

Annual Report to Trustees

January 2024 – March 2025

Prickleback Urchin Hedgehog Rescue - 1207339

Objectives and Activities

The purpose of the charity, for the benefit of the public, is to relieve the suffering of the hedgehog species in Rutland and the surrounding area.

To achieve this purpose the charity:

- a) provides first aid, treatment and rehabilitation to sick, injured or orphaned hedgehogs with the aim of releasing such hedgehogs back into the wild whenever possible.
- b) provides education to the public in the subject of supporting and promoting the hedgehog population within the remit of their daily lives. This is achieved through talks, presentations, social media and online presence.

The Trustees ensure that the charity's activities to achieve the objects set out in our governance document are for the benefit of the public and are mindful of this when making decisions. This annual report sets out achievements and performance of the charity for the last year.

The charity admits hedgehogs from Rutland and surrounding areas. This service is accessible to any member of the public without discrimination subject to capacity and resources of the rescue. The rescue admits hedgehogs via local veterinary practices or directly from the finder depending on time of day, telephone triage and clinical decision making. The charity does not offer, nor has the capacity to offer, a transportation service to the public.

Achievements and Performance

This year saw the rescue achieve charity status on **6th March 2024**; this achievement was possible as we could prove our organisation met the threshold set out by the charity commission for England and Wales for charitable and public benefit.

This was a significant milestone since opening as a small home-based rescue in July 2021.

The rescue continues to be run as a home-based rescue by the Founders Rachel and Jason with a small team of volunteers. The rescue is the only hedgehog rescue in the county of Rutland however the team work with veterinary practices and members of the public not only from Rutland also from Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire.

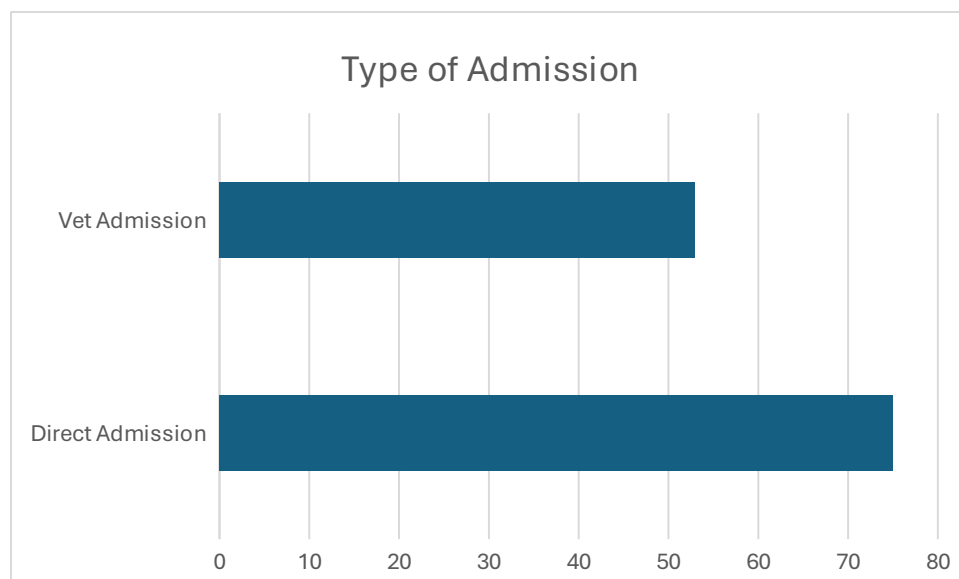
Admissions and outcomes

Overall, the charity has admitted **128** hedgehogs between **March 2024** and **March 2025**.

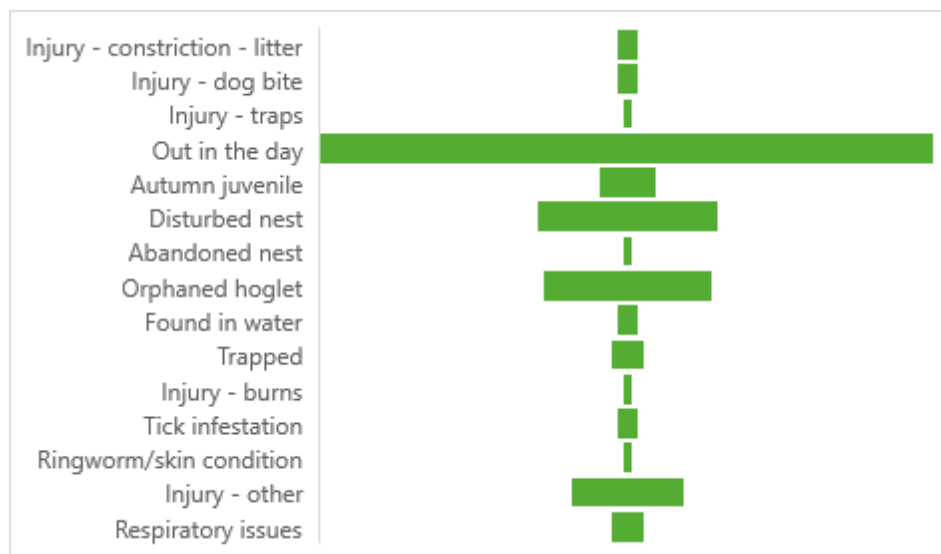
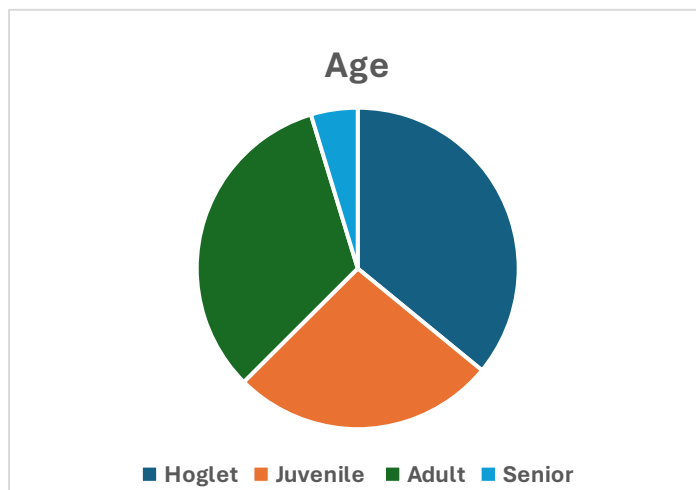
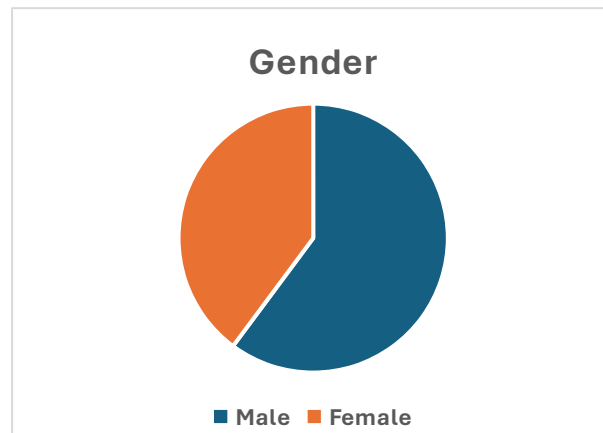
The majority of hedgehogs were admitted directly to the rescue (75) with the remaining 53 via local veterinary practices. As a rescue we encourage all hedgehogs to be taken directly to a veterinary practice in the first instance if found during work hours and this is our preferred admission procedure for 3 reasons:

1. This ensures the hedgehog is seen swiftly and triaged by a veterinary professional at the earliest opportunity.
2. Prevents unnecessary suffering to an animal assessed by a veterinarian as requiring euthanasia due to the extent of injuries or condition.
3. Ensures immediate first aid such as warmth and fluid therapy can be started without delay; this is because the rescue is not able to provide this level of care during working hours.

Hedgehogs are admitted directly into our care, subject to our capacity and availability, when they are found outside of veterinary working hours. In these cases they are triaged within the scope of our ability, first aid is administered and veterinary assistance is sought if clinically necessary at the earliest opportunity. The rescue works closely with all three vets in the Oakham area and effective communication between the rehabilitators and the veterinary professionals is a significant strength in provision and outcomes for animals in this area.

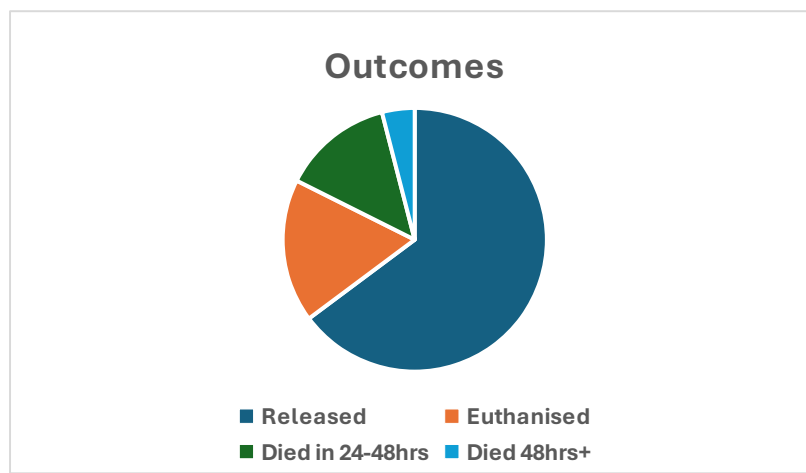


Admission Data



The admission data shows that most hedgehogs admitted in 2024/25 were found 'out in the day' without evidence of any other cause such as injury or trauma. This indicates that most hedgehogs were admitted because of the burden of internal parasites with disturbed nests or orphaned hoglets being the next most significant categories. This data does not reflect the number of hedgehogs we directed the finder to seek immediate veterinary care for due to the nature and/or extent of the animals injuries which may account for the lower percentage of injured hedgehogs admitted to the rescue and the slightly higher than average 'released' percentages shown below.

Outcomes:



In total 65% have been successfully rehabilitated and returned to the wild.

While outcome data is useful, we consider every rescue to be a successful outcome because every animal coming into rescue or veterinary care does so because it is sick, injured or has been disturbed/displaced from its natural habitat. The 18% euthanised were therefore spared prolonged suffering while the 17% that died in rescue were in receipt of experienced, veterinary supervised care at their time of passing.

Training and CPD

The most significant CPD event this year took place between **12th – 14th January** when two members of the team, along with our Vet and RVN from RVC (Rutland veterinary centre) attended the International Hedgehog Conference at Hartpury University in Gloucestershire.

In total the weekend consisted of 19.5 hours of workshops, lectures and networking opportunities with over 300 delegates from across Europe.

In November a team of four consisting of the founders and two volunteers attended training provided by Wild Things Rescue in Lincolnshire with a focus on fostering and setting up satellites or hubs as a rescue.

The founders have attended two courses run by the British Wildlife Rehabilitation Council and in January 2025 the rescue took the step to become an 'Associate Organisation' to demonstrate further our commitment to continuing professional development and best practice in wildlife rehabilitation. The courses undertaken in 2024 were:

- An introduction to parasitology
- Investigation into failures at a Rescue led by a RSPCA Inspector Officer Keith Hogben

Volunteer training and CPD has been a key focus this year and will be outlined further below.

Volunteer Contribution

This year we have continued to expand our volunteer capacity. We have fully inducted two additional volunteers and now have 4 individuals, two of whom are trustees, working directly with the animals in our care. We now have a core team who are able to work independently but under the overall supervision of the Founders. Two of our volunteers have expressed an interest in expanding their roles and even considering future fostering roles and took the Knowledge and Assessment Exam as part of the Wildlife Care Badge scheme in March. Both volunteers passed this assessment and strengthened our provision.

We have two additional volunteers who are ready to complete their induction in 2025 having undertaken 'taster' sessions in October, November and December 2024.

Our volunteer induction policy has been reviewed and a new induction programme is ready for implementation in 2025.

We have three regular volunteers who focus on supporting our fundraising efforts and enable us to raise funds and awareness at community events. The drive and determination of these individuals has helped us raise over £2000 in the financial period 2024/25.

This year has seen a number of individuals become involved by supporting the rescue with regular newspaper ripping! This has saved countless hours for us as rehabbers and has proved invaluable in terms of practical help. We are grateful to receive such targeted and bespoke support which truly helps.

Talks and Education

This year we have provided public benefit by offering a range of talks to groups and interested parties to help promote awareness with the aim of impacting positively on the wider hedgehog population. Talks and sessions are led by Rachel.

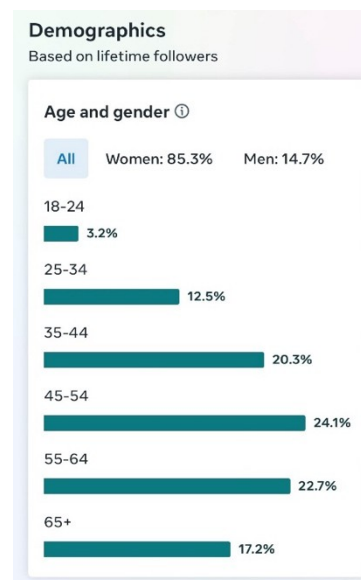
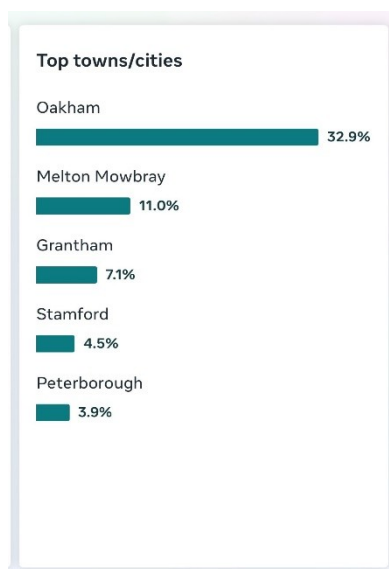
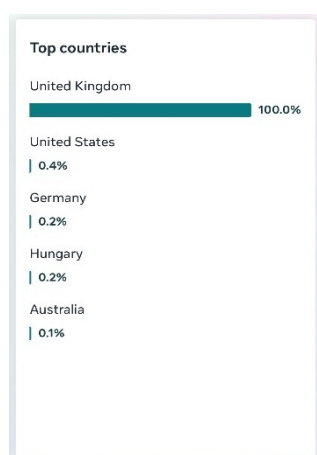
In total we have engaged with 7 groups, 5 school/children's groups and over **391** individuals as shown in the list below:

- 6th February – Ropsley Women's institute. 28 people in attendance.
- 26th February – Greetham Goes Wild talk given (Rachel and Jay) 35 people in attendance.
- 7th March – Waltham on the Wolds Environmental group and Scouts Group combined 22 children and 10 adults
- 13th March - Edith Weston Women's Group - 23 people in attendance.
- 21st March – Bourne Garden Group – 33 people in attendance.
- 25th March – Langham after school club – 15 children + 1 adult
- 8th April – Cottesmore garden group – 34 people in attendance.
- 15th April – Oakham Veterinary Hospital – 12 professionals and interested members of the public.
- 29th April – Barrowby Eco Group – 54 people in attendance.
- 7TH May – Brownies Oakham – 23 children and 2 adults
- 10th June - Rutland Veterinary Centre, Oakham – 3 members of staff
- 17th June – Whole school assembly Langham school (not included in numbers)
- 23rd September - Catmose Vets – 3 professionals
- 28th October – Old Dalby reception class – 24 children and 2 adults
- 25th November – Animate Vets – Market Deeping. 8 professionals.
- 13th January – Priory Vets in Market Deeping (Postponed due to weather)
- 14th January – Carlby WI – 34 people
- 7th February – Easton on the Hill village hall – 35 people
- 11th February – Manthorpe WI – 28 people

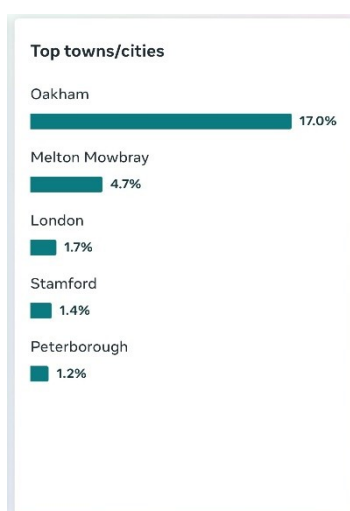
Publicity

Facebook and Instagram are our key channels for information sharing and publicity of the work we do. We have 1,344 Facebook followers and 577 on Instagram and the analytics shows that most of our followers are female. Our followers are almost exclusively within a local radius as shown below although Instagram reaches slightly further afield.

FACEBOOK INSIGHTS:



INSTAGRAM INSIGHTS

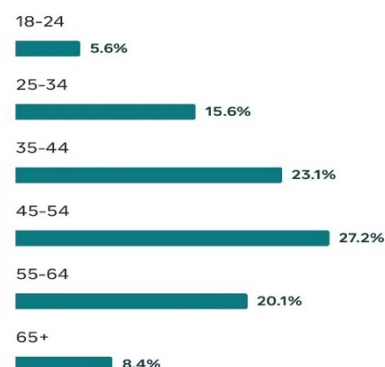


Demographics

Based on lifetime followers

Age and gender

All Women: 80.4% Men: 19.6%



On 25th January 2024 an article on our rescue was run in Stamford and Lincolnshire mercury. An article appeared in the Rutland Living Magazine in the Spring 2024 time specifically to give advice to the general public as per our charity's objectives to coincide with hedgehogs rousing from hibernation. In October 2024 we appeared on the Radio and BBC East Midlands social media channel focusing on advice regarding 'too small to hibernate' and when the general public should or should not intervene. Later in the some month we were interviewed at length on The Eye 103 which is a community Radio Station broadcasting across Melton and the Vale of Belvoir.

Grants, Fundraising and donations

In the last 9 months 78% of our funding income has come from donations with 22% coming from fundraising events. The largest fundraiser in our calendar is our annual Quiz night which was held on the 17th May 2024 at the Victoria Hall in Oakham and raised £1299.33. The annual quiz, which is so kindly hosted and prepared by two local Quiz Masters, is a key source of our fundraising income.

In addition we attended the first Brinvale Farm near Melton Mowbray open day on the 3rd August, the Ashwell Village Fete in June and the Wymondham Christmas Fair in November. Our volunteer Donna is instrumental in make all of these events a success and puts in countless hours preparing and crafting to ensure they are a success.

In September Ferneley's Dairy near Whissendine kindly allowed us to use their site to host our Family Day where the focus was on fundraising but also promoting awareness of hedgehogs amongst the younger generation.

For the second year in a row local Blues Band, Smokestack played for us and donated their time to allow us to host a band night and fundraising birthday bash for the rescue.

As a charity it is now possible for individuals to raise funds for us via 'GoFundMe' or PayPal Giving. Having charity status has enabled us to ensure that our donation routes are now linked to our charity's PayPal Account, something that was not possible before. As soon as a charity status was achieved we amended the website and all links have been updated so that donations come through this route for transparency.

One individual raised over £600 by snorkelling the Silfra in Iceland while others chose to support us with 'birthday fundraisers'.

The Market Overton Sewing group give us regular donations throughout the year and we have received donations from LandsEnd, Multibeds, Rutland Morris Group and sadly donations in memory of Jason's Dad Jorg who passed away this year.

We have a handful of donors who support us by donating monthly directly into the bank account and many others who have given generously after coming into contact with our charity and/or accessing our support.

We have received some small donations (of amounts under £50) from unknown donors across the year in the form of cash posted directly through our door.

Another important income has been generated through donations given by groups that have received talks. We do not charge for giving talks however we do ask for a donation and often receive more than our recommended £60. We do not ask for a donation for school or children's groups such as Brownies or Scouts however it is not uncommon for group leaders to arrange for sundries such as kitchen towel, bin liners, gloves and puppy pads to be given as a thank you.

Local Bird food manufacturer, Brinvale in Long Clawson have donated several boxes of hedgehog food this year and championed our rescue efforts across their social media and news channels.

In November we approached a local legal firm, Hegarty Law and submitted a request to become their nominated charity for 2025 however we have not heard back so assume this was unsuccessful.

In 2024 we did not bid for any grants but intend to in 2025.

Veterinary engagement

A milestone achievement this year has been the continued and strengthening relationship with the veterinary teams across Oakham and further afield. Our charity is supported and holds an account with Rutland Veterinary Centre in Oakham and our annual veterinary visit is due on the 20th January 2025. Our premises are inspected annually at our cost and consists of a challenging and detailed review of our site, enclosures, practices, record keeping, protocols and storage of medication. The annual visit is essential in order to maintain our operating agreements with our prescribing veterinary team and is also an opportunity for us to review and improve our practice. In 2024 the advice to 'uncouple' the finders information from the daily record sheets for example was immediately acted upon. Upon completion the annual report is submitted to the Wildlife Care Badge scheme to enable us to continue with our accredited status. Rutland Veterinary Centre are our dispensing veterinary team and without this working agreement we would be unable to undertake our role as a wildlife rehabilitation unit.

We also have a close and well-established working relationship with Oakham Veterinary Hospital and in 2024 more hedgehogs were admitted via this veterinary practice than Rutland Veterinary Centre.

In September we approached a newly established veterinary practice in Oakham, Catmose Vets and were given a warm welcome. In March they supported us for the first time with an out of hours emergency. Having out of hours provision for emergencies has only been provided at Uppingham previously so an additional veterinary practice is extremely welcome. We hope to further our links with this practice in 2025.

Having support from three veterinary practices means we are able to ensure that hedgehogs in need are seen swiftly depending on availability and opening times giving us a large scope of veterinary support. It cannot be stressed enough how important and vital this support is to our rescue and a future change in veterinary support is the single biggest risk factor we can identify. Thankfully, the level of engagement and commitment from all veterinary practitioners and their administration teams is phenomenal.

In 2024 we were invited to give awareness talks to veterinary professionals and administrative teams in both practices. We created a species specific 'triage' flow chart for the administration teams to help ensure that a member of the public calling a veterinary practice for advice is given the correct information to improve outcomes. This piece of work has subsequently been shared with four other rescues and a further 2 veterinary centres.

In November we were invited to give our presentation to Animates vets in Market Deeping. This veterinary practice has an exotic animal hospital onsite which makes them well equipped to deal with hedgehogs. The team at Animates have chosen to support us by taking a charity donation box for display in their reception. We have admitted two hedgehogs via this team in the Autumn of 2024.

In February (27.2.25) Rachel was invited by the Wildlife care badge team to host a webinar titled – A Case Study of developing positive relationships with veterinary professionals for colleague rescues, furthering our network.

Financial Review and administration

The accounts will be shared in a separate document.

The charities Bank Account is held with the Melton Mowbray branch of Natwest where the account is held in the name of Prickleback Urchin Hedgehog Rescue.

The Financial Controls Policy and Reserves policy was reviewed by the Trustees at the Finance meeting on the 16th January 2025. The end of the financial year is the 5th April 2025.

The Charity's first annual review and accounts need to be submitted the charity commission by 4th February 2026.

The charity's insurance has been renewed with ANSVAR. The premium increased this year as we have more than 5 volunteers, we are now a charity and our income exceeded £10,000. The premium has been paid and the new certificate of insurance will be displayed when provided before the renewal date which is the 28th January 2025.

The charity now has a new telephone number and we have subscribed to an internet based landline service called Air Landline. This provides real benefits because the number now published is not a personal mobile and the system allows calls to be diverted to other mobiles or directly to answer machine when necessary. This is a big step forward in protecting ourselves as individuals. The new number is 01572 504114. The cost of the subscription is £11.99 a month.

The website and business cards have all been updated. The new system allows us to also have a 'Business WhatsApp' providing another layer of segregation between ourselves as individuals and our role as the key contacts for the charity.

Structure, Governance and Management

The charity is a CIO (charitable incorporated organisation) and has a board of 5 Trustees. Mrs Rachel Thomas, Mr Jason Calmus, Mrs Natalie Mostert, Mr John Bladon, Mr Neil Jones. The chair is Mrs Rachel Thomas, the Treasurer is Mrs Natalie Mostert.

The charity is run day to day by the founders Mrs Rachel Thomas and Mr Jason Calmus.

The charities Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) is Mr Jason Calmus who is also the Health and Safety Officer.

The Trustee information on the charity commission website is up to date and accurate.

Reference and Administrative details

Registered Charity Number: 1207339

Structure: Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

Date of Registration: 6/03/2024

Charity Address: 9 Cordle Way, Market Overton, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 7PU



5th April 2024 - 4th April 2025

2024/2025

Cash balance @ 04/04/2025 **£12,031**

Opening balance	£3,464.90
Total Income	£15,520.05
Total Expenditure	£6,833.03
Total Surplus/(deficit)	£12,151.92
In year Surplus/(deficit)	£8,687.02

Income

Fundraising	18.5%	£2,867.59
Donation	80.9%	£12,552.46

Total Income £15,520.05

Expenses

Equipment	24.7%	£1,685.06
Food	22.3%	£1,522.55
Veterinary care & medication	15.0%	£1,027.38
Training & conferences	1.1%	£75.00
Fundraising expenses	16.1%	£1,100.83
Bedding	7.1%	£484.89
Sundries	1.0%	£66.98
Marketing	2.5%	£169.04
Medical equipment	3.6%	£248.41
Public Liability Insurance (Feb)	3.7%	£249.75
Stationery	1.0%	£68.19
Subscription	2.0%	£134.95

Repayment to RT	£341.27
Repayment to Vets	£991.63

Total Expenditure inc. repayments £8,165.93

Total Expenditure £6,833.03

Fundraising:

Quiz	£1,359.33
Smokestack	£510.00
Kelsey's Iceland Snorkle	£487.55
Ferneleys	£510.71

Total Fundraising £2,867.59

