



# RSPCA Kent-Folkestone & District Branch

Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts. Year ended 31 December 2023

Registered Office: Henwood House, Henwood, Ashford TN24 8DH. Charity Number: 209580





## TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023.

### POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

The object of the charity is to promote kindness and good care and prevent or suppress cruelty to animals by all lawful means, in accordance with the policies of the Society.

### REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Kent-Folkestone and District Branch is registered with the Charity Commission under charity number 209580 and is governed by the rules and regulations laid down by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA).

## OUR TRUSTEES FOR 2023

Trustees are elected by the local RSPCA membership. The trustees who served during the year, and at the report approval date, are as follows:

Linda Hicks: Chairman (appointed 17 November 2022)  
Olivia Treadwell: Secretary (resigned June 2023)  
Sian Hughes: Secretary and Vice Chair (appointed June 2023)  
Andre Knuchel-Takano: Treasurer (resigned June 2023)  
Pam Ninham: Treasurer (appointed June 2023)  
Jeff Hicks  
Maddison Broom (appointed June 2023)  
Siobhan Pery-Knox-Gore (appointed June 2023)  
Becky Odd (appointed June 2024)

### INDEPENDENT EXAMINER, ACCOUNTANTS & PAYROLL

Magee Gammon, Henwood House,  
Henwood, Ashford TN24 8DH

### BANKERS

Natwest Bank Plc

## STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The charity is constituted as an unincorporated association. The charity operates as a separately registered Branch of the RSPCA subject to its rules for Branches (as updated in December 2021). In the normal course of business, Committee members are elected at every Annual General Meeting, from the members of the Branch, to carry on the work for the ensuing year. Candidates must receive 50% of the votes of the members present.

The elected Branch Committee can co-opt not more than three members onto the Committee until the next Annual General Meeting. All Committee members must be Society members for a minimum of three months on appointment. The Committee members are trustees of the Branch and are briefed on their responsibilities as trustees prior to their acceptance of the role.

The trustees hold regular meetings at which decisions are made and implemented or conveyed to our staff for action.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

A health and safety policy that outlines the Branch's duty of care in respect of the health and safety of all persons visiting the Branch's working premises (e.g. volunteers, contractors, members of the public) is available for reference by all staff and volunteers and is reviewed regularly to take into account any changes.

It is a legal and important requirement that the RSPCA Kent-Folkestone & District Branch, in the conduct of its business operations, ensures a safe and healthy working environment for all its employees, contractors, visitors and volunteers in compliance with all current Health and Safety Legislation. The RSPCA Kent-Folkestone & District Branch accepts the fact that this implies the corresponding duty of ensuring that the necessary branch, equipment, and training is provided to fulfil this obligation.

An effective Health and Safety Policy requires the full collaboration and co-operation of all employees; therefore, all employees are required to familiarise themselves with the content of the documents and to accept their own personal responsibility for Health and Safety at work.

## SAFEGUARDING POLICY

A safeguarding policy was reviewed and revised by a trustee with a specialism in safeguarding, recognising our collective responsibility for safeguarding children and adults at risk of abuse and exploitation.

## FUNDRAISING POLICY

A fundraising policy has been reviewed and adopted by the trustees to ensure compliance with the Fundraising Code of Practice and all relevant legislation. This recognises the care required in handling donations and funds raised and ensures governance is in place to prevent risk of fraud.

## LONE WORKER POLICY

The trustees have developed a lone worker policy to support our staff and volunteers to feel safe and supported at work this is reviewed regularly by our HR consultant and the relevant Line Manager, to take into account any changes.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**

This policy ensures that Trustees always make decisions in the Branch's interests alone and to further its specific charitable purposes.

## **WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

RSPCA Kent-Folkestone & District Branch has developed a Whistleblowing Policy to demonstrate its commitment to open and accountable management. This policy is designed to allow staff, volunteers and trustees to disclose information that they believe shows malpractice, unethical conduct or illegal practices in the undertaking of our work, without being penalised in any way.

## **HOME WORKING & PERSONAL DEVICES POLICY**

RSPCA Kent-Folkestone & District Branch allows employees to work from home on occasions that are agreed in advance with their line manager. There is no automatic right to work from home. When deciding whether to allow an employee to work from home the primary consideration will always be the efficient completion of work duties.

During 2023 the trustees chose to appoint Peninsula, a specialist provider of Human Resources and Health & Safety support. This will offer the branch 24/7 access to advice and a greater opportunity for training to ensure the branch, its volunteers and staff are up to date and compliant with current requirements.

# RISK MANAGEMENT

The branch have a commitment to review and manage the potential risks that the charity faces. The trustees have taken steps to mitigate against any risks that our staff and volunteers may face during the course of their duties.

**The Branch have identified the following risks:**

- Loss of income through error or fraud
- Loss of reputation
- Loss of income through outside forces
- Insufficient trustees to continue as a viable branch
- Risk of claims by volunteers or the public
- Adverse publicity
- Risk of inadvertent non-compliance with complex legislation such as GDPR
- Insufficient suitable homes for the animals rescued and rehabilitated, particularly the elderly and abused
- Health and safety of staff and volunteers working with abused and neglected animals and their owners in the most difficult areas of animal welfare
- Insufficient resources to help all the animals that need us



## STRATEGIC AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The object of the charity is to promote kindness and good care and prevent or suppress cruelty to animals by all lawful means with particular reference to the area of the Branch, in accordance with the policies of the Society. Our activities to achieve the objectives include the following:

During 2023, Kent-Folkestone and District Branch, have continued to provide vital support to the community. Our Animal Welfare Officer has become invaluable, being called on for wildlife rescues, as well as offering advice and assistance to pet owners. She has worked alongside the Inspectorate, supporting their work. Our Outreach & Fundraising Officer, works with us for three days a week, and aids our AWO, as well as educating and informing the public about the vital work of the local branch.

We have continued to provide financial support for neutering as well as vaccinations and microchipping. Since our Folkestone clinic was closed by the veterinary centre where it was based, we've worked to establish relationships with several vet practices throughout the area in order to continue to provide this essential service to those in receipt of welfare payments. Neutering has both behavioural and health benefits for the animal.

We've provided veterinary welfare assistance via our voucher scheme, which benefits those members of the

public on low income by offering them financial help and promoting responsible pet ownership.

The Branch also runs two pet food banks, which have been vital during this difficult time. These have been supplied by a combination of donated food and pet food purchased by the Branch.

Our officers have established relationships with other local animal welfare organisations and worked together to manage wildlife emergencies and concerns. They've supported each others work and drawn on a range of skills to best care for the needs of animals.

We've continued to collaborate with neighbouring RSPCA branches and benefit from access to their rehoming centres for emergency accommodation for mistreated or abandoned animals, including pets whose owners suffer ill health, financial difficulties or have passed away.

With the support of our Outreach & Fundraising Officer we've been able to engage with the local community, to educate and inform about the work of the RSPCA. Understanding the role animals play in our lives and our responsibility for their care.

In setting objectives and planning for activities, the Trustees have given due consideration to general guidance published by the Charity Commission relating to public benefit, including the guidance Public benefit: running a charity (PB2)

# FINANCIAL REVIEW

During the year, the Branch made a cash deficit of £55,073 (2022: £2,706). After sales and purchases of investments and purchases of tangible assets, the Branch made a cash deficit of £50,383 (2022: cash surplus of £24,669).

At the end of the year, cash reserves available for general use amounted to £16,224 (2022: £66,607) and the valuation of the investment portfolio was £235,567 (2022: £223,576). Overall unrestricted reserves totalled £251,791 (2022: £290,183).

## RESERVES POLICY

Reserves are needed to bridge the gap between the spending and receiving of resources and to cover unplanned emergencies and other expenditures.

The cost of living crisis, has provided a challenging environment for us all during 2023. The Trustees have noted the increase in deficit spend and are taking appropriate action to manage any long term finance risk, while continuing to retain our staff, support pet owners and protect our local wildlife.

Approved by the board of Trustees & signed on their behalf by:

*L Hicks*

Linda Hicks (Chairman) 30.05.2024



# Highlights of 2023



# January

During January we received 34 rescue and assistance calls.

## PET FOOD DONATION

January 2023 saw an amazing donation to our pet food banks from The Pet Pantry. Our officer had reached out to them as supplies were running low. Thanks so much to The Pet Pantry for being amazing :-)

We had several calls from the public, concerned about a Staffie who had been found wandering the streets alone near his home on several occasions. After tracking down the owner, our officer was able to give advice and provide a lead, so that the dog could be exercised safely. Our officer further supported the owner in talks with their carer and in providing pet food when needed.

Our officer was able to help an elderly owner who was finding it difficult to administer treatment to his pet bird. In ongoing conversations with the owner, it was decided it would be in their best interest, to rehome his birds. Our officer was able to reach out to a rescue that offered a place and transport the birds to the new home.

# February

During February we received 16 rescue and assistance calls.

## VOLUNTEERS

February saw two volunteers join us to help out with events and at our pet food banks - in both Hythe and Folkestone. This released our officer to respond to the many call-outs received daily.

We were contacted by several members of the public about a seal on Sandgate Beach. The British Divers Marine Life Rescue was contacted. They are specialists in this type of work and aided in its rescue.

We were also contacted by several members of the public about a homeless man in Folkestone with his cat sleeping out with him. Another local rescue was able to help track him down, and we reached out to help with neutering and micro-chipping the cat. With the owner's consent, the cat was then placed with a friend, who had been home checked, until his circumstances changed.



# March

During March we received 44 rescue and assistance calls.

March was a busy month with our Folkestone pet food bank relocating to The Community Fridge at Wood Avenue Library. This meant that we could reach more people in need from this new and busy location. Welfare advice and specialist food were distributed to pet owners.

## TEAMWORK

Our officer was approached about this Persian cat who had become ill, with the owner unable to afford its ongoing care. The Folkestone branch contacted the Canterbury branch of RSPCA, who provided a cattery space and the treatment the cat needed, which the Folkestone branch was able to fund.

A gentleman also reached out about this cat who became very stressed at the vet's and needed his nails trimmed.

He was anxious about how best to do this. Our officer made a house call and was able to show and support the owner in nail clipping so he can now do this himself moving forward.





# April

During April we received 33 rescue and assistance calls.

## EASTER FUN

A Folkestone early years centre had reached out to our officer to spend some time at their Easter fair.

The children drew pictures of animals, while our officer chatted with them about where each animal lived, their needs, and how we can help the animals that we live alongside to have a better life.

During April, our branch was contacted regarding a house with multiple cats, that the resident was struggling to care for. Our Animal Welfare Officer was able to help. One cat had an abscess in her womb after having numerous pregnancies, which could have been fatal but fortunately, she was treated in time. All cats were chipped, neutered and after treatment, rehomed to new loving families.



# May

During May we received 47 rescue and assistance calls.

## URGENT REHOMING

We were contacted by a lady whose neighbour was taken into hospital and needed her pond fish rehomed. Our officer was able to reach out to the public, carry out home checks, and manage the collection and rehoming of the fish.

Each month, one of our officers broadcasts on a regular radio slot on Radio Folkestone. It allows the branch to talk about the latest rescues and give seasonal advice, as well as address concerns that the public might have.

May saw several cats needing to be rehomed due to the cost of living crisis. A family who had lost their home moved in with a family member and were only allowed to keep one cat due to the rental agreement. Luckily our officer found spaces in nearby RSPCA branches and the cats were micro-chipped, neutered, and rehomed together.





# June

During June we received 49 rescue and assistance calls.

## GULL SEASON BEGINS

In June we were called out to two gull chicks. One had an injured leg that needed veterinary care, and the other just needed a checkover. He'd fallen from a nearby roof and there was no way to return him. But he had a place to stay safe on the ground and parents were feeding and looking over him, so he was left in their care.

We were called to a goat with its head stuck in the fence. The owners were not on site, so it was released by one of our officers, and a note was left with contact details.

June saw a call to a baby hedgehog that was found by a member of the public, after removing a pile of dried leaves. He was rushed to a vet who treated him straight away. He survived for 3 days but passed away in his sleep.

It's so important to be aware of the wildlife living in our gardens, parks, and all around us, and understand how we can help them live a safe and happy life.

# July

During July we received 165 rescue and assistance calls.

Two gulls were spotted on the ground in gardens, after some strong winds. Our officer visited the area and they seemed unable to fly, so were taken for a vet visit. The vet found nothing physically wrong, so they were given some time to rest before being released.

We were called to a young gull stuck in a chimney. With the help and permission of the landlord, we were able to remove the front of the fireplace and retrieve the gull. After a checkover, our officer was confident that the gull was well enough for release. The parents were watching and calling for the chick. After release, they were reunited on the field behind the property.

## EDUCATION

Our officer visited a school to discuss with the children, the benefits of working in the community. The children were excited to talk about their own animals and wildlife. They asked questions about the job and how they could pursue working in the RSPCA when they grew up.





# August

During August we received 122 rescue and assistance calls.

In August our officer received two call-outs from members of the public, within a week of each other, to poorly foxes in Folkestone. They were both very lethargic and suffering from mange. We were able to catch them and transfer them to RSPCA Mallydams where they were treated and rehabilitated. Once recovered, our officer was able to release them near the area they came from, so they returned home safely.



## A SOCIAL MEDIA STAR

This little hedgehog was found outside during the day in Hawkinge, looking exhausted and underweight. He was collected and taken to the vet to be treated and recovered before release. He featured in his own Facebook post with advice and information from the RSPCA website to recognise when a hedgehog requires your help.

# September

During September we received 207 rescue and assistance calls.

## SAFE & SOUND

We were very grateful to receive help from our local fire service when attending a call-out to a kitten. He had climbed out of an upper-story window and got stuck on the roof. After a quick checkover from our officer, the kitten and owner were happily reunited. Advice was given on how best to keep the kitten safe so this won't happen again in the future.

Margot the cat was taken in as a stray. She was an older cat and had some issues with her back legs, which made her a little wobbly - but this just added to her charm. She is now in a loving home with her new owners who think that Margot is just the best cat they could have ever asked for:

"She's super affectionate, she's a lap cat too! Constantly by my side, we can tell she loves the atmosphere, it's perfect and calm for her and she's settled like an absolute dream, I feel like she's 100% herself and loving her life."



# October

During October we received 131 rescue and assistance calls.

## CUTENESS OVERLOAD

October saw a litter of kittens getting their vaccinations.

They had been found by a member of the public, in a shed, where their mum had chosen to give birth.

We checked Mum for a micro-chip without any luck. We asked the local vets and reached out to the public to find her owner. When we received no response, mum and babies were taken in and cared for locally. Once they'd been weaned and were old enough for their vaccinations, they quickly found their forever homes. We wonder why?



# November

During November we received 112 rescue and assistance calls.

## CHIP-CHECK CAMPAIGN

In November there was a collaboration between Folkestone & Hythe District Council and our branch for their Paws for Thought event at Littlestone. Officers from the Folkestone branch and the RSPCA North West Kent branch provided free dog microchipping and chip checks.

The chip-check proved invaluable as 80% of owners discovered that their details were out of date, meaning that a lost dog might not easily be reunited with its owners. This sparked our valuable #chipncheck campaign on our social media sites.

Meet Frank - he's just 12 weeks old and one of an unplanned litter. Our branch reminded the public of the importance of neutering. For a female cat, it is a simple operation known as 'spaying'. From four months old a female will start to attract the attention of tomcats, who'll want to mate with her. No cat should be pregnant while she's still a kitten herself.



# December

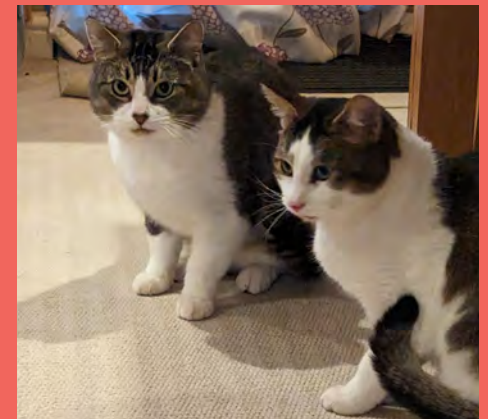
During December we received 124 rescue and assistance calls.

## FUNDRAISING FUN

We celebrated Santa Paws' with our charity partners, Pets at Home - Folkestone. That meant our fabulous volunteers, trustees, and staff spent time in the store spreading awareness of our branch and giving people the chance to win a pet basket for their fur baby this Christmas. Plus, customers were able to donate at the till throughout December to help animals in need.

December also saw the return of the Folkestone Living Advent Calendar. We were invited to attend two door openings. We gave out some RSPCA goodies and collected donations from the public, which were gratefully received.

We also welcomed in two abandoned cat brothers Mickey & Dave, who we placed in one of our wonderful Foster homes so they weren't homeless for Christmas.



**ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS**  
**FOLKESTONE AND DISTRICT BRANCH**

**RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	2023 £	2022 £
<b>RECEIPTS</b>		
<u>Charitable Activities</u>		
Door to Door	23,094	23,850
Donations	6,585	6,515
Legacies	-	20,070
Adoption fees	414	483
Rebates	-	4
	<u>30,093</u>	<u>50,922</u>
<u>Investments</u>		
Bank and other Interest	352	55
Dividends	3,186	3,659
	<u>3,538</u>	<u>3,714</u>
Total Receipts	<u><u>33,631</u></u>	<u><u>54,636</u></u>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>		
<u>Charitable Activities</u>		
Vets	39,354	8,346
Branch Contribution	7,891	7,066
Staff Costs	28,440	30,251
Motor Costs	2,988	2,372
Telephone	612	561
Miscellaneous	1,111	438
Secretarial and Accountancy	1,419	1,614
Insurance	-	632
Legal and Professional Fees	1,430	35
Investment Broker Fees	5,175	5,726
Bank Charges	284	301
	<u>88,704</u>	<u>57,342</u>
<u>Capital Transactions</u>		
Purchase of Investments	73,154	63,327
Purchase of Assets	-	470
Sale of Investments	(77,844)	(91,172)
	<u>(4,690)</u>	<u>(27,375)</u>
Total Payments	<u><u>84,014</u></u>	<u><u>29,967</u></u>
<b>NET (PAYMENTS) / RECEIPTS</b>	(50,383)	24,669
Cash at Bank and In Hand Brought Forward	66,607	41,938
Cash at Bank and In Hand Carried Forward	<u><u>16,224</u></u>	<u><u>66,607</u></u>

**ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS**  
**FOLKESTONE AND DISTRICT BRANCH**

**STATEMENT OF ASSETS**  
**AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	2023 £	2022 £
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>		
Investment Portfolio at valuation ( <i>Cost £219,668, 2022 - £221,198</i> )	235,567	223,576
Equipment	26,608	26,608
	<u>262,175</u>	<u>250,184</u>
<b>BANK AND CASH</b>		
Current Account	9,680	32,584
Deposit Account	2,970	25,192
Broker Trading Account	3,155	7,860
Broker Income Account	185	705
Cash in Hand	234	266
	<u>16,224</u>	<u>66,607</u>

**Related Parties:**

The Branch constitution is approved by the national RSPCA umbrella body, charity no. 219099, which is considered a related party for accounting purposes. During the financial year, the Branch received a total of £23,094 (2022: £23,850) in grant funding from the national RSPCA for the Branch's purposes. In addition, the Branch made contributions of £7,891 (2022: £7,066) to the national RSPCA for services rendered. The Branch also receives a number of umbrella body services, including legacy administration under the Branch Legacy Scheme, membership administration and practical guidance and assistance from a Branch Support Specialist employed by the national Society.

Signed on behalf of the trustees:

*L Hicks*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Linda Hicks, Chair

Date: 30.05.24

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**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE**  
**ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS**  
**FOLKESTONE AND DISTRICT BRANCH**  
**ON THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 December 2023.

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

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

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

**Independent examiner's statement**

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

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

*R G Parry*

**Roland Parry FCA**

Magee Gammon Corporate Limited  
Henwood House  
Henwood  
Ashford  
Kent  
TN24 8DH

Date: 31 May 2024