge change to our legal status that we undertook during 2024 – the transition from an unincorporated charity to becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), in line with a significant piece of work introduced by the Society, for its own benefit and that of Branches. It says much about the way that we work, and our openness to change, that we were among the very first Branches to achieve the new status and sign the new Partnership Agreement, with the Society.

Our trustees are incredibly proud of the work we do, and the difference we make not only to animals, but to the lives of those who volunteer and fundraise for us. We consistently overachieve, and continually seek to develop and improve. We very much hope that you enjoy reading our Annual Report for 2024 and enjoy this celebration of our success. We start with an overview of our progress against our objectives for the year, then summarise the rehoming and community work we have done. We end with our financial review 2025 objectives, and mention of the many people we thank for supporting everything that we do.

Julie Brunt
Branch Chair



Progress on objectives set for 2024:

1. Reduce risk to the Branch by:

- Robust financial and business planning, and management of the Risk Plan
- Capacity review of current pressures and workload for existing trustees.
- Investing in volunteer engagement and recruitment.

All achieved - we established clear processes for business planning and risk management, aligning with the Branch Assessment required by the Society.

2. Engage with the Society with regard to regional meetings, learning and development opportunities and networking.

All achieved – we attended regional meetings, the Branches Conference and numerous workshops and meetings around the transition to become a CIO. We also engaged with other Branches to a greater extent than ever before, in a variety of ways.

3. Develop and implement a budgeting and investment process for 2025 and beyond.

Achieved – a robust process is in place, with provision made for regular reviews.

4. Undertake a procedural review of the contract in place with the PBE used by the Branch, following full resumption of dog services.

Achieved – we undertook a thorough review of the contract and licences, which included seeking legal advice. A process for annual informal reviews is also now in place.

5. Develop our people, including undertaking a volunteer survey and alignment of the outcome to our business needs.

Achieved – we undertook the survey, which included all the volunteers registered with us, and developed a plan to implement suggestions made.

6. Expand our network of connected partners and optimise resources with other like-minded charities on our footprint.

Achieved, although we recognise that this is work in progress, and we continue to work on it in 2025, particularly in relation to our engagement with communities across our footprint.

7. Develop a Public Relations (PR) plan to raise the Branch profile and alignment to the Society (and aligned to our new CIO status).

Achieved – we started this work towards the end of 2024 and established a time-limited working party to drive this forward. We continue to develop and implement the plan in 2025

Highlights for the year include:

- Our transition to a CIO – a lengthy and complex process that continues into 2025, but saw our new status registered in June. We operated parallel systems and duplicate processes during the transition; these continued as we moved towards the closure of our unincorporated charity. We were among the very first branches to successfully complete registration, and sign the new Partnership Agreement with the Society.



- In tandem with this change to our status, we undertook a rebranding process, including our logo, website, social media platforms, documentation, following the Society's rebranding initiative and accompanying national campaign.
- We launched our first internal Branch Newsletter in 2024, produced them throughout the year and reviewed this in December. This is now a key function of the internal promotion of our work, and aligns with an action on our Business Plan.
- A new Independent Examiner was appointed - Charity AID Accountancy Services. This is in keeping with best practise of changing IE's every 5-7 years. This will facilitate the introduction of a more thorough external review process of this aspect of our operations.
- Independent legal advice was sought in the refreshment of the existing licence with our Private Boarding Establishment (PBE) - this is important to the Branch in ensuring due diligence around the ongoing care of animals. We wish to ensure best practise at all times.
- We increased our engagement with the Society, other Branches in the North West region and with other voluntary sector organisations across our footprint.



Branch Achievements

Dogs

In 2024 the branch rehomed eleven of the dogs that came into our care, one was transferred to a staffed centre and one is receiving ongoing support into 2025. Twelve dogs came to us via the RSPCA Inspectorate, and one came via local intake from a member of the public. The Inspectorate dogs were nine females and three males. Only one female and one male were neutered when they came into RSPCA care. In addition to routine vet care, i.e. vaccinations, flea and worm treatments, two dogs were in need of expensive dental treatment, one required the removal of a mammary tumour, one required BOAS surgery



and one had chronic skin and other issues including an aural haematoma. None of these conditions were declared prior to branch intake. Some conditions cannot be treated immediately, necessitating lengthy and costly stays in kennels.

In addition to health issues, dogs sometimes have behavioural issues, which require attention. These factors place a financial burden on the branch. Prolonged kennel stays reduce the number of dogs we might otherwise have been able to rehome over the year. Increased health and behavioural issues in rescue dogs have been very noticeable this year. It's hard to pinpoint a particular reason, although the pandemic is probably still having an impact e.g. lack of early socialisation/training and irresponsible ownership. We consider the cost-of-living crisis is also a factor.

This year's dogs came to us for a variety of reasons including cruelty, neglect and abandonment. In two cases, they were signed over because their owners were unable to keep them either for health or financial reasons.

Some dogs are traumatised on arrival and take time to trust and allow interaction. Some dogs adjust well to life in kennels, whilst others find it stressful. Lola, who came to us after suffering abuse, found it difficult to relax in kennels. She faced a lengthy stay as she couldn't be neutered for some months. Fortunately, we were able to arrange foster care for her. Lola's foster family helped her rehabilitation enormously. With their love and patience, Lola's confidence grew and grew. She soon revealed her goofy personality, made friends with other dogs and mastered house training. The impact of caring fosterers cannot be under-estimated. The branch is extremely grateful for their valuable contribution to our work.

We started the year with four dogs in kennels and one in foster care. All had come to branch care via the Inspectorate. They were Betty (Pug), Tess (Pug x), Honey (Pug x), Beth (Labrador Retriever) and Penny (Shih Tzu).

Tess and Honey were adopted in January. Tess needed to be neutered but couldn't have the procedure until after her next season. At Honey's pre-adoption health check, the day before she was due to be adopted, it was discovered she needed quite significant dental treatment (this had not been flagged during previous appointments). Both sets of adopters were prepared to proceed with the adoptions and arrange treatments with their local vets in due course, with the branch providing vouchers to cover the costs. This enabled the adoptions to be completed sooner, avoiding prolonged kennel stays for the dogs. It also meant that the dogs could recover from their surgeries in the comfort of their new homes. Beth also needed to be neutered. Although we knew when it could be safely carried out, as we knew her history, it had to be postponed due to a phantom pregnancy. Fortunately, Beth was fostered by one of our volunteers so she didn't have to wait in kennels. Once spayed, she was adopted by her fosterer.

Betty's stay with us turned out to be long and eventful. She had several health issues when she arrived, which had not been disclosed. She wasn't neutered, she was morbidly obese and she had trouble breathing while exercising. She couldn't be neutered until she reached a healthy weight as she couldn't safely have a general anaesthetic.



Sadly, due to the nature of her health issues, she wasn't a candidate for fostering. Betty coped well in kennels, remaining good-natured in spite of her difficulties. After five months of a strict diet and exercise regime, she was ready to be neutered.

Unfortunately, there was another setback as we were advised Betty was suffering from Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome (BOAS). She needed surgery to improve her breathing before she could be neutered. The procedures couldn't be carried out at the same time - far from ideal. Betty's BOAS surgery involved widening her nostrils (see photos), shortening her soft palate and removing sacculi from her larynx.

Betty was adopted shortly after being neutered. Unfortunately, after four months in the home, she was returned because she had started fighting with the other family dog. The adopter was sad to return Betty, but it was in the best interests of both dogs. She was soon adopted again, this time as an only pet. She took her change in circumstances in her stride and quickly settled with her new family. Before she left us again, Betty was photographed and filmed by the National Society. She features in the new RSPCA 'Born to Suffer' campaign, which raises awareness of irresponsible breeding practices leading to health problems in brachycephalic animals.

We're pleased to have been able to ensure Betty no longer suffers from these problems herself. We're very proud that she is helping to raise awareness and will help other animals in the future.



Another long stayer, Jack, arrived in February. He had already been in RSPCA care for 8 months, being housed in private boarding kennels while waiting for a branch space. Jack had some health issues as a result of a lifetime of neglect. He was suffering from severe fungal and bacterial infections, resulting in sore, inflamed skin and fur loss. He also had some mobility problems, especially stiff back legs. Despite his limitations, Jack was a happy, sociable and affectionate boy who quickly stole our hearts. Joint supplements and regular exercise helped his mobility enormously.



Jack's skin issues took longer to get on top of. A hypo-allergenic diet, anti-fungal baths, anti-histamines, supplements and steroids were all tried. We then discovered that Jack was older than originally thought, around 12, and that he was mostly deaf!

Jack also had a few behavioural issues. He had never lived in a normal home so he had no idea how to behave. He'd never been trained, including house training, and had no manners or spatial awareness. We engaged a clinical behaviourist to compile a training and behaviour management plan, for implementation in Jack's eventual home. The training plan made allowances for Jack's deafness, including the use of visual cues. It took a while but we eventually secured a suitable foster home. Jack has been in the home for a few months now. His fosterers still find him challenging at times but he has made wonderful progress. They have been so patient and sympathetic to Jack's difficult history. Jack, for his part, has worked his magic and charmed them (as he charms everyone he meets). He is very special!



Bobby, a 7 year old Jack Russell Terrier, struggled to cope in the kennels environment. He was very nervous and agitated on arrival, following his removal from an abusive home. Although he soon bonded with our volunteers, and progressed well with training and socialisation, he was stressed and constantly over-excited. Calming medications had no effect. We realised that we were unable to adequately meet his needs and made the difficult decision to move him to a larger branch with better resources than ours, including trained staff. The move was right for Bobby. The additional attention he received helped him to relax a little and accelerated his progress, allowing him to be rehomed sooner.

Low volunteer numbers continue to be a problem in dog rehoming for the branch. We still have a very small core team, despite spending many hours inducting and training new volunteers. We added two excellent new walkers in 2024 but, sadly, some existing volunteers left. Maintaining a capable and reliable team of volunteer dog walkers is an ongoing challenge.

The number of dogs rehomed by the branch was fairly low again this year. Whilst we would like to rehome more dogs, we recognise our limitations. We are proud of the difference we make to our dogs' lives. We see them transform and thrive in our care. We do our utmost to secure healthy, happy futures for our dogs in the loving homes they all deserve and remain committed to this objective.

Angela Chan
Dog Rehoming Coordinator



Cats

2024 was a very busy year for the cat team. Sadly, we saw an increase in cats needing our help, which mirrored a national trend. RSPCA and Cats Protection report that cat abandonment increased by around 30% in 2024 compared with previous years and our experiences were in line with that. The branch homed 100 cats in 2024, which is a great achievement but underlying that is the fact that more cats were in need of help.



The branch became increasingly more involved in helping RSPCA Inspectors by taking ownership and rehoming cats that were brought in by inspectors but could not be housed in RSPCA centres due to the lack of space from the increased demand. Our help meant that more cats could be removed from poor homes or rescued from abandonment. Traditionally cats that are abandoned are single cats or possibly two or three cats that are left behind when owners move away.

A marked change in 2024 was the increased size of the cat groups that were abandoned which included seven cats brought in by inspectors from the same house and ten cats that were abandoned in a house in Crewe. Many of these cats were not neutered so without intervention the groups would have quickly expanded. We always do our very best to help in these situations, but they do place a great deal of pressure on our resources, both financial and human.

Cat neutering is more important now than ever before so in addition to rehoming, the branch became actively involved in assisting with the neutering of unowned/outdoor living cats in conjunction with a local charity who undertook the trapping of the cats. Containing the size of feral colonies is essential for both cat and human health and well-being. To assist people on low incomes, the branch ran a neutering campaign at a vets in Winsford with people contributing £10 for a neuter and a microchip. The campaign was hugely popular with over 20 cats being neutered. Whilst this may not sound like many it has probably prevented 100s of kittens being born. The branch is keen to repeat this campaign in future.



The cat team welcomed new volunteers in 2024 whose contribution has been key in allowing the branch to help more cats and cope with the additional demand.

Amanda Hill
Cat Rehoming Coordinator



Rabbits

2024 saw the branch take in 22 rabbits, 3 from the Inspectorate, 3 transfers from branches, 15 from members of the public and 1 sadly returned after a failed bond. We rehomed 21 rabbits in 2024, a decrease on 2023, but we didn't have the cuteness of babies in 2024 to entice adoptions.

The rising cost of veterinary care, combined with improved knowledge about proper rabbit welfare, has led to an increase in the number of rabbits being surrendered to the RSPCA. As owners become more aware of the complex needs of rabbits—such as the necessity of companionship, large enclosures, and specialised diets—they realise that they are unable to provide adequate care.

Additionally, escalating vet bills, particularly for essential treatments like vaccinations, dental care, and neutering, can place a significant financial strain on owners. This has resulted in more people making the difficult decision to sign their rabbits over, where they hope they will receive the care they need. The trend highlights the importance of responsible pet ownership and the need for continued education on the true commitment required to care for rabbits properly.

This was highlighted in January when a family signed their rabbit, Hades, over to us as they could no longer care for him. We were advised that Hades was 4 years old when we took him in, and that his favourite treat was a rich tea biscuit every night for his tea!

Whilst Hades was settling into foster care, we changed his name to Biscuit - Hades didn't suit his nature at all - and noticed that there was something not right with him.

At the vets they discovered he had arthritis in his spine, dental disease through poor diet, a worn-down hip through being cramped in a tiny hutch and cataracts, meaning he was slightly blind. The vets believed he was more like 8-9 years old.

I personally adopted Biscuit, to live out his days with my other 4 rabbits. He sadly passed away early in 2025, but knew love and companionship in his final year, something he hadn't had previously.



We often see rabbits come into our care which show outward signs of the poor care that they've received, and seeing them improve whilst with us brings so much joy to the team.



Walter, who came in from the Inspectors, hadn't been well cared for at all, he was timid, wasn't keen on hay and had coarse fur. When he went to his forever home in September, he'd come out of his shell, showing a cheeky personality and a new, shiny coat!



You can see in this photo the coarse fur moulting out (ginger in colour) and the new, silky fur coming through (dark brown).

We also had a few new members join the rabbit team in 2024, each bringing something new to the table. The rabbit team is a safe place for us to share experiences, knowledge, joy and sadness over the rabbits we share our lives with.

With this in mind, we had our first social event as a team, pizza night at one of the team's houses, with snuggles all round from the foster buns, Harry and Ron.



Our hope for 2025 is that rabbit welfare continues to improve and that we see a reduction in the number of rabbits needing to come into our care through improved knowledge, however, if early 2025 is any indication, the situation is getting worse, not better.

Katie Farrie
Rabbit Rehoming Coordinator

Welfare Assistance during 2024

We undertook a thorough revision of this aspect of our work during 2024. We wished to reach and support as many people in our local communities as we could, in the context of our limited staff resources. New trustees with excellent local knowledge and contacts enabled us to initiate a partnership with the St Paul's Centre in Crewe.



Towards the end of 2024 we were able to offer financial support for pet food to vulnerable local people, via the Centre. We are developing this work in 2025.

Through engagement with the Society's Food Bank Team, we were able to connect with the Very Green Grocery, Winsford, attending an event there in December. Also present were Society colleagues. Pet food and vet vouchers were distributed to local people and a cat neutering scheme, subsidised by the Branch, was launched for the Winsford area. This operated in partnership with the Ark Vets in Northwich.

We also supported a number of feral cat communities. This comprised capturing a number of cats, providing all necessary medical care and rehoming as appropriate. We aim to have a more strategic and preventative approach to this in 2025, particularly in the Crewe area.

Challenges during 2024

- The ongoing challenge of being an entirely volunteer-led organisation, particularly for a small group of trustees who deal with all the demands of managing and operating our Branch.
- Continuing to function despite shortfalls in some key staffing areas, including a Branch Secretary.
- Attracting volunteers with the knowledge and experience to fulfil certain areas of our work – administration, finance, business, marketing, animal fostering.
- Increased volume of cats and rabbits, placing pressure on existing foster and PBE provision.
- Transitioning arrangements of Branch Partnership Managers (BPM), and having no BPM in place for 4 months of 2024
- Rising costs, particularly in relation to veterinary care and boarding.
- The difficulties of sustaining a dog rehoming function, given the pressures it presents in terms of staff capacity and retention of suitable volunteers.

Objectives set for 2025

- Engage with local Social Housing provider to develop collaborative working regarding neutering schemes
- Increase fosterer numbers and carer capabilities and skills
- Increase inter-Branch and national co-operation
- Develop our work with local communities, supporting vulnerable people and offering educative events
- Conduct a Board effectiveness assessment
- Acquisition of more trustees with skillset in marketing, business and finance



- Implement the Public Relations plan.
- Develop and expand our network by targeting local businesses and other voluntary sector organisations within our footprint.

Volunteering

The Branch remains, as it always has been, staffed entirely by volunteers. The most popular roles for applicants continue to be those directly involved with working with our animals, especially dog walking and cat socialising. We receive enquiries about these types of roles almost every week, although inevitably, not all those who enquire go on to volunteer for us. By the end of 2024, we deemed our Cat and Dog Teams to be sufficient for our needs and therefore removed the request for walkers and socialisers from the website.

We still wish to recruit more fosterers, so this remains a priority for 2025. We are delighted that a core team of volunteers remain with us, which allows for continuity in terms of animal care.

During 2024 we took the decision to split the role of Volunteer Coordinator, aiming to align to individual trustees' strengths and experience. We created the roles of Volunteer Coordinator Administrator, which takes the lead on responding to enquiries that come via our website, and Volunteer Engagement and Community Liaison Officer. The latter is a more adaptive role. Its focus is improving engagement with our own volunteers and establishing better links with other voluntary sector and community organisations. This is a key step in risk management and future branch planning, to help to secure additional volunteer capacity in other areas and implement the Public Relations plan.

Two significant measures were taken in 2024 to improve engagement with our own volunteers. We conducted a survey of all our registered volunteers, asking them their views on their experiences of volunteering for us, and about how we might improve. A key request was for a social event, which we planned to hold in early 2025. We also launched a quarterly internal Branch Newsletter, which aims to inform all our volunteers about the on-going work of our Branch, particularly in relation to rehoming and fundraising. These are extremely high quality and have been very positively received. We reviewed our decision to produce these at the end of 2024, given the extra burden of workload they present for our trustees, but committed to continue with them into 2025.

We were incredibly fortunate to recruit a volunteer videographer in 2024. The expertise he brought greatly supported the fundraising and events team and brought on board new ideas to reach new audiences and markets. His skills were also put to good use in helping our rehoming functions, by providing high quality films of our animals. We were also able to broaden the repertoire of films that we share on our social media platforms.

It is a measure of our improved profile across the Branch network, that we were selected for involvement in the Volunteer Transformation Project. We are one of only a handful nationally to be involved in this pilot programme, which will be rolled out in 2025.



This will bring further networking opportunities alongside the other partnerships involved, and we will benefit from the support of Society colleagues within the project, for our various volunteering functions, including recruitment.

Fundraising

In 2024, we set ourselves the challenging target of £5,000 to be raised throughout the year, and through our hard work, we smashed that target, raising a whopping £7,222! We were able to achieve this by testing out several new events to introduce to our calendar, alongside some of our favourite yearly events.

The highlights of our summer included working with Stapeley Grange and Macclesfield on the One Fun Day celebrations, which saw us embrace the 200th anniversary of RSPCA in a spectacular way, even if the weather was typical for a British summer!

We also ran four Sip and Paint events, inviting the public to come and test their painting skills for an evening, being led into creating some unique pieces of art.

Our summer also saw us at Nantwich Pride, at which we showed our support by wearing our most colourful fashion.

At the end of summer, we held a Puppy Party to conclude the 200th Anniversary celebrations, however, again we were challenged with some very British weather, and had to change our plans at the last minute!

We round off our year with our annual Christmas Fair and raffle, it's always hard work for the whole team as a lot of organising goes into it. But we have an amazing day celebrating the festive season with our supporters, and Santa always pays a visit too!

We are looking forward to 2025 and challenging ourselves with even higher targets and more new events to keep the public supporting us!

Ewa Arrand
Fundraising Coordinator

Financial Review

Due to a desire to become more transparent and clearer in reporting our income and expenditure sources, allocation of some costs are shown differently within this report. Wherever possible, comparative figures for 2023 have been shown.

Income received during this year was £76,358, this was an increase of £16,088 on the previous year's total of £60,270. Income generated through rehoming animals has increased from £8,167 (2023) to £11,336 (2024). The Care Contribution Fund scheme (CCF), paid from RSPCA Head Office, is a daily rate paid to the branch when it takes an animal into care to look after it and attempt to re-home it. This rose from £2,311(2023) to £13,662 (2024).



Both of these increases reflect the increased number of cats, dogs and rabbits we have supported this year. Internal fundraising increased by nearly 40% this year from £5,205 to £7,222; this is a fantastic achievement given the number of volunteers involved.

Expenditure increased from £80,230 (2023) to £96,967. The largest expenditure increase has been for the care of animals. Veterinary treatment has increased from £29,213 (2023) to £37,886 (2024), and the cost of Boarding animals increased from £25,873 (2023) to £39,836 (2024). Again, these costs reflect the increase in animals supported.

David Smith
Treasurer

Reserves Policy

Reserves are held to ensure the continuation of our animal welfare work. In order that our service level for animal welfare is maintained should there be a significant reduction in incoming resources, the Branch holds reserves (funds that are freely available for general purposes and are uncommitted).

As we don't have staff to pay or buildings to maintain, the trustees agree that a minimum reserve of £10,000 should be sufficient and maintained. The trustees recognise that this policy should be, and is, reviewed, as required.

At the end of 2024, the charity reserves were £371,824; all of these were unrestricted.

Risk Assessment

The Trustees are very aware of the need to assess and minimise risks to the operation of the charity. As such, a comprehensive set of policies and procedures are maintained, reviewed, and where necessary, updated to comply with changes in legislation and the requirements of funding bodies. Following the guidance of these policies covers the main risks to the operation of the charity.

The risk of being unable to adequately fund the work we achieve is our main concern. In order to minimise this risk, expenditure is constantly reviewed in order to ensure that funds continue to be used effectively. In addition, the trustees continually look at various ways in which to diversify its income streams.

The charity is registered with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) and adheres to all General Data Protection Regulation. All relevant policies such as Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Equality etc are in place and reviewed regularly.



Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

RSPCA Crewe, Nantwich and District Branch (the Branch) was originally formed as an unincorporated charitable association (registration number 256976) and a separately registered branch of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (the Society) on 8th October 1968.

The Branch converted to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on 15th February 2024 (registration number 1207034) and is governed by a constitution approved by the Charity Commission of England and Wales.

At a trustee meeting 7 June 2024, all assets of the unincorporated charity were transferred to the CIO charity. A resolution to officially close the unincorporated charity was agreed at a meeting on 24 April 2025. As the closure of charity branches falls within the remit of the national branch of the RSPCA, at the time of signing this report the old unincorporated charity is still registered with the Charity Commission pending future closure.

Appointment of Trustees, Induction and Training

The Board of Trustees is well represented by a wide range of individuals from various aspects of the community. Trustees have the power to appoint additional trustees to act jointly with them for all purposes. A trustee whose term of office has expired can be appointed for a further term of office.

All new trustees are invited to meet with the Chair in order to gain an overview of the charity and the context within which it operates. The Chair will discuss the following aspects of the charity with potential or new trustee and answer any questions arising.

- The obligations of the Board of Trustees members.
- The main documents which set out the operational framework for the charity.
- The current financial position as set out in the latest published accounts.
- Future and objectives of the organisation.

In addition, new trustees are given a copy of the latest Annual Report, the trustee role description, the organisation's main policy documents and the latest financial statements. They are made aware of the constitution and the Charity Commission's Trustee Handbook.



Organisational Structure

The Branch is currently governed by a committee of eight trustees. All trustees were elected at the last Annual General Meeting (and drawn from individuals who have been members of the Society and the Branch for at least 3 months).

As a board of trustees, we have a collective responsibility for the management of the Branch and its funds. We have complied with our duty under the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission. Under the Charities Act, the advancement of animal welfare is recognised as a distinct statutory charitable purpose. This legislation, together with the Animal Welfare Act 2006, indicates an acceptance by society that treating living creatures with compassion has a moral benefit for the public as a whole.

Responsibilities of the Trustees

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period.

In preparing these financial statements the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity's SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charity (Accounts Reports) Regulations 2008. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees' Annual Report was approved by the Trustees on 24 April 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

Julie Brunt, Branch Chair



Acknowledgments

The Branch continues its relationship with Santosha Boarding Kennels and Cattery who have maintained their excellent standard of care for our animals over 2024. We are so grateful to the proprietor, Adam Crossley, and to all of Santosha's staff for everything that they do for our animals.

For their help, advice and support over the year, the Branch wishes to thank:

- Group N2 Inspectorate, Brett Witchalls and the staff at Regional Headquarters.
- Gavin Bevan, Branch Partnership Manager.
- Lesley Hung, Dog Rehoming Coordinator from Altrincham Branch.

We would also like to thank local businesses for their support. Particular mention is given to:

- YMCA Crewe for hosting our trustee meetings.
- Helen Daniels of Not Just A Dog Photography for her wonderful photos of our dogs (and sometimes our cats) that help so much in illustrating their rehoming profiles.
- Lauren Clarke, Rabbit Rehoming Coordinator at RSPCA Altrincham, for her continued support of the rabbit function.
- Linda Leese, Ann Hadley and Amy Redfearn for their beautiful crochet blankets, mice and rabbits which the cats love, and for their other kind donations.
- Kevin Lovatt for being our Santa!
- Melanie Latham for judging our dog shows.
- Jackie Cross for making up hampers for us.
- Olwen Ayers for making covers for the carriers, and blankets.
- Other professionals who have supported the Branch including Nantwich Vets, Eden Vets, Birch Heath Vets and Clinical Animal Behaviourist, Cerian Forrest of Forrest Animal Behaviour.

We extend our gratitude to all our supporters, those who have donated or adopted through 2024.

Special thanks to all our volunteers for all the work they do on our behalf. We really wouldn't be here without their commitment and time, and we must also mention their families. Family members are often called upon to do a whole range of activities without even being officially registered as volunteers! So, we wish to extend a huge thank you to all of them!



Reference and Administrative Information

Charity Name:	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Crewe, Nantwich and District Branch
Charity Status:	Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
Charity Number:	1207034
Registered Office:	7 Kings Court Welsh Row Nantwich Cheshire CW5 5DY
Telephone:	07508 342551
Email:	branch@rspca-crewenanthwich.org.uk
Website:	www.rspca-crewenanthwich.org.uk
President:	Vacant
Branch Chair:	Julie Brunt
Secretary:	Mandy Hill (Auxiliary Secretary)
Treasurer:	David Smith
Trustees:	Pamela Parkes (to Feb 2024) Ewa Arrand Katie Farrie Angela Chan Lisa Allen (from Feb 2024) Rachael Dyer (from Apr 2024)
Branch Partnership Manager:	Gavin Bevan (to Aug 2024)
Chief Inspector:	Brett Witchalls
Independent Examiner:	Bev Richardson, Charity AID Accountancy Services Woodland Lodge, Stafford Road, Dunston, Staffs, ST18 2AB
Bank:	National Westminster Bank 36 High Street, Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 2GA



Independent Examiners Reported to the trustees of RSPCA Crewe, Nantwich and District Branch CIO

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of RSPCA Crewe, Nantwich and District Branch CIO ('the Charity') for the year ended 31 December 2024, which are set out on pages 22 to 30.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I can confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1) accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
- 2) the accounts do not accord with those records; or
- 3) the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Bev Richardson MAAT
Charity AID Accountancy Services
Woodland Lodge, Stafford Road, Dunston, Staffs, ST18 2AB

Date 24 April 2025



Statement of Financial Activities

		Un-restricted funds 2024	Restricted funds 2024	Total funds 2024	Total funds 2023
Income from:					
	Note	£	£	£	£
Donations & legacies	1	28,564	-	28,564	34,445
Charitable activities	2	24,998	-	24,998	12,185
Trading activities	3	7,222	-	7,222	5,208
Investments	4	15,574	-	15,574	8,432
Total income		76,358	-	76,358	60,270
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		1,211	-	1,211	-
Charitable activities		95,756	-	95,756	80,230
Total expenditure	5	96,967	-	96,967	80,230
Net income and net movement in funds for year		(20,609)	-	(20,609)	(19,960)
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		392,433	-	392,433	412,393
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-
Total funds carried forward		371,824	-	371,824	392,433

All funds for 2024 were unrestricted.



Balance Sheet

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible assets	9	<u>33,396</u>	<u>39,297</u>
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	10	5,450	5,185
Cash at Bank		<u>337,852</u>	<u>353,839</u>
		<u>343,302</u>	<u>359,024</u>
CREDITORS			
Amounts falling due within one year	11	5,414	5,878
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>337,888</u>	<u>353,146</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>371,824</u>	<u>392,433</u>
FUNDS	12		
Restricted Funds		-	-
Unrestricted Funds		371,824	392,433
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>
TOTAL FUNDS		<u><u>371,824</u></u>	<u><u>392,433</u></u>

The accompanying accounting policies and notes form part of these financial statements.

Approved by the Trustees on 24 April 2025 and signed on their behalf by:

Julie Brunt, Branch Chair

David Smith, Treasurer



Principle Accounting Policies

a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (updated 1 January 2019) – (Charities SORP (FRS102)) and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102).

RSPCA Crewe, Nantwich and District Branch CIO meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note.

b) Going Concern statement

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis which assumes that the Charity will continue to operate. The validity of this assumption is dependent upon the continuance of support from the Charity's key funders and stakeholders and in response to the progress made by the Charity in pursuing a viable budget including the obtaining of further grants and donations.

The Charity's business plan shows that the Charity will be able to operate in the foreseeable future. Based on this understanding the Trustees believe that it remains appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis. The financial statements do not include any adjustments, which would result from the basis of preparation being inappropriate.

c) Funds

General accumulated funds are unrestricted funds available for general purposes and include funds designated for a particular purpose; the use of such funds remains at the discretion of the Trustees.

Restricted funds are funds subject to conditions imposed by the donor or by specific terms of the appeal under which the funds are raised. The restrictive conditions are binding upon the Charity.

d) Income

Income is recognised and included in the accounts when all of the following criteria is met;

- The charity has entitlement to the funds
- Any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met or are fully within the control of the charity
- There is sufficient certainty that receipt of the income is considered probable, and the amount can be measured reliably.
- Income dependent on certain conditions, amounting to more than mere administrative requirements, is recognised when the conditions have been fulfilled.



e) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure on charitable activities includes the direct costs of activities undertaken to further purposes of the charity and their associated support and governance costs.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

f) Interest receivable

Bank interest is shown on the basis of amounts received in the year.

g) Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at a rate calculated to write off the cost on a straight-line basis over a period of less than the estimated useful life of the assets, which is estimated at 10 years.

Fixed assets are capitalised when their value exceeds £500.

h) Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

i) Creditors

Creditors are recognised where the Charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably.

j) Taxation

As a registered Charity no provision is considered necessary for taxation.



Notes to the Financial Statements

1. Donations & legacies

	2024	2023
	£	£
Un-restricted:		
Donations	27,182	34,097
Collection Boxes	108	104
Subscriptions	268	244
Gift Aid Reclaimed	1,006	-
Total	28,564	34,445

2. Income from Charitable Activities

	2024	2023
	£	£
Un-restricted:		
Dog Re-homing	2,000	740
Cat Re-homing	8,466	6,292
Rabbit Re-homing	870	1,135
CCF – Dogs *	6,393	
CCF – Cats *	6,936	2,311
CCF – Rabbits *	333	
Other	-	1,707
Total	24,998	12,185

* CCF costs were shown as one figure in the 2023 accounts

3. Trading activities

	2024	2023
	£	£
Un-restricted		
Fund Raising	7,222	5,208
Total	7,222	5,208

4. Investment

	2024	2023
	£	£
Un-restricted:		
CCLA Investment Interest	15,025	8,432
Bank Interest	549	-
Total	15,574	8,432



Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

5. Analysis of Expenditure

	Unrestricted	Restricted	2024	2023
	£	£	£	£
Fundraising Costs	1,211	-	1,211	285
Telephone	188	-	188	224
Animal Treatment	1,090	-	1,090	2,018
Veterinary Costs – Dogs *	3,953	-	3,953	
Veterinary Costs – Cats *	26,438	-	26,438	29,213
Veterinary Costs - Rabbits	7,495	-	7,495	
Animal Welfare & Neutering	2,034	-	2,034	2,252
Boarding - Dogs *	17,016	-	17,016	
Boarding - Cats *	22,819	-	22,819	25,873
Fostering - Dogs	224	-	224	-
Fostering - Cats	1,520	-	1,520	-
Fostering - Rabbits	871	-	871	-
Dog Behaviorist	-	-	-	245
Animal Equipment	213	-	213	-
Other Equipment	1,044	-	1,044	228
Room Hire	525	-	525	502
Charity Running Costs	2,087	-	2,087	841
Travel	1,091	-	1,091	40
Legal & Professional Fees	1,501	-	1,501	1,030
Branch Contributions	-	-	-	12,128
Miscellaneous	296	-	296	-
Depreciation	5,351	-	5,351	5,351
	96,967	-	96,967	80,230

* Some of the expenditure has been separated and/or re-classified in the 2024 accounts. Veterinary and Boarding costs have previously been recorded as one amount.

Resources Expended

	Unrestricted	Restricted	2024	2023
	£	£	£	£
Fundraising Costs	1,211	-	1,211	285
Direct Costs	85,174	-	85,174	71,729
Support Costs	8,966	-	8,966	7,674
Governance	1,616	-	1,616	542
	96,967	-	96,967	80,230

**Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)****6. Net expenditure/income for year**

	2024	2023
	£	£
Un-restricted:		
Independent Examination	480	520
Depreciation	5,351	5,351
Total	<u>5,831</u>	<u>5,871</u>

7. Trustee remuneration and expenses

The Charity has no employees, it is completely voluntary run. There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits in the year (2023: None). Trustee expenses totalling £4,449 were reimbursed in the year for costs incurred on behalf of the charity (2023: £3,325). There are no further related party transactions that require disclosure in the accounts.

8. Merger Accounting

As explained in the Trustees' Annual Report, a new charity, RSPCA Crewe, Nantwich & District Branch C.I.O (charity number 1207034) was registered with the Charity Commission on 15 February 2024. Under a transfer agreement dated 7 June, the undertaking of assets of the old unincorporated charity (RSPCA Crewe, Nantwich & District charity number 256976) were transferred to the new C.I.O. charity who then took on all activities previously undertaken by the old charity. As required under section 27 of the SORP the transaction has been accounted for by a merger and results pre and post-merger have been combined in these financial statements as follow;

	Old charity pre-merger	New charity post-merger	Combined Total
	£	£	£
Total Income	50,624	21,454	72,078
Total Expenditure	(53,571)	(42,195)	(95,766)
Net income/expenditure & net movement in funds	<u>(2,947)</u>	<u>(20,741)</u>	<u>(23,688)</u>

The above figures do not account for year-end adjustments. All funds pre and post-merger were unrestricted.

**Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)****9. Tangible fixed assets**

	Animal Equipment £	Electronic Equipment £	Total £
Cost			
At beginning of year	39,287	-	39,287
Additions	-	-	-
At end of year	39,287	-	39,287
Depreciation			
At beginning of year	14,227	-	14,227
Charge for the year	5,351	-	5,351
At end of year	19,578	-	19,578
Net Book Value			
At 31 March 2023	39,287	-	39,287
At 31 March 2024	33,936	-	33,936

10. Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Prepayments	-	-
Deferred Income	5,450	5,185
	5,450	5,185

11. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Accruals	5,414	5,878
Deferred Income	-	-
	5,414	5,878

Movements in deferred income are as follows:

	£
At beginning of year	5,185
Released to income in the year	(5,185)
Deferred in year	-
At end of Year	-

Deferred income relates to funding received in advance of project activity.

**Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)****12. Comparative Statement of Financial Activities**

		Un-restricted funds 2023	Restricted funds 2023	Total funds 2023
Income from:				
	Note	£	£	£
Donations & legacies		34,445	-	34,445
Charitable activities		12,185	-	12,185
Trading activities		5,208	-	5,208
Investments		8,432	-	8,432
Total income		60,270	-	60,270
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds		-	-	-
Charitable activities		80,230	-	80,230
Total expenditure		80,230	-	80,230
Net income and net movement in funds for year		(19,960)	-	(19,690)
Reconciliation of funds:				
Total funds brought forward		412,393	-	412,393
Total funds carried forward		392,433	-	392,433