

RSPCA WILTSHIRE MID BRANCH TRUSTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

The RSPCA Wiltshire Mid Branch operates in central Wiltshire, covering the four towns of Devizes, Melksham, Warminster and Westbury and the surrounding villages. It is a registered charity and its charity number is **205295**.

Trustees

The committee comprises ten volunteers with a broad range of life experiences and careers, all sharing a common passion for animal welfare – specifically preventing cruelty, alleviating suffering and promoting kindness.

Committee

Mr. Andrew Sheppard (Chairman)

Mr. Richard Pearce (Treasurer)

Miss Jane Barton (Secretary – up to AGM for 2022)

Mrs. Elizabeth Davies (Secretary from 1st July 2023)

Mrs. Lesley Pawlak

Mrs. Jo Sheppard

Ms. Maddy Goodman

Mrs. Caroline Davy

Miss Jessica Scull

Mrs Lorna Gough

Miss Jessica Portch (co-opted)

Contact Information

For communication purposes the principal address is C/o Rangebourne Pet Care, 38 New Park Street, Devizes, SN10 1DT the business address of the Chairman Mr. Sheppard.

web site is <https://www.rspca.org.uk/local/wiltshire-mid-branch/> This site shows details of how to get in touch for animal welfare purposes alongside current news and national and local campaigns/events.

The financial accounts are independently examined by Alanbrookes Group Ltd., t/a J S Weeks & Co., 10 Market Place, Devizes, SN10 1HT. Branch funds are held by Lloyds Bank PLC, Devizes.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Branch is constituted as an unincorporated association. The Branch operates as an autonomous Branch of the National RSPCA subject to its rules for Branches. A committee of Trustees, elected at the Annual General Meeting governs the Branch. All Trustees are briefed on their responsibilities as Trustees prior to their acceptance of the role.

The Branch operates within a national network of organisations that pursue the same objectives, known collectively as the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The network comprises independent Branches operating within a defined geographical area for the purposes of fundraising and the provision of animal care facilities and treatments.

A regional structure which is overseen on a national basis, brings several Branch colleagues together with Inspectors, regional and national representatives. The purpose is to discuss regional funding, co-ordinate policies and objectives as well as provide opportunities for colleagues to share knowledge and experiences.

Representatives of the Branches, regional and national organisations meet at this forum on a regular (at least bi-annual) basis.

The Branch also has links with other Branches and organisations committed to the same objectives including among others, Cats Protection, Wiltshire Wildlife Hospital, RSPCA Bath Cats and Dogs Home, Cat Action Trust, Chippenham Cat Rescue, Acorn Rescue and Compassion for Cats.

Branch Management

The Trustees meet every eight weeks to discuss progress on the year's activities and to agree any required actions. The Branch finances are reviewed at each meeting to ensure donated funds are used appropriately and to mitigate any risks.

The Trustees also examine other operational and business risks and confirm that they have established systems to mitigate any significant risks, such as:-

1. Loss of reputation through error or fraud
2. Loss of income through error or fraud
3. Insufficient funds to cover the costs of animal welfare activities

These meetings are also used to ensure that the Branch operates in accordance with any relevant National Society rules, processes and initiatives – guided by the Branch Partnership Manager.

OBJECTS, OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES

The objects of the Branch are to promote the work and objectives of the National Society of the RSPCA – to prevent animal cruelty, to promote kindness to animals and to alleviate the suffering of animals through all lawful means – with particular reference to the Branch area and in accordance with the policies of the Society.

The Trustees have reviewed the outcomes and achievements of the Branch's objectives and activities for the year to ensure they remain focused on the charity's aims and continue to deliver benefits to the public. The Trustees have complied with the duty under the Charities Act 1993 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission which can be illustrated as follows: -

Alleviating Suffering

A priority for the Branch is to ensure appropriate veterinary care is available for animals whose owners are on benefits or a low income and may be reluctant or anxious about the costs of seeing a vet. The Branch provides contributions towards veterinary treatment for sick or injured animals owned by local people on low incomes and on benefits through a voucher scheme.

During 2023 vouchers to the total value of £12,581 were redeemed in the Branch area. The neutering campaign amounted to a further £11,818. Further expenditure was incurred by our continuing trapping, neutering and releasing of feral adult cats and rehoming of any kittens of feral cats which amounted to £8,415 (including expenses). This is a separate issue from the voucher system. Below is an analysis of veterinary charges incurred in 2023.

ANALYSIS OF VET CHARGES 2023		£	£		
Cats	Spay	8519		27.86%	
Cats	Castrate	4356		14.25%	
Cats	Medical/Surgical	5897		19.29%	
Cats	TNR/Branch Animals	6178		20.20%	
Cats	Microchipping	706		2.31%	
Cats Total			25656		83.91%
Dogs	Spay	248		0.81%	
Dogs	Castrate	200		0.65%	
Dogs	Medical/Surgical	4129		13.50%	
Dogs Total			4577		14.97%
Others	Neutering	100		0.33%	

Others	Medical/Surgical	244		0.80%	
Others Total			344		1.13%
Grand Total			30577		100%

PROMOTING KINDNESS AND PREVENTING CRUELTY

The branch has a phone which trustees take in turns to hold and answer so that the public can ring to ask for help and advice. This is available for 12 hours a day and when not manned has a lot of useful information the public can access. We issue vouchers where we feel this is necessary to alleviate an animal's suffering (this is only to owners who are on benefits) and always encourage owners to think about pet insurance.

The Branch also offers subsidised neutering of cats for owners on state benefits, this helps to control cat populations and promotes responsible pet ownership.

Volunteering Support

RSPCA Wiltshire Mid Branch provide volunteering opportunities for those who wish to support our work including Trusteeship, fundraising and event participation.

The Branch continues to make efforts to attract new Trustees and volunteers.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Joint Report of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer for 2023

2023 has been a year when our focus has very much been on building the strength of our trustee and volunteer teams in order to continue our work in the area.

We have had a year of concentrating on the cat population and ways to ensure this is kept to a manageable level. Feral colonies have been a major share of the work and our trapping, neutering and releasing has gone some considerable way to reducing unwanted kittens in our area.

Our thanks go to our trustees and volunteers who carried out this vital work and those who have taken on the care of kittens from feral colonies prior to finding homes for them.

It was agreed that we should hold a cat neutering campaign to run from 9th January to 31st March 2023.

We were able to secure funding of a £6,00 grant from the RSPCA South West Regional Board was based on an estimate of £12,000 expenditure for the campaign.

We received 339 applications in total for 481 cats to be neutered. Applications by areas of responsibility were as follows:

RSPCA Mid Wilts Branch – 133 female, 101 male, 195 microchips
Cats Protections Frome and District Branch – 91 female, 91 male, 127 microchips
Out of campaign area (passed to relevant organisation where possible and practicable
33 females, 32 males, 58 microchips

All vets in the area were involved in the campaign. Vouchers expired on 30th September 2023.

Expected cost to RSPCA Mid Wilts Branch if all vouchers are presented is £14,713.64 which includes £236.64 for the supply of RSPCA microchips. By supplying the microchips an estimated saving of £880 in charges was achieved.

During the course of the year, we have, as always, provided financial support in the form of vouchers issued to veterinary practices for owners who cannot afford to take their animals for treatment. This financial assistance is limited per case for people on state benefits and advice is

also given with regard to pet insurance (although this is often too expensive for families on state benefits).

Some restrictions are being made in respect of the amount of money the Branch will give in particular situations and when the need for more expensive assistance is required i.e. operations, benefit status would be taken into consideration. This is a very difficult area to police and every case is individual and needs to be considered carefully to ensure that each animal that comes to our attention receives at the very least, emergency care.

The Branch continues to financially support the Wiltshire Wildlife Hospital at Newton Tony, Salisbury. The financial assistance takes the form of a percentage of the running costs of the Hospital, based upon the numbers of animals / birds which originate from the Mid Wilts Branch area. All payments are open to debate and approval by the committee.

In line with that arrangement, in February 2023 an invoice was duly received and based upon the figures provided, it was agreed that the sum of £9,000 should be paid to the Hospital; this figure would represent our total financial support for 2023 up to and including the 1st January 2024.

The Committee are very happy to continue supporting the Hospital which provide dedicated care of injured and rehabilitating wildlife originating from our community area, this in turn has the knock-on effect of helping to reduce the workload of our Inspectors, who, without the Hospital's intervention would be required to attend and deal with many of these casualties.

We have on occasion been most fortunate to receive legacies from some amazing people which has enabled us to carry out the work which we do, without that monetary support the degree of financial assistance we could provide would be minimal. Fundraising in this day and age is very difficult, the majority of people, due to the rise in cost of living are unable to assist charities as they once would have done.

The legacy leaflets which were devised and printed last year are being used at events we run or attend in the hope that members of the public will consider this as an option when making their wills.

In respect of neutering, again during the year a number of feral cats from various colonies in our Branch area have been successfully trapped, neutered and returned to sites, sincere thanks are extended to trustees Mr. Thom and Ms Goodman for their hard and diligent work in this respect.

Feral colonies are an ongoing problem in the branch area but we will continue to monitor and take necessary action to reduce unwanted kittens.

We have co-opted Jess Portch to our branch and we hope she will become a full trustee after the AGM. Jess lives locally and grew up with horses, dogs and chickens. She wanted to join our branch to make a difference to animal in the area. She had previously volunteered for another charity but wanted to get more involved with rescuing and rehoming so came to Mid Wilts RSPCA.

In June 2023 we held our Annual General Meeting. Inspector Steph Daly kindly attended the meeting and gave a brief resume of her work within the RSPCA. The meeting was as usual small in attendance but matters of business were progressed and the meeting was concluded with light refreshments.

If there are any members or supporters who could assist in any form with any of our events / fundraising initiatives it would be greatly appreciated, the committee are small in number, many with a number of additional responsibilities and limited free time and any offers of assistance would be greatly appreciated.

That brings us to the end of another year in which we feel we have forged good relationships with new organisations and strengthened our relationships with organisations we already work with so that the animals in the Mid Wilts area are supported and cared for with a range of different but caring organisations who have their welfare at heart.

In conclusion, as always, our grateful thanks are extended to everyone who has supported us in whatever way during the past year either financially or by the generous gift of their time. Our thanks go to our Branch Partnership Managers, Mrs Rogers (part of the year) and Mrs. Robson, local authorities and Veterinary Practices and our dedicated Inspectors and their colleagues.

Detailed below are bullet points in support of the following topics: -

Collaboration with the National Society

It is a given that we always support the National Society objectives, where appropriate, and within our capability. Guided by our Branch Partnership

Manager we use the regular Branch Communication circulations to identify opportunities to get involved.

As part of our commitment to running a properly regulated charity we have established several Branch policies and have adopted the principle of a Branch Annual Review through which we may reflect on past work and to plan future activities.

Collaboration with the Community

We are taking part in the Melksham River Festival this year to promote the branch and it's work in the Melksham community. We will have a pitch at the festival with lots of information about our work and hope to engage with the public by showing them the many and varied strands that make up our work with animals and their owners.

Collaboration with other Branches and Charities

As will have been seen from previous reports the Branch agreed to North Wilts Branch siting an RSPCA shop in Warminster, under the terms of the arrangement the Branch receives a percentage of the profits and all donations received, which this year amounted to £683.50 to benefit the Mid Wilts Branch. We also collaborate with the Cats Protection Frome and district for our cat neutering campaigns and they have been very supportive.

Wiltshire Wildlife Hospital continues to receive monetary support from the Branch to assist in their work of caring for and rehabilitating local wildlife.

Collaboration with the Local Inspectors

The RSPCA Inspectors provide knowledge and experience to the Branch which is invaluable, the wide range of issues and problems they face can be seen from the Chief Inspector's Report included within this Report.

Fundraising

We are actively seeking to raise funds via grants and legacies with leaflets about legacies being part of our events.

Branch Awareness is a focus for the coming year with events that inform and (and hopefully involve) people in the areas we cover.

The total incoming resources for the year amounted to £39,168. Expenditure for the year amounted to £43,253.

It is the policy of the Branch to maintain free reserves for the Branch at a level equal to approximately five years' unrestricted expenditure, to allow for fluctuations in donations and legacies on which the Branch relies. Our Trustees are keen that money should not be retained unnecessarily simply to ensure sustainability.

Free reserves are defined as unrestricted reserves (funds donated for a specific purpose which cannot be used for anything other than the purpose for which they were donated).

In line with the Branch Rules, an annual donation is made to the National Society, this amount is calculated as a percentage of our free reserves. This donation is deducted at source from our share of the Door-to-Door collection that we receive annually from the National Society.

The investment policy, taken on advice following receipt of legacies, takes into account our cautious attitude to risk, with investment funds stored in National Savings Income Bonds.

The Trustees have no designated funds for expenditure in the next twelve months, apart from an amount in the region of £7,500 which will be donated to the Wiltshire Wildlife Hospital during 2024.

FUTURE PLANS

Together with our regular and continuing support provided to those in need of financial veterinary assistance we will be at the Melksham River Festival on 31st August and 1st September and plan another Dog Show in 2025 in Devizes.

We continue to look to increase our Volunteer / Trustee base with a view to bringing fresh ideas into the group.

We will continue to work with our local Inspectors, supporting them on specific animal welfare projects as identified by them.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and their financial statements in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

Law applicable to charities in England and Wales require the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. The financial statements are required by law to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs and the net incoming and outgoing resources of the Charity for that period. In preparing the financial statements, Trustees are required to: -

1. Select suitable policies and then apply them consistently;
2. Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
3. Prepare financial statements on a going-concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Branch will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 1993. They have general responsibility for taking such steps as are reasonably open, to safeguard the assets of the Charity and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

So far as the Trustees are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Charity's auditors are unaware. Additionally, the Trustees have taken all the steps needed in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Charity's auditors are aware of that information.

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2023

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

WILTSHIRE MID BRANCH

CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER 205295

REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

**ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO
ANIMALS -**

WILTSHIRE MID BRANCH

Report of the Independent Examiner

**To The Officers and Committee of Royal Society for the Prevention of
Cruelty to Animals - Wiltshire Mid Branch**

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 December 2023, which are set out on pages 3 to 5.

Respective Responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act)) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:-

- examine the accounts (under section 145 of the 2011 Act);
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act); and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent Examiner's Statement

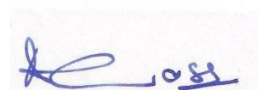
In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act, and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act,

have not been met; or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



.....
Mrs A M Cross FCCA

The Alanbrookes Group Ltd t/a J S Weeks & Co

10 Market Place

Devizes SN10 1HT

Wiltshire

8 May 2024

**ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS -
WILTSHIRE MID BRANCH
BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023**

2023	2022		
£			£
		Accumulated Fund	
133,571.93		Balance Brought Forward	106,463.43
		Add Surplus of Income	
-.-		Over Expenditure	-.-
		Deduct Excess of Expenditure	
(27,108.50)		Over Income	(4,084.50)
-----			-----
106,463.43			102,378.93
=====			=====
		Represented By:	
		Investments	
100,000.00		National Savings Income Bonds	105,000.00
15,010.94		Bank Deposit Account	4,067.47
		Current Assets	
2,316.30		Bank Current Account	3,775.48
-----			-----
117,327.24			112,842.95
(10,863.81)		Less:- Creditors	(10,464.02)
-----			-----
106,463.43			102,378.93
=====			=====

**ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS -
WILTSHIRE MID BRANCH**

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

2023	2022	INCOME	
	£		£
	2,926.66	Subscriptions and Donations	6,165.94
	1,828.00	Warminster Shop – Share of Profit	.-
292.00		Shop – Donations	683.50
	1,801.90	Dog Show Receipts	.-
	.-	Legacies	.-
	.-	Grants	6,000.00
	23,218.00	Door to Door Collection	23,094.00

-----	30,066.56		35,943.44
		Investment Income	
823.31		Interest Received	3,225.21

-----	30,889.87		39,168.65
	=====		
=====			

**ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS -
WILTSHIRE MID BRANCH**

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

2023	2022	EXPENDITURE		
£	£		£	£
551.00		Branch Contribution to RSPCA	551.00	
28,437.80		Veterinary Fees - General	12,580.83	
11,105.38		Neutering Campaigns	11,818.27	
3,604.42		Feral Neutering/Rehoming	6,178.07	
3,374.42		Feral TNR Expenses	2,237.92	
145.88		Goods Purchased	764.32	
360.00		Independent Examiner's Fees	360.00	
296.05		Telephone	238.39	
9,000.00		Wildlife Hospital	7,500.00	
279.50		Dog Show Expenses	.-	
.-		Printing	95.00	
180.00		Room Hire	72.00	
35.00		ICO Fees	35.00	
628.92		Insurance	822.35	
-----	57,998.37			
	-----	43,253.15		
		Surplus of Income over Expenditure		
	.-	Carried to Accumulated Fund		.-
		Excess of Expenditure over Income		
	(27,108.50)			
Carried to Accumulated Fund				(4,084.50)
	-----			-----
	30,889.87			
		39,168.65		
	=====			
	=====			

**ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO
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WILTSHIRE MID BRANCH

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Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

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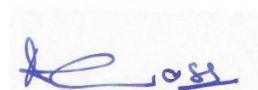
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8 May 2024

