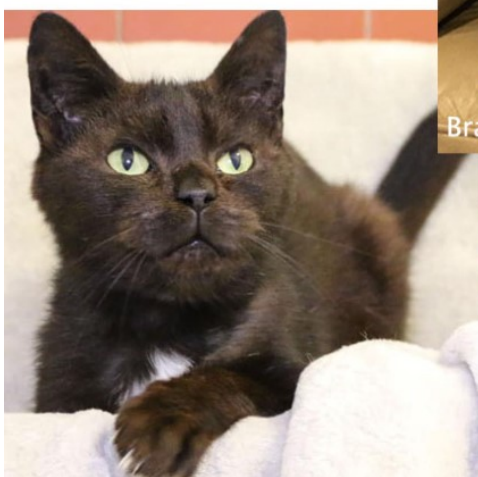
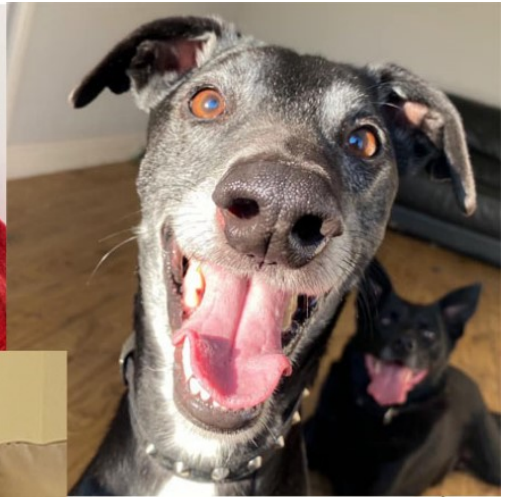
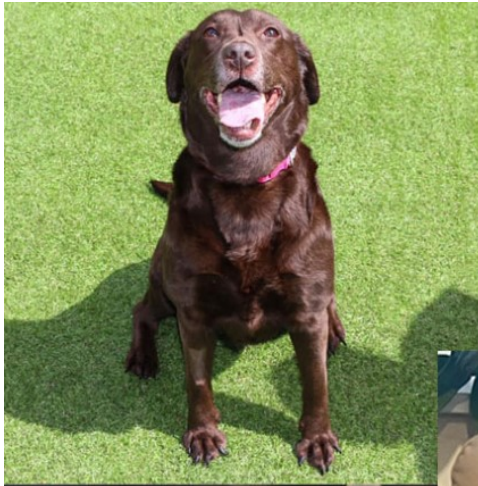


**ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO  
ANIMALS**

**WIRRAL & CHESTER  
BRANCH**

(Registered Charity No. 219766)  
Patron: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

**ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR 2021**



In Memory of Avril Prestidge  
Branch Trustee/Chairman for over 50 years

**1. REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

**CHARITY NAME: RSPCA WIRRAL & CHESTER BRANCH**

**REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 219766**

**MAIN ADDRESS: CROSS LANE, WALLASEY. CH45 8RH**

**BRANCH TRUSTEES**

**CHAIRMAN :** MRS A.M. PRESTIDGE  
**HON. TREASURER:** MR K.W.T. CROWDEN ACIB  
**HON. SECRETARY** MS M.  
SHILLIDAY  
**MEMBERS:** MISS J GODWIN  
  
MR A MILNE  
MRS P MARCHAL  
MISS M STATHER  
MRS A CARTER  
MRS E BURKE  
Mr C CLAYTON (co-opted 14<sup>th</sup> June  
2021).

**Appointment of Trustees:**

Trustees are elected from Branch Members at the Annual General Meeting, to carry on the work for the next year.

The Committee shall consist of no less than 7 and no more than 14 elected members.

The elected Committee can co-opt up to 3 persons until the next AGM. Co-optees must by then be members.

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**BRANCH MANAGEMENT**

**BRANCH MANAGER: PETER HATTAM**

**ANIMAL CARE MANAGER: KAY HAWTHORN**

**MAIN INDEPENDENT ADVISERS**

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS: MCLINTOCKS (NW) LIMITED**

**BANKERS: LLOYDS BANK**

**PLC**

**COMMISSION CUSTODIAN TRUSTEES: CHARITY**

**MAIN BRANCH FACILITIES - WIRRAL ANIMAL  
CENTRE**

Telephone: 0151 - 638 - 6318

REHOMING BY APPOINTMENT - Covid restrictions: 12.00 A.M. - 3.00 P.M. EVERY DAY

**TO REPORT GENERAL CRUELTY TO/OR NEGLECT OF ANIMALS THEN CONTACT**

## **2. STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

### **2.1**

#### **Governing Rules:**

The Branch is constituted as an un-incorporated association and has its own charitable status.

The Branch works within a constitution and rules that are laid down by the RSPCA Headquarters.

It receives guidance via documentation and from Branch Support Advisers employed by the National Society who regularly attend Branch meetings.

### **2.2**

#### **Trustee recruitment and**

#### **appointment**

Trustees are elected from Branch members at each Annual General Meeting to set the general direction and to establish appropriate policies for the Branch for the forthcoming year.

### **2.3**

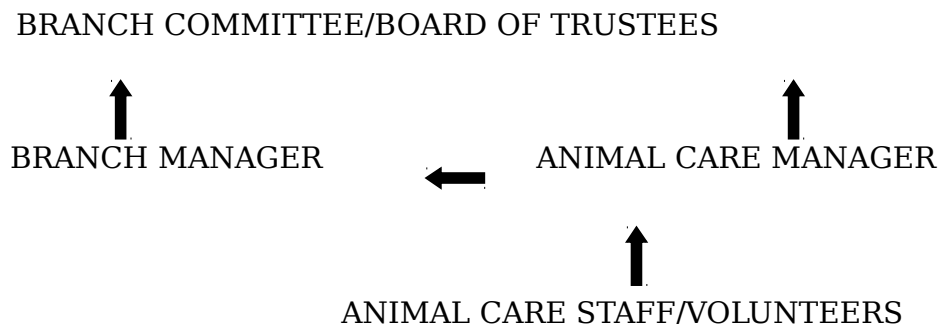
#### **Policies and procedures for induction and**

#### **training of Trustees**

All new Trustees receive a guidance pack from Headquarters and the Branch offers an induction via the Branch Manager. This can be tailor-made to meet each Trustee's requirements. The National Society hold workshops for new and existing Trustees, covering their responsibilities, roles etc. as required.

### **2.4**

#### **Organisational Structure**



#### **Decision making processes**

The Trustees meet normally every six - eight weeks and receive overviews on developments and performance from

the Inspectorate, the Animal Care Manager and the Branch Manager. They receive a review of the financial

performance, (Income and Expenditure) at each meeting, from the Hon. Treasurer. They also receive information regarding complaints made and actions taken to resolve such matters.

They discuss policy-related matters and determine the general direction in which they feel the Branch should proceed.

They review the operations of the Animal Centre and Chester Shop and related matters on an ongoing basis and determine new pricing structures and review existing policies.

The Branch management ensures that these are implemented and report back on progress.

Independent advice is sought from advisors, as required.

The Branch has formulated a survival plan, which will help to determine the future direction of the Branch that will help to secure our continuing success. This Plan is reviewed on an on-going basis as needs demand.

### **Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statement**

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law & UK Accounting Standards. The Law applicable to England & Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true & 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 apply them consistently
- Observe the methods and principles of Charities SORP
- Make judgements & estimates that are reasonable & prudent
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to do presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial

position of the charity and enable them to ascertain to ensure that the financial statements comply with the

Charities Act 2011 (and subsequent updates 2016) and the Charity (Accounts & Reports) Regulations 2015.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the

prevention & detection of fraud or other irregularities.

In the interest of transparency and accountability to our donors we publish our Annual Report and

Audit/Examiners Report on our website and annually on the Charity Commission website. The trustees are

responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included in the charity's

website.

## **2.5 Branch's Objectives and Public Benefit Statement**

The RSPCA Wirral & Chester Branch is an unincorporated charitable association and a separately registered charity

of the RSPCA helping to carry out its direct animal welfare work in the Wirral, Ellesmere Port and Chester areas.

***Our Mission is - to offer a forever home to pets who need it & provide joy and happiness to their new family.***

***Our Objectives are***

- (i) To promote the work and objectives of the National Society - to promote kindness and to prevent or suppress cruelty to animals by all lawful means, in accordance with the policies of the Society and Branch in place at any time and within the resources available to us.**
- (ii) To raise funds towards operating costs and to carry out local animal welfare work.**

The Trustees review the outcomes and achievements of our objectives and activities for the year, to ensure that we remain focused on our charitable aims and continue to deliver benefits to the public. We have complied with the duty under the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to public benefit guidance issued by the Charity Commission.

Under the Charities Act 2006, the advancement of animal welfare is recognized as a distinct statutory charitable purpose. This legislation and the Animal Welfare Act 2006 indicate an acceptance by the Society, that treating living creatures with compassion has a moral benefit for the public - as a whole. Whilst this public benefit is clear, it is sometimes difficult to quantify and must be balanced against any detriment.

The Branch's animal welfare work, although local in nature, benefits society at large and also aims to help people most in need with the care of their animals. The next section highlights the Branch's main activities and demonstrates the benefits provided to the public. All our charitable activities focus on promoting kindness and preventing/suppressing cruelty to animals and are taken to further these purposes for the public good.

## **2.6 Charitable activities pursued for the public benefit**

We support our local Inspectorate by taking in free of charge, mistreated or abandoned animals that they bring to us. This includes pets whose owners may suffer ill-health and can no longer look after their pets properly, or suffer a significant financial change, or where sadly the owner has died.

In addition to providing education, information and advice, the Inspectorate rescues animals in distress and enforce

Laws in place against the cruel mistreatment of animals in England and Wales, by bringing prosecutions where necessary. This work is key to the "prevention and/or suppression of cruelty".

As the Branch operates with an Animal Centre it is possible to offer re-homing opportunities each year to hundreds of needy cats and dogs.

We also take in lost pets or stray cats and attempt to reunite them with their owners (stray dogs are the responsibility of the local Council, but we continue to support their work where we can).

This work benefits our local community (including local authorities) by preventing animals straying and posing a risk to themselves and to people through road traffic accidents or through being scared or intimidated by their surroundings. All such animals are logged and wherever possible are returned to their owners through the various "lost & found" schemes.



Animals in our care receive veterinary treatment as required, vaccination, neutering, micro-chipping and are assessed for re-homing. This work helps to control the incidence and spread of disease and suffering through vaccination.

Neutering helps to prevent and control unwanted animals and unnecessary breeding.

We re-home animals in our care at a subsidised cost to people willing and able to have and look after a companion animal. Whilst we recognize that companion animals provide measurable benefits to people's physical and mental

well-being we consider the re-homing of animals in our care and reducing animal suffering as our top priorities.

Our policy is to charge a reasonable adoption fee and we aim to highlight the ongoing personal and financial commitment of pet ownership. It is not in the best interests of animals and would therefore fall outside our objectives, to re-home to anyone who could not afford to look after them properly. Similarly, we will look to assess the animals in our care to ensure the best possible match to a new owner and home.

We provide neutering, stray cat and micro-chipping schemes in our area. These schemes help to reduce the number of unwanted cats, dogs and other small animals and help owners to neuter and micro-chip companion animals, thereby promoting responsible pet ownership. Over time it will also help to reduce the burden on re-homing centres like our own.

We provide an emergency consultancy service with local vets to ensure that sick animals can at least be seen by a vet so that they are not suffering unnecessarily. Any treatments required must then be provided by the owner – as it is their responsibility to provide for their pets as responsible pet owners.

We respond to enquiries from the public (both directly and via the Society's National Call Centre) about animals locally and further afield. The public benefits from knowing that we can and do intervene to assist animals in need. We also offer animal care advice via our telephone help lines and websites, which helps to benefit the public through the promotion of responsible pet ownership.

We provide volunteering opportunities for those who wish to support our work, including, fostering helping at the Animal Centre and fundraising. This benefits local people and companies by providing the possibility of supporting our cause and doing work which is compassionate and rewarding.

## **2.7 Remuneration of key management personnel**

The Branch Manager has been in post since 2000 and the current Animal Care Manager (ACM) has been at the Centre since 2007 and as ACM since 2009. At appointment their remuneration was agreed at current market rates.

Since that time cost of living increments have been applied for all employees and staff pay has now been brought slightly above the government's living wage program. However, pay rates still cannot be deemed to be generous and will continue to be reviewed annually.

A formal review was undertaken, using data provided across the RSPCA to evaluate pay rates for Branch staff. Trustees agreed to revise the pay review date from October to January each year, so that they had access to the full financial years income & expenditure data before determining pay increases. The pay review was subsequently undertaken in January 2022 and will continue to be reviewed annually in January.

## **2.8 Statement**

## **Risk Management**

The Branch has continued to review its financial position by looking for further reductions in expenditure and seeking to increase its regular monthly donations and



other sources of income. However, this is becoming increasingly difficult as vets fees and general costs are increasing.

In March 2021, Upton vets determined to increase general fee levels by around 35% across the board. Whilst on the face of it this is a significant increase it must be pointed out that vets fees hadn't been reviewed for some years and this review was due in the main to the fact that the practice had come under new management.

In December 2021, a further meeting took place with Upton vets to review neuter charges and these too have seen a significant increase which will impact from 2022 onwards.

Despite this increase, the branch believes that it is still getting good value for money and retains an extremely good working relationship with Upton vets.

Clearly, the Animal Centre provides the Branch and National Society with a significant facility that helps to re-home hundreds of animals each year, but it also represents the largest costs to our operations. The Branch's priority is to maintain this facility and whilst we are still reliant upon legacies and grants, this is to a much lesser extent than has been the case in the past.

Trustees have continued to review the Branch's financial position and have maintained the level of designated reserves to £50,000 to ensure that any legal requirements to pay redundancies and to meet other Branch commitments are covered. They have also adopted a "Survival Plan" that, if required, will see further cutbacks in staffing and operational costs to secure the long-term future of the Animal Centre moving towards a "breakeven" basis.

Since the refurbishment of the Charity Shop in 2017 we have seen a drop-off in support and takings (which was always a risk with the short-term closure). The introduction of the coronavirus in December 2019 resulted in the closure of the shop from March 2020 until it re-opened in June 2021. Since its re-opening, volunteers have been working hard to re-establish its popularity

### ***COVID 19 (December 2019 onwards)***

Clearly, with the impact of Covid 19 - mainly impacting from March 2020 onwards, we had to review our operations and the impact that this has on staff, supporters and the future business. On the 25th March 2020, we saw the Animal Centre close to the public and the closure of the Chester Charity Shop. Whilst restrictions were imposed, lifted and re-imposed again throughout 2021, we continued to re-home nearly 600 cats, which was a great achievement.

Income from re-homing was impacted when the Animal Centre was closed under strict Covid rules and no visitors were allowed on site. As restrictions eased, re-homing was able to take place via on-line applications and staff dropping off re-homed cats. It is pleasing to note that whilst the number of re-homed cats fell in 2020, we have managed to re-home a similar number of cats in 2021 as we did in 2020, albeit this is still down when compared to around 740 in 2019.

This enforced closure and reduction in re-homing has resulted in a loss of Animal Centre income and due to the increasing uncertainty of the local & global economy, there has been a reduction in monthly donations, which hopefully will now remain steady.

The previous loss of income from the Chester charity shop (due to its closure in March 2020 - May 21) has been re-established since its re-opening in June 2021. Together with the on-line sales, the income has almost doubled, but is still well down on the £30,000 pre Covid period. Volunteers are working extremely hard trying to re-establish its marketplace, but as we have seen throughout the UK and global economies, shopping practices have changed and probably in many cases will not revert back to the way it was before.

However, Covid has also meant that there has been a reduction in some costs, as the movement of cats has been restricted and as we had fewer cats - we saw a reduction in

vets fees, feed costs, litter, etc. Overall, therefore, the loss of income versus expenditure has impacted upon reserves.

The government's furlough scheme and subsequent SSP recovery scheme, meant that the cost of staffing has not had any significant impact on the Branch. Only one member of staff has been furloughed (by agreement) and two other members of staff believed they had a form of Covid - so self-isolated in line with the relevant guidance.

Whilst Covid is a matter of great concern in terms of its human impact, both physically and mentally, it is having less of an impact on business practices although clearly, it will be an ongoing factor and will continue to have further financial impacts as we proceed.

However, we believe that with the mix of help we provide to both the Inspectorate and members of the public, together with the facility to offer safe haven (until re-homing) to both case animals and re-home animals, together with our respected reputation for the work we do and the number of cats (especially) and dogs that we re-home, we have a better long-term future and a strategy in place to adjust operations to meet most eventualities.

Therefore, at the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

Since the start of the pandemic in January 2020 it has been recognised that the Covid-19 Pandemic has had an adverse financial impact on the charity and will continue to do so in the near future. Notwithstanding that, the trustees are satisfied that the charity has adequate reserves and that it is appropriate to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

**With the continuing support of the public, we can continue to build upon our success.**

**We re-home animals that are unwanted or cannot be looked after fully,  
sometimes due to a change in circumstances for their current owners.**

**The animals in our care are found new homes  
with a loving family,  
who are willing to give a companion animal a  
second chance.**

### **3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2021**

## **ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE**

In 2021 the Animal Centre re-homed 32 dogs (21 dogs in 2020), and 576 cats (558 in 2020) in total 608 (579 in 2020). Towards the end of 2021 our financial position was becoming a concern, but we had received a notification of a few legacies (received towards the end of 2021) that has helped to ease concerns and our financial situation has become healthier. However, increasing costs, both in terms of general fuel costs and vets bills, are impacting on the sustainability at full capacity, which is being kept under review.

We continue to help both the National Society and the Inspectorate taking in case and "at risk" animals and this reduces their need to use the services of Private Boarding Establishments (PBE's) whilst retaining funding within the RSPCA.

We retain the honour of being the number one RSPCA cat re-homing centre in the North Region (possibly the country).

Discussions are continuing between Branch managers and RSPCA Regional representatives, to discuss future working relationships with the National Society and other local Branches.

It is accepted that the Branch is well run, significantly contributes to the work of the Inspectorate and National Society and has an extremely cost effective and good working

relationships with Upton vets and other local veterinary practices. These relationships are essential to our continuing success in re-homing the cats and dogs in our care.

Despite the reduction in kennels from the original 24 kennels to 5, we still manage to provide re-homing opportunities for a number of dogs that are harder to re-home due to their age, temperament or physical conditions.

Our thanks go to the Animal Centre Manager Kay Hawthorn and the dedicated staff for the hard work, effort and care that they all provided especially through such a challenging year with the Covid virus impacting on more than one occasion.

As always, we still wish to offer a vote of thanks to all our volunteers even though their input was impacted by the closure to the public due to covid restrictions.

We were fortunate enough to hold the Summer Fair & Dog Show in 2021, due to the outdoor nature of the event and covid restrictions being eased. This saw a welcome return to the site of members of the public and their dogs and was again very well attended.

Sadly, the Christmas Fair was not held due to the restrictions that holding the event indoors posed. Hopefully, this event will resume in 2022.

In terms of offering a welfare neutering scheme to the public, the Branch has over the past decade, neutered over 2,000 dogs, more than 6,800 cats and over 300 rabbits. During this time, therefore, over 9,000 animals have been neutered and this has significantly reduced the number of unwanted strays/pets.

Such provision will remain in the longer term as this has a dramatic effect on reducing the pressure on the Animal Centre in taking in unwanted animals. We then look to give them a second or third chance in finding a new loving home and owner(s).

As Chairman, I would like to thank my fellow Trustees who give of their time freely in not only attending meetings but supporting other fundraising events as well.

I would also like to thank members of the public, who by making their donations of cash/goods and time, enable the Wirral & Chester Branch to continue to provide services to the local community as well as the National Society Inspectorate and animals they rescue.

Sadly Avril Prestidge - long term supporter, trustee and more recently Chairman (since 2016) passed away suddenly in February 2021.

She devoted 50 years of her life to supporting our cause in trying to reduce animal cruelty and to offer new homes to those animals that needed and deserved a second chance.

She is very sadly missed by all those who knew her.

***Avril Prestidge (died February 2022) - (Margaret Stather -March 2022 - June 2022) Chairman***

## **LOCAL INSPECTORATE ISSUES IN 2021**

Overall, 2021 was a good year for animal welfare. On the 29th April, we celebrated a milestone victory for animal welfare when the government passed the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill in England. The new law came into force in June 2021 and it means that offenders can now face up to five years in jail. The maximum sentence will allow courts to take a firmer stance on cases involving dog fighting, badger baiting, illegal cropping of dog's ears and the neglect and abuse of farm animals.

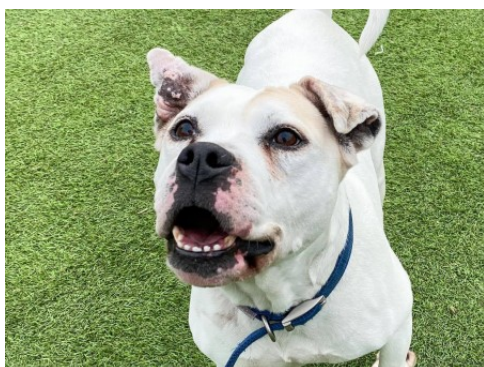
The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill also made good progress through the House of Commons during 2021. At the time of writing this report it is at the report stage. It only has one more stage to go before it gets passed on to the House of Lords for

consideration. The Bill will hopefully deliver a number of reforms to kept animals and will amongst other things, decrease the number of animals that can travel in a single non-commercial movement. It will also introduce powers to restrict imports of dogs with cropped ears and docked tails. Ear cropping is illegal in the UK, however during the past 4 to 5 years, we have seen a significant increase in the number of dogs that have been imported with cropped ears.

The increase in sentencing powers and recent changes in legislation have made the RSPCA reconsider its role as prosecutor. It was announced to the press during 2021, that the RSPCA was considering applying for statutory powers and prosecuting through the Crown Prosecution Service. This would enable inspectors to reach vulnerable animals quicker and reduce pressure on the police. The RSPCA has a long history as a private prosecutor and although our detractors would rather that we give up the role entirely and leave prosecutions to the police and other statutory authorities, prosecutions remain an important means to achieve our charitable objectives- to prevent cruelty and improve animal welfare by all lawful means.

During 2021, the Merseyside/Cheshire group took a number of successful prosecutions against perpetrators of animal cruelty. Local cases included:

On the 11th February, a male from the St Helen's area was convicted in Liverpool Magistrates Court for failing to seek veterinary treatment for his dog which was suffering from a chronic and painful ear infection. Inspector Caren Goodman-James visited his property back in October 2020 and found 'Angel', a small crossbreed dog, in poor condition and living in filth. Angel's right ear was severely inflamed and looked hard and solid. Despite a guilty plea, the owner of Angel was given a 12-week jail sentence and banned from keeping animals for 10 years. I'm pleased to say that thanks to Caren, GMAH and Wirral and Chester Branch, Angel made a good recovery and was able to be rehomed.



ANGEL



EAR CROPPING

In March 2021, a male from the Wirral area was convicted of causing suffering to a Jack Russel terrier. Inspector Jenny Bethel visited the property in September 2020, where she found the dead dog left in a bag by an outside tap. A post mortem revealed that the dog had died from blunt force trauma. Although we never fully discovered how the dog sustained the injuries, the owner was convicted of causing suffering and received a 16-week prison sentence and a 10-year Disqualification Order.

In April 2021, Inspector Naomi Norris attended a house in the Liverpool area after responding to an allegation of ear cropping. Two young American bulldogs were found, both with recently mutilated ears. The two dogs' ears were badly infected and still had stitches in them. The defendants were treating them with talc, in an attempt to dry up the infection. Both POIs (persons of interest) were prosecuted and received 8 weeks suspended prison sentences and were banned from keeping animals for 2 years. In addition, they received fines of £250 each and 100 hours Community Service.

A Deprivation Order was imposed and the dogs were passed into the RSPCA's care for rehoming.

In June, Inspector Leanne Cooper was passed an incident with CCTV footage attached. The video footage showed an adult male severely beating a small Staffordshire bull

terrier type dog. The male was seen kicking and stamping on the dog and then beating it with a metal pole. During the entire ordeal, two young children were seen playing in the garden. Inspector Cooper attended the incident and with the help of the police, seized two adult Staffordshire bull terrier dogs. In interview, the suspect declined legal advice stating, "there's not much they can do".

He admitted to the offence and told Inspector Cooper that it was out of character and that he had lost his temper. He was sentenced to a 12-month Community Punishment Order - 160 hours unpaid work and made to pay £500 in court costs. No Deprivation Order was imposed as the dogs belonged to his partner.

In August 2021, a male and female from the Neston area of the Wirral were convicted of causing suffering to a young pup. In November 2020, Inspector Anthony Joynes responded to an allegation of beating. The dog in question had been presented at a local vets with fractured ribs and a punctured lung. The defendants claimed that the dog had received the injuries whilst attempting to escape from its crate. Supporting veterinary surgeon, Dave Martin MRCVS, confirmed that the injuries were not consistent with a dog trying to squeeze out of a crate but were more likely to have been caused by being beaten. The female defendant was handed 12 weeks suspended custodial sentence, suspended for 1 year and was ordered to complete 20 Rehabilitation Activity Days. In addition, she received an 8-week curfew order to run from 7pm to 7am and was made to pay £250 in costs. The male was handed a 10-week custodial sentence, suspended for 12 months, 150 hours unpaid work and 10 Rehabilitation Activity requirement Days.

On the 16th December last year, a male from the Liverpool area was sentenced to a lifetime ban on all animals, an 8-week curfew and was also made to pay £750 in costs. The case resulted from a warrant that was issued in 2020 for animal fighting offences. When group inspectors and officers from SOU attended the address, they found a small terrier with significant untreated injuries, consistent with those sustained during badger baiting.

A substantial amount of money and time is invested in prosecutions, as it's important that officers are properly trained and the right people are prosecuted. Prosecutions do however only make up a small proportion of an inspector's work. Most of an officer's time is normally spent dealing with routine complaints, collections and rescues. During the past two years, pet ownership has gone up significantly and there are a lot of people that have acquired a pet for the first time and need all the help they can get.

Collections and rescues are normally fairly seasonal, peaking during spring and early summer. Normally, by the time we get to late summer, the number of collections has reduced to a trickle. Last year however was very different, with bird flu keeping us busy throughout the winter months.

Officers were at Spike Island in Widnes on a daily basis during December, collecting dead and dying birds. After bird flu had literally decimated the bird population there, it moved on to Winsford Marina, where we had a repeat of the same thing. To make matters worse, the strain of bird flu we were dealing with was the highly pathogenic H5N1 variety, which is zoonotic and can be passed on to humans. Because of the close contact that officers were having with the birds, we were having to check in with the UK Health Security Agency (formerly Public Health England) on a daily basis. Thankfully not all collections and rescues are as soul destroying as the ones at Spike Island and Winsford Marina.

In early January, Inspector Leanne Cragg, Inspector Caren Goodman-James, AWO Steve Wickham and the fire service, rescued a grebe trapped by Chester flood defences. Details of the rescue were reported in the local news.

On Tuesday 5th January 2021, Inspector Louise Showering was called by the RNLI to Crosby beach. Their officers had retrieved a gull thrashing around on the shoreline. The young bird had a hook, line and a weight attached. RNLI staff removed the weight and line but the hook required veterinary intervention, as it had entered via the beak and exited in the gulls face, narrowly missing the eye. The gull was sedated at a local vet hospital where the hook was removed and the gull was fit to be released later that day.



On 13th April 2021, a member of the public rang us after spotting a cat 40ft down from the River Mersey wall at Priory Wharf. The cat was too far down for Inspector Leanne Cooper to use her Reach & Rescue pole and with light fading, Merseyside Fire and Rescue were called in to assist. Fire and Rescue used a boat to reach the cat, named Ollie, and he was reunited with his grateful owner.

Although the Merseyside/Cheshire group had an incredibly successful year and achieved an enormous amount for animal welfare, we are profoundly aware that we are a part of a larger team, that comprises both internal and external partners, such as the fire service, the police and our wonderful network of branches.

All of our successes are shared successes and would not be possible without the support of like-minded professionals and volunteers.

**Chief Inspector Brett  
Witchalls.**

#### **4. FINANCIAL REVIEW**

### **HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT**

The balance sheet at £1,002,624 appears to be healthy and cash at hand has increased to £288,608 due in the main to a small number of legacies received towards the end of 2021.

Donations and gifts fell by about £7,000 but this is still quite positive considering the impact of the coronavirus generally.

Legacy income also fell in 2021 by about £80,000 but as we know such income fluctuates year on year and cannot be relied upon to maintain our services.

Income from "case" animals halved in 2021 and is likely to remain lower as the National Society seek to advise and educate members of the public more about animal welfare rather than prosecute, although where necessary such actions will be undertaken.

The WRC cattery which was established in 2014 to house case cats that would otherwise be placed into Private Boarding Establishments (PBE's) will continue to be utilised for the foreseeable future, but with the significant reductions in donations, legacies and "case" payments, a review of operations throughout 2022 is likely as we proceed.

Staffing costs have increased due to the appointment of an additional animal care staff member as well as the ongoing move to implement the government's living wage provision - which I am pleased to say the Branch has not only adopted - but exceeded. The coronavirus did have an impact on staffing as we proceeded through the various stages of lockdowns etc. in 2020 and 2021, but staff were protected during this period as they are the mainstay of our support for the animals in our care.

Trustees have continued to review expenditure and income sources in an effort to maximize existing resources.

These actions are helping to extend provision into the future, significantly reducing our reliance on legacies, so that we can at least maintain our current provision.

Our strategy at present is to look to increase income from adoptions rather than seek monthly direct debits. This will likely reduce the number of monthly donors as well as impact on our reclaim under the Gift Aid scheme but will help to sustain income streams.

The risk assessment and level of reserves required, has been amended to reflect our change in fortune, although members can see how important it is to continue to seek new opportunities to raise funds and to seek legacies, to help meet the running costs of the Animal Centre and our other activities.

The welfare neutering, assisted treatment schemes and stray cat policies have all helped to improve the plight for animal welfare and decrease the number of unwanted animals within our catchment area.

It is important that we also recognise the worth and contribution that our staff make, without them and our loyal team of volunteers, our facilities would not be able to provide the care that we currently provide to our animals whilst they are resident with us.

It is pleasing to note that income from the door-to-door collection scheme continues to be successful and has been maintained at a level of around £24,000 per annum. We thank all those who decided to support our ongoing success in dealing with animal welfare and cruelty issues in our catchment areas.

Income from the Chester Shop and Animal Centre shop was significantly reduced in 2021 due to closures and albeit that the Chester shop re-opened in 2021, there had been and will be a significant loss in income during the foreseeable future, until the business can be rebuilt. However, we are grateful to Chris Clayton for his sterling efforts in raising significant funding via on-line sales.

Whilst our immediate future is secure due to the difficult decisions and actions taken by Trustees and receipt of significant legacies towards the end of 2021, it is still important that we receive the continuing support of our local community and legacies remain crucial to our continuing long-term success.

### ***Going concern & COVID impact***

Although the coronavirus has significantly affected operations across the country (and the world), 2021 was still seen as a success both in terms of re-homing significant numbers of cats and dogs from our care and a stabilising of our financial position.

The forecast for 2022 is somewhat more worrying as increasing general costs, vets bills, utility bill increases, a reduction in donations as the general public are also looking to reduce their non-essential costs, are significant and will impact on our ability to continue to maintain the level of provision we have in the longer term.

At present, there are no legacy notifications in the pipeline, which is also worrying. These do, however, materialise from time to time and already in 2022, we have received a couple of legacies, unknown to us.

Monthly expenditure is running at around £20,000 per month more than income at present, which is concerning. At present, the Branch can continue to run at full capacity, but this will have to be reviewed before the end of 2022, unless the overall situation changes significantly.

We have had to adapt our operational activities to cope with “lockdown” and the gentle release from Covid’s grip, and it will obviously affect the way we move forward. Although it is clear that the impact from Covid 19 will impact on our business operations, future income streams and general level of activity the trustees retain their view that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable and hopefully longer-term future.

The charity’s free reserves amounted to £273,301 (2020:£252,854)” - for this reason, it continues to adopt “the going concern” basis in preparing the financial statements.

Finally, may I remind supporters that the Wirral & Chester Branch is self-financing and receives no Government funding. The costs of providing our facilities and the support we provide to the local community are significant and we need the continuing support and donations from members of the public, to secure our long-term future.

Anyone wishing to support the Branch’s work should ensure that donations/legacies should refer to the

“RSPCA Wirral & Chester Branch” and not simply “RSPCA” and to avoid any misunderstandings, should quote our Charity number 219766.



## **BRANCH POLICIES**

### ***RESERVES POLICY***

**Policy:** To maintain reserves at a level equivalent to at least three months net running costs.

**Rationale:** The Branch wishes to ensure the continued operation of its facilities and welfare schemes in the Wirral Ellesmere Port & Chester areas. It believes therefore, that such a level of reserves is necessary to enable the Branch to provide a level of stability and certainty, whilst ensuring that there is a sufficient timescale for forward planning. To this end trustees are retaining £50,000 to ensure that they can achieve their aims.

### ***EXPENSES POLICY (to include volunteers)***

All staff/volunteers can claim local mileage in accordance with the agreed mileage rates in place at that time for home visits and approved journeys. For non-local journeys, reasonable petrol costs may be claimed. Tunnel fees/tolls can be claimed where this is the most efficient means of reaching a destination.

### ***HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY***

The Branch has adopted a Health and Safety Policy, which is underpinned by procedures and guidance, as appropriate. The Policy is signed by the Chairman on behalf of the Branch Committee and is reviewed annually.

The day-to-day operation of the policy, procedures etc. are the responsibility of the managers employed by the Branch. Everyone, however, has a responsibility for their own Health, Safety and Welfare and for other visitors/users and welcome suggestions for improvement from our staff and other users.

In view of the impact of the coronavirus, the Branch implemented a Mental Health and Welfare Policy in addition to the Health & Safety Policy, as we recognise the significant impact this has had on staff and volunteers mental well-being during the past two years and its impact for the future.

### **FUTURE PLANS**

The Branch will continue to look at areas to reduce costs and increase regular income streams (e.g., monthly direct debits),

but will also pursue a policy to not only continue with general levels of good maintenance and repair, but to find ways to

upgrade and improve facilities. This will ensure, wherever possible, that we retain a more maintenance free environment

that will help to reduce costs in the longer term and enable managers and staff to continue to give priority to animal

health & welfare into the future. We are also looking to try to secure some grant funding through various organisations.

***K.W.T.Crowden***  
***Treasurer***

***Hon.***

**HOW YOU CAN HELP THE ANIMALS IN OUR CARE**

The cost of running the Wirral Animal Centre exceeds £1,000 a day.

We receive no direct financial support from the Government and relatively little direct funding from the National Society (other than specific grants to help with neutering), which is also experiencing difficult times financially.

We rely completely on fundraising, donations and legacies to keep the Centre open and to offer our schemes of support.

The Government has given charities like ours a boost by setting up its "Gift Aid" scheme, where we can claim the Tax back on any donation that a UK taxpayer makes to us. We can set up direct debits with your bank if you wish to make regular monthly donations. This is something that has been increasing over the past 18 months but that we need your support even more, so that reliance on legacies is minimized. This facility adds around £5,000 each year in additional income.

If you would like to help, then please contact Peter Hattam via e-mail at

[peterhattam@btconnect.com](mailto:peterhattam@btconnect.com) - or

you can telephone - 0151-638-6318 or

write to us at the RSPCA Animal Centre, Cross Lane, Wallasey, CH45 8RH.

Your employer may have a payroll giving facility? If so, you can receive tax relief on your donations, which will be deducted from your pay. Please speak with your payroll section about this option. However, you must specify that the beneficiary should be the "**RSPCA WIRRAL & CHESTER BRANCH**" if you wish your donation to come directly to us.

**Have you considered including the R.S.P.C.A. WIRRAL & CHESTER BRANCH in your Will?**

This is a straightforward process, which will take only a few minutes to complete and your legal adviser will offer assistance in formulating the revision/inclusion. For this Branch to benefit, the bequest must clearly identify the beneficiary as the

RSPCA WIRRAL & CHESTER BRANCH OR QUOTE OUR REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 219766.

Any bequests made to the RSPCA will benefit Headquarters (who provide support via Inspectors and Animal Collection Officers etc. who deal directly with animal suffering and cruelty) but will not directly benefit your local Branch.

We have raised awareness and sought support by writing to local firms of Solicitors, informing them and their clients of our needs.

We really do appreciate everyone's continuing support in ensuring that we can retain all of our facilities within the area that we cover. However, the amount of help we can give is limited by the sum of money that we can raise.

Cruelty exists in our Branch area and we need your continuing support and financial aid to keep our Animal Centre and Shop open. Any suggestions as to ways that we can raise additional funding will also be appreciated.

### ***PLEASE NOTE***

The words "R.S.P.C.A. WIRRAL & CHESTER BRANCH" should be used when remitting cheques, postal orders and especially when making bequests in Wills.

**-THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUING SUPPORT IT  
IS VERY MUCH APPRECIATED-**

**ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO  
ANIMALS WIRRAL AND CHESTER BRANCH**

**UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021**

# **ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS WIRRAL AND CHESTER BRANCH CONTENTS**

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**ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO  
ANIMALS WIRRAL AND CHESTER BRANCH  
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT  
TO THE TRUSTEES**

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I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of (the charity) for the year ended 31 December 2021.

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

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

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act. 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**

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of ACCA, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no 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
- 2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the financial statements 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 financial statements to be reached.

**Helen Furlong FCCA  
McLintocks (NW) Limited**

46 Hamilton Square  
Birkenhead  
Wirral  
Merseyside  
CH41 5AR

Dated: 26<sup>th</sup> May 2022

**ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO  
ANIMALS WIRRAL AND CHESTER BRANCH  
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES  
INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021**

		<b>Unrestricted funds 2021 £</b>	<b>Unrestricted funds 2020 £</b>
	<b>Notes</b>		
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>			
Donations and legacies	<b>3</b>	291,195	386,168
<u>Charitable activities</u>			
Animal welfare centre	<b>4</b>	72,954	104,745
Other trading activities	<b>5</b>	17,082	13,081
Other income	<b>6</b>	1,597	3,496
<b>Total income</b>		<u>382,828</u>	<u>507,490</u>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>			
Raising funds	<b>7</b>	<u>4,053</u>	<u>815</u>
<u>Charitable activities</u>			
Animal welfare centre	<b>8</b>	<u>391,085</u>	<u>377,662</u>
<b>Total charitable expenditure</b>		<u>391,085</u>	<u>377,662</u>
Other	<b>12</b>	<u>-</u>	<u>1</u>
<b>Total resources expended</b>		<u>395,138</u>	<u>378,478</u>
<b>Net (expenditure)/income for the year/ Net movement in funds</b>		(12,310)	129,012
Fund balances at 1 January 2021		<u>1,014,934</u>	<u>885,922</u>
<b>Fund balances at 31 December 2021</b>		<u><u>1,002,624</u></u>	<u><u>1,014,934</u></u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.



# ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS WIRRAL AND CHESTER BRANCH BALANCE SHEET

**AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021**

	Notes	2021 £	£	2020 £	£
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Tangible assets	13		729,323		762,080
<b>Current assets</b>					
Stocks	14	650		400	
Debtors	15	11,821		27,175	
Cash at bank and in hand		288,608		237,660	
			301,079		265,235
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	16	(27,778)		(12,381)	
Net current assets			273,301		252,854
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			1,002,624		1,014,934
<b>Income funds</b>					
Unrestricted funds			1,002,624		1,014,934
			1,002,624		1,014,934

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2022

*Margaret Seath*

**Trustee (Chairman)**

**ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO  
ANIMALS WIRRAL AND CHESTER BRANCH  
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021**

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	Notes	2021 £	£	2020 £	£
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>					
Cash generated from operations	<b>18</b>		52,533		144,042
<b>Investing activities</b>					
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(1,585)		(34,425)	
<b>Net cash used in investing</b>			(1,585)		(34,425)
<b>Net cash used in financing</b>			-		-
<b>Net increase in cash and cash</b>			50,948		109,617
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of			237,660		128,043
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at end of year</b>			288,608		237,660

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**ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO  
ANIMALS WIRRAL AND CHESTER BRANCH  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021**

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**1 Accounting policies**

**Charity information**

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Wirral and Chester Branch is an unincorporated charity. The principle address is Cross Lane, Wallasey, Wirral CH45 8RH.

**1.1 Accounting convention**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's [governing document], the Charities Act 2011, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102") and the Charities SORP "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 (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019). The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

**1.2 Going concern**

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable

Since the start of the pandemic in January 2020 it has been recognised that the Covid-19 Pandemic has had an adverse financial impact on the charity and will continue to do so in the near future. Notwithstanding that, the trustees are satisfied that the charity has adequate reserves and that it is appropriate to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

**1.3 Charitable funds**

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

**1.4 Incoming resources**

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

Income from charitable activities includes income received under contract or where entitlement to the grant funding is subject to performance conditions. Income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when the related services have been provided, income received in advance of those services being provided is deferred.

**ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO  
ANIMALS WIRRAL AND CHESTER BRANCH  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021**

---

**1 Accounting policies**

Income from trading activities, includes income from fundraising events and trading activities to raise funds for the charity. Income is recognised when earned and the charity is entitled to the

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity, this is normally on notification of the interest paid or payable by the

**1.5 Resources expended**

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

Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs are allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of

Support costs are those that assist the work of the charity but are not directly attributable to the charitable activities. Support costs include office costs, administrative payroll costs and governance costs which support the charity's activities. Where the support costs cannot be attributable to a direct activity they have been allocated to the costs of raising funds and charitable activities on a pro-rata basis.

Governance costs represent costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory

**1.6 Tangible fixed assets**

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Freehold land and buildings	2.5% on cost
Fixtures and fittings	25% & 10% on cost
Motor vehicles	25% on cost

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of

# **ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS WIRRAL AND CHESTER BRANCH**

## **NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021**

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### **1 Accounting policies**

#### **1.7 Impairment of fixed assets**

At each reporting end date, the charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

#### **1.8 Stocks**

Stocks are stated at the lower of cost and estimated selling price less costs to complete and sell. Cost comprises direct materials and, where applicable, direct labour costs and those overheads that have been incurred in bringing the stocks to their present location and condition. Items held for distribution at no or nominal consideration are measured the lower of

Net realisable value is the estimated selling price less all estimated costs of completion and costs to be incurred in marketing, selling and distribution.

#### **1.9 Cash and cash equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

#### **1.10 Financial instruments**

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability

##### **Basic financial assets**

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not

##### **Basic financial liabilities**

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current

# ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS WIRRAL AND CHESTER BRANCH

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021**

### 1 Accounting policies

#### ***Derecognition of financial liabilities***

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

#### **1.11 Employee benefits**

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charity is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide

#### **1.12 Retirement benefits**

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as

### 2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the

### 3 Donations and legacies

	<b>Unrestrict funds</b>	Unrestricted funds
	<b>2021</b>	2020
	£	£
Donations and gifts	86,390	93,264
Legacies receivable	182,867	263,713
Grants	18,077	28,657
Membership fees	1,278	534
Special efforts	2,583	-
	<u>291,195</u>	<u>386,168</u>

**ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO  
ANIMALS WIRRAL AND CHESTER BRANCH  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021**

**3 Donations and legacies**

**Donations and gifts**

Donations	62,263	65,023
Collection boxes	103	194
Door collections via HQ	24,024	25,063
Other	-	2,984
	<u>86,390</u>	<u>93,264</u>

The branch has received notification of a legacy which involves a property within the bequest. The property cannot be sold until the death of the sitting tenant and the branch has therefore been unable to quantify either the timescale or the value of this legacy.

**Grants receivable for core activities**

Neutering grant HQ	-	2,627
RSPCA HQ grant	13,260	17,015
Covid -19 grant	-	5,000
Job retention scheme	4,817	4,015
	<u>18,077</u>	<u>28,657</u>

**4 Charitable activities**

	<b>Animal welfare centre 2021 £</b>	<b>Animal welfare centre 2020 £</b>
Sales within charitable activities	39,647	36,793
Payment for case animals	33,307	67,952
	<u>72,954</u>	<u>104,745</u>



**ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO  
ANIMALS WIRRAL AND CHESTER BRANCH  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021**

**5 Other trading activities**

	<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	Unrestricted funds
	<b>2021</b>	2020
	<b>£</b>	£
Charity shop income	13,021	7,947
Sale of food and other items	4,061	5,134
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
Other trading activities	17,082	13,081
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

**6 Other income**

	<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	Unrestricted funds
	<b>2021</b>	2020
	<b>£</b>	£
Other income	1,137	2,779
Bank interest receivable	460	717
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	1,597	3,496
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

**7 Raising funds**

	<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	Unrestricted funds
	<b>2021</b>	2020
	<b>£</b>	£
<u>Trading costs</u>		
Operating charity shops	4,053	815
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	4,053	815
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

**ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO  
ANIMALS WIRRAL AND CHESTER BRANCH  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021**

**8 Charitable activities**

	<b>Animal welfare centre</b>	<b>Animal welfare centre</b>
	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Staff costs	155,329	140,010
Depreciation and impairment	34,342	34,427
Food and bedding	25,928	18,766
Veterinary fees	46,687	38,101
Drugs and consumables	13,479	22,400
Neutering scheme	12,370	11,119
Identichipping	1,670	583
Body disposal	257	171
Hygiene	19,517	19,838
Rates and water	9,866	5,950
Insurance	680	1,484
Light and heat	17,495	15,727
Repairs and renewals	8,190	16,698
Telephone	2,542	2,103
Printing, stationery and advertising	2,970	2,285
Vehicle expenses	1,131	895
General expenses	3,762	3,806
Donation	100	500
	<u>356,315</u>	<u>334,863</u>
Share of support costs (see note 9)	32,240	40,549
Share of governance costs (see note 9)	2,530	2,250
	<u>391,085</u>	<u>377,662</u>

**ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO  
ANIMALS WIRRAL AND CHESTER BRANCH  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021**

**9 Support costs**

	<b>Support costs</b>	<b>Governance costs</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Support costs</b>	<b>Governance costs</b>	<b>2020</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Staff costs	31,214	-	31,214	39,474	-	39,474
Bank charges	1,026	-	1,026	1,075	-	1,075
Accountancy fees	-	2,530	2,530	-	2,250	2,250
	<u>32,240</u>	<u>2,530</u>	<u>34,770</u>	<u>40,549</u>	<u>2,250</u>	<u>42,799</u>
Analysed between Charitable activities	<u>32,240</u>	<u>2,530</u>	<u>34,770</u>	<u>40,549</u>	<u>2,250</u>	<u>42,799</u>

**10 Trustees**

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the charity during the year.

**11 Employees**

**Number of employees**

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Number</b>
Branch administrators	2	2
Other staff	<u>11</u>	<u>10</u>
	<u>13</u>	<u>12</u>

**Employment costs**

	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Wages and salaries	177,752	171,056
Social security costs	4,269	4,349
Other pension costs	<u>4,522</u>	<u>4,079</u>
	<u>186,543</u>	<u>179,484</u>

There were no employees whose annual remuneration was £60,000 or more.

**ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO  
ANIMALS WIRRAL AND CHESTER BRANCH  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021**

**12 Other**

	<b>Total</b>	Unrestricted funds
	<b>£</b>	
	<b>2021</b>	2020
Net loss on disposal of tangible fixed assets	-	1

**13 Tangible fixed assets**

	<b>Freehold land and £</b>	<b>Fixtures and fittings £</b>	<b>Motor vehicles £</b>	<b>Total £</b>
<b>Cost</b>				
At 1 January 2021	1,253,429	28,510	1,390	1,283,329
Additions	-	1,585	-	1,585
Disposals	-	(1,928)	-	(1,928)
At 31 December 2021	1,253,429	28,167	1,390	1,282,986
<b>Depreciation and impairment</b>				
At 1 January 2021	513,866	7,036	347	521,249
Depreciation charged in the year	30,940	3,055	347	34,342
Eliminated in respect of disposals	-	(1,928)	-	(1,928)
At 31 December 2021	544,806	8,163	694	553,663
<b>Carrying amount</b>				
At 31 December 2021	708,623	20,004	696	729,323
At 31 December 2020	739,563	21,474	1,043	762,080

Freehold property comprises the Animal Centre at Cross Lane, Wallasey and a charity shop at 85/85a Christleton Road, Chester.

**14 Stocks**

	<b>2021 £</b>	<b>2020 £</b>
Finished goods and goods for resale	650	400

**ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO  
ANIMALS WIRRAL AND CHESTER BRANCH  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021**

**15 Debtors**

	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Amounts falling due within one</b>		
Other debtors	11,621	27,003
Prepayments and accrued income	200	172
	<u>11,821</u>	<u>27,175</u>

**16 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year**

	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Other taxation and social security	1,879	2,054
Trade creditors	21,437	5,763
Other creditors	712	814
Accruals and deferred income	3,750	3,750
	<u>27,778</u>	<u>12,381</u>

**17 Related party transactions**

There were no disclosable related party transactions during the year (2020 - none).

**18 Cash generated from operations**

	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
(Deficit)/surplus for the year	(12,310)	129,012
Adjustments for:		
(Gain)/loss on disposal of tangible fixed assets	-	1
Depreciation and impairment of tangible fixed assets	34,342	34,427
Movements in working capital:		
(Increase)/decrease in stocks	(250)	300
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	15,354	(17,411)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	15,397	(2,287)
<b>Cash generated from operations</b>	<u>52,533</u>	<u>144,042</u>

**19 Analysis of changes in net funds**

The charity had no debt during the year.

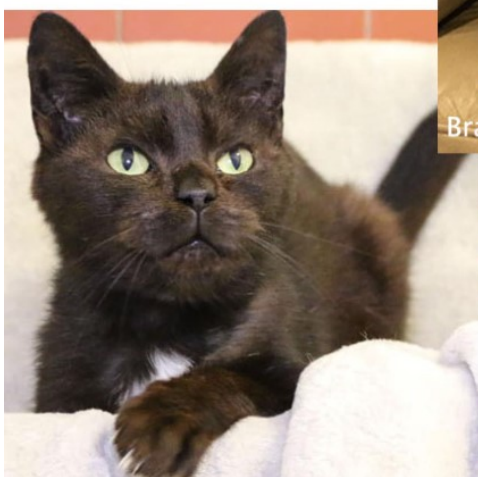
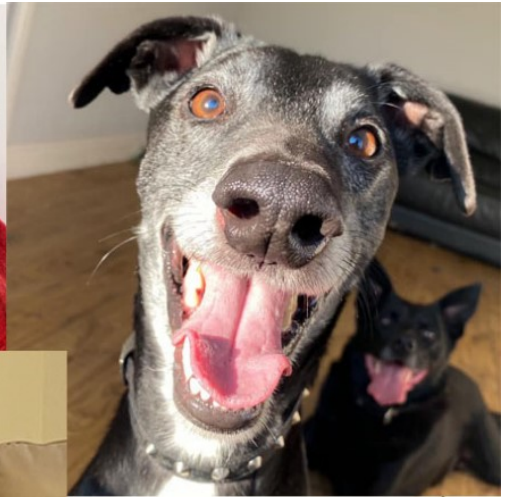
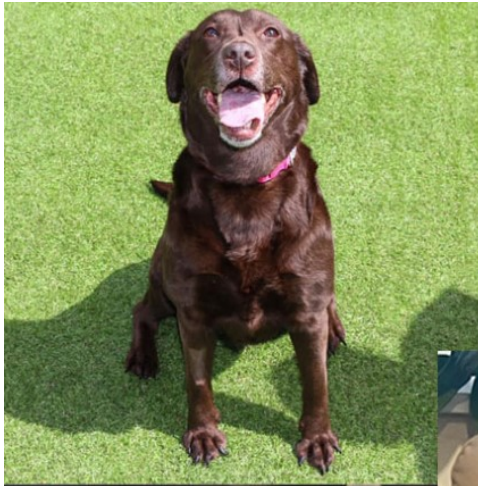
**ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO  
ANIMALS**

**WIRRAL & CHESTER  
BRANCH**

(Registered Charity No. 219766)  
Patron: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

**ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR 2021**





In Memory of Avril Prestidge  
Branch Trustee/Chairman for over 50 years



**1. REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

**CHARITY NAME: RSPCA WIRRAL & CHESTER BRANCH**

**REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 219766**

**MAIN ADDRESS: CROSS LANE, WALLASEY. CH45 8RH**

**BRANCH TRUSTEES**

**CHAIRMAN :** MRS A.M. PRESTIDGE  
**HON. TREASURER:** MR K.W.T. CROWDEN ACIB  
**HON. SECRETARY** MS M.  
SHILLIDAY  
**MEMBERS:** MISS J GODWIN  
  
MR A MILNE  
MRS P MARCHAL  
MISS M STATHER  
MRS A CARTER  
MRS E BURKE  
Mr C CLAYTON (co-opted 14<sup>th</sup> June  
2021).

**Appointment of Trustees:**

Trustees are elected from Branch Members at the Annual General Meeting, to carry on the work for the next year.

The Committee shall consist of no less than 7 and no more than 14 elected members.

The elected Committee can co-opt up to 3 persons until the next AGM. Co-optees must by then be members.

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**BRANCH MANAGEMENT**

**BRANCH MANAGER: PETER HATTAM**

**ANIMAL CARE MANAGER: KAY HAWTHORN**

**MAIN INDEPENDENT ADVISERS**

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS: MCLINTOCKS (NW) LIMITED**

**BANKERS: LLOYDS BANK**

**PLC**

**COMMISSION CUSTODIAN TRUSTEES: CHARITY**

**MAIN BRANCH FACILITIES - WIRRAL ANIMAL  
CENTRE**

Telephone: 0151 - 638 - 6318

REHOMING BY APPOINTMENT - Covid restrictions: 12.00 A.M. - 3.00 P.M. EVERY DAY

**TO REPORT GENERAL CRUELTY TO/OR NEGLECT OF ANIMALS THEN CONTACT**

## **2. STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

### **2.1**

#### **Governing Rules:**

The Branch is constituted as an un-incorporated association and has its own charitable status.

The Branch works within a constitution and rules that are laid down by the RSPCA Headquarters.

It receives guidance via documentation and from Branch Support Advisers employed by the National Society who regularly attend Branch meetings.

### **2.2**

#### **Trustee recruitment and appointment**

Trustees are elected from Branch members at each Annual General Meeting to set the general direction and to establish appropriate policies for the Branch for the forthcoming year.

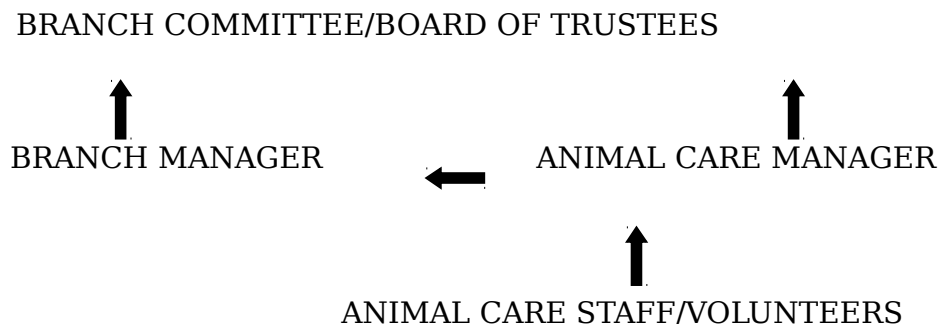
### **2.3**

#### **Policies and procedures for induction and training of Trustees**

All new Trustees receive a guidance pack from Headquarters and the Branch offers an induction via the Branch Manager. This can be tailor-made to meet each Trustee's requirements. The National Society hold workshops for new and existing Trustees, covering their responsibilities, roles etc. as required.

### **2.4**

#### **Organisational Structure**



#### **Decision making processes**

The Trustees meet normally every six - eight weeks and receive overviews on developments and performance from

the Inspectorate, the Animal Care Manager and the Branch Manager. They receive a review of the financial

performance, (Income and Expenditure) at each meeting, from the Hon. Treasurer. They also receive information regarding complaints made and actions taken to resolve such matters.

They discuss policy-related matters and determine the general direction in which they feel the Branch should proceed.

They review the operations of the Animal Centre and Chester Shop and related matters on an ongoing basis and determine new pricing structures and review existing policies.

The Branch management ensures that these are implemented and report back on progress.

Independent advice is sought from advisors, as required.

The Branch has formulated a survival plan, which will help to determine the future direction of the Branch that will help to secure our continuing success. This Plan is reviewed on an on-going basis as needs demand.

### **Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statement**

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law & UK Accounting Standards. The Law applicable to England & Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true & 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 apply them consistently
- Observe the methods and principles of Charities SORP
- Make judgements & estimates that are reasonable & prudent
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to do presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial

position of the charity and enable them to ascertain to ensure that the financial statements comply with the

Charities Act 2011 (and subsequent updates 2016) and the Charity (Accounts & Reports) Regulations 2015.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the

prevention & detection of fraud or other irregularities.

In the interest of transparency and accountability to our donors we publish our Annual Report and

Audit/Examiners Report on our website and annually on the Charity Commission website. The trustees are

responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included in the charity's

website.

## **2.5 Branch's Objectives and Public Benefit Statement**

The RSPCA Wirral & Chester Branch is an unincorporated charitable association and a separately registered charity

of the RSPCA helping to carry out its direct animal welfare work in the Wirral, Ellesmere Port and Chester areas.

***Our Mission is - to offer a forever home to pets who need it & provide joy and happiness to their new family.***

***Our Objectives are***

- (i) To promote the work and objectives of the National Society - to promote kindness and to prevent or suppress cruelty to animals by all lawful means, in accordance with the policies of the Society and Branch in place at any time and within the resources available to us.**
- (ii) To raise funds towards operating costs and to carry out local animal welfare work.**

The Trustees review the outcomes and achievements of our objectives and activities for the year, to ensure that we remain focused on our charitable aims and continue to deliver benefits to the public. We have complied with the duty under the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to public benefit guidance issued by the Charity Commission.

Under the Charities Act 2006, the advancement of animal welfare is recognized as a distinct statutory charitable purpose. This legislation and the Animal Welfare Act 2006 indicate an acceptance by the Society, that treating living creatures with compassion has a moral benefit for the public - as a whole. Whilst this public benefit is clear, it is sometimes difficult to quantify and must be balanced against any detriment.

The Branch's animal welfare work, although local in nature, benefits society at large and also aims to help people most in need with the care of their animals. The next section highlights the Branch's main activities and demonstrates the benefits provided to the public. All our charitable activities focus on promoting kindness and preventing/suppressing cruelty to animals and are taken to further these purposes for the public good.

## **2.6 Charitable activities pursued for the public benefit**

We support our local Inspectorate by taking in free of charge, mistreated or abandoned animals that they bring to us. This includes pets whose owners may suffer ill-health and can no longer look after their pets properly, or suffer a significant financial change, or where sadly the owner has died.

In addition to providing education, information and advice, the Inspectorate rescues animals in distress and enforce

Laws in place against the cruel mistreatment of animals in England and Wales, by bringing prosecutions where necessary. This work is key to the "prevention and/or suppression of cruelty".

As the Branch operates with an Animal Centre it is possible to offer re-homing opportunities each year to hundreds of needy cats and dogs.

We also take in lost pets or stray cats and attempt to reunite them with their owners (stray dogs are the responsibility of the local Council, but we continue to support their work where we can).

This work benefits our local community (including local authorities) by preventing animals straying and posing a risk to themselves and to people through road traffic accidents or through being scared or intimidated by their surroundings. All such animals are logged and wherever possible are returned to their owners through the various "lost & found" schemes.

Animals in our care receive veterinary treatment as required, vaccination, neutering, micro-chipping and are assessed for re-homing. This work helps to control the incidence and spread of disease and suffering through vaccination.

Neutering helps to prevent and control unwanted animals and unnecessary breeding.

We re-home animals in our care at a subsidised cost to people willing and able to have and look after a companion animal. Whilst we recognize that companion animals provide measurable benefits to people's physical and mental

well-being we consider the re-homing of animals in our care and reducing animal suffering as our top priorities.

Our policy is to charge a reasonable adoption fee and we aim to highlight the ongoing personal and financial commitment of pet ownership. It is not in the best interests of animals and would therefore fall outside our objectives, to re-home to anyone who could not afford to look after them properly. Similarly, we will look to assess the animals in our care to ensure the best possible match to a new owner and home.

We provide neutering, stray cat and micro-chipping schemes in our area. These schemes help to reduce the number of unwanted cats, dogs and other small animals and help owners to neuter and micro-chip companion animals, thereby promoting responsible pet ownership. Over time it will also help to reduce the burden on re-homing centres like our own.

We provide an emergency consultancy service with local vets to ensure that sick animals can at least be seen by a vet so that they are not suffering unnecessarily. Any treatments required must then be provided by the owner – as it is their responsibility to provide for their pets as responsible pet owners.

We respond to enquiries from the public (both directly and via the Society's National Call Centre) about animals locally and further afield. The public benefits from knowing that we can and do intervene to assist animals in need. We also offer animal care advice via our telephone help lines and websites, which helps to benefit the public through the promotion of responsible pet ownership.

We provide volunteering opportunities for those who wish to support our work, including, fostering helping at the Animal Centre and fundraising. This benefits local people and companies by providing the possibility of supporting our cause and doing work which is compassionate and rewarding.

## **2.7 Remuneration of key management personnel**

The Branch Manager has been in post since 2000 and the current Animal Care Manager (ACM) has been at the Centre since 2007 and as ACM since 2009. At appointment their remuneration was agreed at current market rates.

Since that time cost of living increments have been applied for all employees and staff pay has now been brought slightly above the government's living wage program. However, pay rates still cannot be deemed to be generous and will continue to be reviewed annually.

A formal review was undertaken, using data provided across the RSPCA to evaluate pay rates for Branch staff. Trustees agreed to revise the pay review date from October to January each year, so that they had access to the full financial years income & expenditure data before determining pay increases. The pay review was subsequently undertaken in January 2022 and will continue to be reviewed annually in January.

## **2.8 Statement**

## **Risk Management**

The Branch has continued to review its financial position by looking for further reductions in expenditure and seeking to increase its regular monthly donations and

other sources of income. However, this is becoming increasingly difficult as vets fees and general costs are increasing.

In March 2021, Upton vets determined to increase general fee levels by around 35% across the board. Whilst on the face of it this is a significant increase it must be pointed out that vets fees hadn't been reviewed for some years and this review was due in the main to the fact that the practice had come under new management.

In December 2021, a further meeting took place with Upton vets to review neuter charges and these too have seen a significant increase which will impact from 2022 onwards.

Despite this increase, the branch believes that it is still getting good value for money and retains an extremely good working relationship with Upton vets.

Clearly, the Animal Centre provides the Branch and National Society with a significant facility that helps to re-home hundreds of animals each year, but it also represents the largest costs to our operations. The Branch's priority is to maintain this facility and whilst we are still reliant upon legacies and grants, this is to a much lesser extent than has been the case in the past.

Trustees have continued to review the Branch's financial position and have maintained the level of designated reserves to £50,000 to ensure that any legal requirements to pay redundancies and to meet other Branch commitments are covered. They have also adopted a "Survival Plan" that, if required, will see further cutbacks in staffing and operational costs to secure the long-term future of the Animal Centre moving towards a "breakeven" basis.

Since the refurbishment of the Charity Shop in 2017 we have seen a drop-off in support and takings (which was always a risk with the short-term closure). The introduction of the coronavirus in December 2019 resulted in the closure of the shop from March 2020 until it re-opened in June 2021. Since its re-opening, volunteers have been working hard to re-establish its popularity

### ***COVID 19 (December 2019 onwards)***

Clearly, with the impact of Covid 19 - mainly impacting from March 2020 onwards, we had to review our operations and the impact that this has on staff, supporters and the future business. On the 25th March 2020, we saw the Animal Centre close to the public and the closure of the Chester Charity Shop. Whilst restrictions were imposed, lifted and re-imposed again throughout 2021, we continued to re-home nearly 600 cats, which was a great achievement.

Income from re-homing was impacted when the Animal Centre was closed under strict Covid rules and no visitors were allowed on site. As restrictions eased, re-homing was able to take place via on-line applications and staff dropping off re-homed cats. It is pleasing to note that whilst the number of re-homed cats fell in 2020, we have managed to re-home a similar number of cats in 2021 as we did in 2020, albeit this is still down when compared to around 740 in 2019.

This enforced closure and reduction in re-homing has resulted in a loss of Animal Centre income and due to the increasing uncertainty of the local & global economy, there has been a reduction in monthly donations, which hopefully will now remain steady.

The previous loss of income from the Chester charity shop (due to its closure in March 2020 - May 21) has been re-established since its re-opening in June 2021. Together with the on-line sales, the income has almost doubled, but is still well down on the £30,000 pre Covid period. Volunteers are working extremely hard trying to re-establish its marketplace, but as we have seen throughout the UK and global economies, shopping practices have changed and probably in many cases will not revert back to the way it was before.

However, Covid has also meant that there has been a reduction in some costs, as the movement of cats has been restricted and as we had fewer cats - we saw a reduction in

vets fees, feed costs, litter, etc. Overall, therefore, the loss of income versus expenditure has impacted upon reserves.

The government's furlough scheme and subsequent SSP recovery scheme, meant that the cost of staffing has not had any significant impact on the Branch. Only one member of staff has been furloughed (by agreement) and two other members of staff believed they had a form of Covid - so self-isolated in line with the relevant guidance.

Whilst Covid is a matter of great concern in terms of its human impact, both physically and mentally, it is having less of an impact on business practices although clearly, it will be an ongoing factor and will continue to have further financial impacts as we proceed.

However, we believe that with the mix of help we provide to both the Inspectorate and members of the public, together with the facility to offer safe haven (until re-homing) to both case animals and re-home animals, together with our respected reputation for the work we do and the number of cats (especially) and dogs that we re-home, we have a better long-term future and a strategy in place to adjust operations to meet most eventualities.

Therefore, at the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

Since the start of the pandemic in January 2020 it has been recognised that the Covid-19 Pandemic has had an adverse financial impact on the charity and will continue to do so in the near future. Notwithstanding that, the trustees are satisfied that the charity has adequate reserves and that it is appropriate to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

**With the continuing support of the public, we can continue to build upon our success.**

**We re-home animals that are unwanted or cannot be looked after fully,  
sometimes due to a change in circumstances for their current owners.**

**The animals in our care are found new homes  
with a loving family,  
who are willing to give a companion animal a  
second chance.**

### **3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2021**

## **ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE**

In 2021 the Animal Centre re-homed 32 dogs (21 dogs in 2020), and 576 cats (558 in 2020) in total 608 (579 in 2020). Towards the end of 2021 our financial position was becoming a concern, but we had received a notification of a few legacies (received towards the end of 2021) that has helped to ease concerns and our financial situation has become healthier. However, increasing costs, both in terms of general fuel costs and vets bills, are impacting on the sustainability at full capacity, which is being kept under review.

We continue to help both the National Society and the Inspectorate taking in case and "at risk" animals and this reduces their need to use the services of Private Boarding Establishments (PBE's) whilst retaining funding within the RSPCA.

We retain the honour of being the number one RSPCA cat re-homing centre in the North Region (possibly the country).

Discussions are continuing between Branch managers and RSPCA Regional representatives, to discuss future working relationships with the National Society and other local Branches.

It is accepted that the Branch is well run, significantly contributes to the work of the Inspectorate and National Society and has an extremely cost effective and good working



relationships with Upton vets and other local veterinary practices. These relationships are essential to our continuing success in re-homing the cats and dogs in our care.

Despite the reduction in kennels from the original 24 kennels to 5, we still manage to provide re-homing opportunities for a number of dogs that are harder to re-home due to their age, temperament or physical conditions.

Our thanks go to the Animal Centre Manager Kay Hawthorn and the dedicated staff for the hard work, effort and care that they all provided especially through such a challenging year with the Covid virus impacting on more than one occasion.

As always, we still wish to offer a vote of thanks to all our volunteers even though their input was impacted by the closure to the public due to covid restrictions.

We were fortunate enough to hold the Summer Fair & Dog Show in 2021, due to the outdoor nature of the event and covid restrictions being eased. This saw a welcome return to the site of members of the public and their dogs and was again very well attended.

Sadly, the Christmas Fair was not held due to the restrictions that holding the event indoors posed. Hopefully, this event will resume in 2022.

In terms of offering a welfare neutering scheme to the public, the Branch has over the past decade, neutered over 2,000 dogs, more than 6,800 cats and over 300 rabbits. During this time, therefore, over 9,000 animals have been neutered and this has significantly reduced the number of unwanted strays/pets.

Such provision will remain in the longer term as this has a dramatic effect on reducing the pressure on the Animal Centre in taking in unwanted animals. We then look to give them a second or third chance in finding a new loving home and owner(s).

As Chairman, I would like to thank my fellow Trustees who give of their time freely in not only attending meetings but supporting other fundraising events as well.

I would also like to thank members of the public, who by making their donations of cash/goods and time, enable the Wirral & Chester Branch to continue to provide services to the local community as well as the National Society Inspectorate and animals they rescue.

Sadly Avril Prestidge - long term supporter, trustee and more recently Chairman (since 2016) passed away suddenly in February 2021.

She devoted 50 years of her life to supporting our cause in trying to reduce animal cruelty and to offer new homes to those animals that needed and deserved a second chance.

She is very sadly missed by all those who knew her.

***Avril Prestidge (died February 2022) - (Margaret Stather -March 2022 - June 2022) Chairman***

## **LOCAL INSPECTORATE ISSUES IN 2021**

Overall, 2021 was a good year for animal welfare. On the 29th April, we celebrated a milestone victory for animal welfare when the government passed the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill in England. The new law came into force in June 2021 and it means that offenders can now face up to five years in jail. The maximum sentence will allow courts to take a firmer stance on cases involving dog fighting, badger baiting, illegal cropping of dog's ears and the neglect and abuse of farm animals.

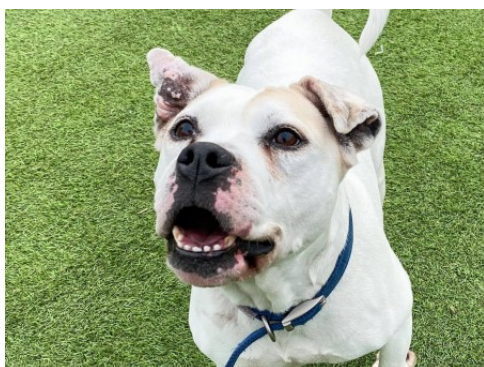
The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill also made good progress through the House of Commons during 2021. At the time of writing this report it is at the report stage. It only has one more stage to go before it gets passed on to the House of Lords for

consideration. The Bill will hopefully deliver a number of reforms to kept animals and will amongst other things, decrease the number of animals that can travel in a single non-commercial movement. It will also introduce powers to restrict imports of dogs with cropped ears and docked tails. Ear cropping is illegal in the UK, however during the past 4 to 5 years, we have seen a significant increase in the number of dogs that have been imported with cropped ears.

The increase in sentencing powers and recent changes in legislation have made the RSPCA reconsider its role as prosecutor. It was announced to the press during 2021, that the RSPCA was considering applying for statutory powers and prosecuting through the Crown Prosecution Service. This would enable inspectors to reach vulnerable animals quicker and reduce pressure on the police. The RSPCA has a long history as a private prosecutor and although our detractors would rather that we give up the role entirely and leave prosecutions to the police and other statutory authorities, prosecutions remain an important means to achieve our charitable objectives- to prevent cruelty and improve animal welfare by all lawful means.

During 2021, the Merseyside/Cheshire group took a number of successful prosecutions against perpetrators of animal cruelty. Local cases included:

On the 11th February, a male from the St Helen's area was convicted in Liverpool Magistrates Court for failing to seek veterinary treatment for his dog which was suffering from a chronic and painful ear infection. Inspector Caren Goodman-James visited his property back in October 2020 and found 'Angel', a small crossbreed dog, in poor condition and living in filth. Angel's right ear was severely inflamed and looked hard and solid. Despite a guilty plea, the owner of Angel was given a 12-week jail sentence and banned from keeping animals for 10 years. I'm pleased to say that thanks to Caren, GMAH and Wirral and Chester Branch, Angel made a good recovery and was able to be rehomed.



ANGEL



EAR CROPPING

In March 2021, a male from the Wirral area was convicted of causing suffering to a Jack Russel terrier. Inspector Jenny Bethel visited the property in September 2020, where she found the dead dog left in a bag by an outside tap. A post mortem revealed that the dog had died from blunt force trauma. Although we never fully discovered how the dog sustained the injuries, the owner was convicted of causing suffering and received a 16-week prison sentence and a 10-year Disqualification Order.

In April 2021, Inspector Naomi Norris attended a house in the Liverpool area after responding to an allegation of ear cropping. Two young American bulldogs were found, both with recently mutilated ears. The two dogs' ears were badly infected and still had stitches in them. The defendants were treating them with talc, in an attempt to dry up the infection. Both POIs (persons of interest) were prosecuted and received 8 weeks suspended prison sentences and were banned from keeping animals for 2 years. In addition, they received fines of £250 each and 100 hours Community Service.

A Deprivation Order was imposed and the dogs were passed into the RSPCA's care for rehoming.

In June, Inspector Leanne Cooper was passed an incident with CCTV footage attached. The video footage showed an adult male severely beating a small Staffordshire bull

terrier type dog. The male was seen kicking and stamping on the dog and then beating it with a metal pole. During the entire ordeal, two young children were seen playing in the garden. Inspector Cooper attended the incident and with the help of the police, seized two adult Staffordshire bull terrier dogs. In interview, the suspect declined legal advice stating, "there's not much they can do".

He admitted to the offence and told Inspector Cooper that it was out of character and that he had lost his temper. He was sentenced to a 12-month Community Punishment Order - 160 hours unpaid work and made to pay £500 in court costs. No Deprivation Order was imposed as the dogs belonged to his partner.

In August 2021, a male and female from the Neston area of the Wirral were convicted of causing suffering to a young pup. In November 2020, Inspector Anthony Joynes responded to an allegation of beating. The dog in question had been presented at a local vets with fractured ribs and a punctured lung. The defendants claimed that the dog had received the injuries whilst attempting to escape from its crate. Supporting veterinary surgeon, Dave Martin MRCVS, confirmed that the injuries were not consistent with a dog trying to squeeze out of a crate but were more likely to have been caused by being beaten. The female defendant was handed 12 weeks suspended custodial sentence, suspended for 1 year and was ordered to complete 20 Rehabilitation Activity Days. In addition, she received an 8-week curfew order to run from 7pm to 7am and was made to pay £250 in costs. The male was handed a 10-week custodial sentence, suspended for 12 months, 150 hours unpaid work and 10 Rehabilitation Activity requirement Days.

On the 16th December last year, a male from the Liverpool area was sentenced to a lifetime ban on all animals, an 8-week curfew and was also made to pay £750 in costs. The case resulted from a warrant that was issued in 2020 for animal fighting offences. When group inspectors and officers from SOU attended the address, they found a small terrier with significant untreated injuries, consistent with those sustained during badger baiting.

A substantial amount of money and time is invested in prosecutions, as it's important that officers are properly trained and the right people are prosecuted. Prosecutions do however only make up a small proportion of an inspector's work. Most of an officer's time is normally spent dealing with routine complaints, collections and rescues. During the past two years, pet ownership has gone up significantly and there are a lot of people that have acquired a pet for the first time and need all the help they can get.

Collections and rescues are normally fairly seasonal, peaking during spring and early summer. Normally, by the time we get to late summer, the number of collections has reduced to a trickle. Last year however was very different, with bird flu keeping us busy throughout the winter months.

Officers were at Spike Island in Widnes on a daily basis during December, collecting dead and dying birds. After bird flu had literally decimated the bird population there, it moved on to Winsford Marina, where we had a repeat of the same thing. To make matters worse, the strain of bird flu we were dealing with was the highly pathogenic H5N1 variety, which is zoonotic and can be passed on to humans. Because of the close contact that officers were having with the birds, we were having to check in with the UK Health Security Agency (formerly Public Health England) on a daily basis. Thankfully not all collections and rescues are as soul destroying as the ones at Spike Island and Winsford Marina.

In early January, Inspector Leanne Cragg, Inspector Caren Goodman-James, AWO Steve Wickham and the fire service, rescued a grebe trapped by Chester flood defences. Details of the rescue were reported in the local news.

On Tuesday 5th January 2021, Inspector Louise Showering was called by the RNLI to Crosby beach. Their officers had retrieved a gull thrashing around on the shoreline. The young bird had a hook, line and a weight attached. RNLI staff removed the weight and line but the hook required veterinary intervention, as it had entered via the beak and exited in the gulls face, narrowly missing the eye. The gull was sedated at a local vet hospital where the hook was removed and the gull was fit to be released later that day.

On 13th April 2021, a member of the public rang us after spotting a cat 40ft down from the River Mersey wall at Priory Wharf. The cat was too far down for Inspector Leanne Cooper to use her Reach & Rescue pole and with light fading, Merseyside Fire and Rescue were called in to assist. Fire and Rescue used a boat to reach the cat, named Ollie, and he was reunited with his grateful owner.

Although the Merseyside/Cheshire group had an incredibly successful year and achieved an enormous amount for animal welfare, we are profoundly aware that we are a part of a larger team, that comprises both internal and external partners, such as the fire service, the police and our wonderful network of branches.

All of our successes are shared successes and would not be possible without the support of like-minded professionals and volunteers.

**Chief Inspector Brett  
Witchalls.**

#### **4. FINANCIAL REVIEW**

### **HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT**

The balance sheet at £1,002,624 appears to be healthy and cash at hand has increased to £288,608 due in the main to a small number of legacies received towards the end of 2021.

Donations and gifts fell by about £7,000 but this is still quite positive considering the impact of the coronavirus generally.

Legacy income also fell in 2021 by about £80,000 but as we know such income fluctuates year on year and cannot be relied upon to maintain our services.

Income from "case" animals halved in 2021 and is likely to remain lower as the National Society seek to advise and educate members of the public more about animal welfare rather than prosecute, although where necessary such actions will be undertaken.

The WRC cattery which was established in 2014 to house case cats that would otherwise be placed into Private Boarding Establishments (PBE's) will continue to be utilised for the foreseeable future, but with the significant reductions in donations, legacies and "case" payments, a review of operations throughout 2022 is likely as we proceed.

Staffing costs have increased due to the appointment of an additional animal care staff member as well as the ongoing move to implement the government's living wage provision - which I am pleased to say the Branch has not only adopted - but exceeded. The coronavirus did have an impact on staffing as we proceeded through the various stages of lockdowns etc. in 2020 and 2021, but staff were protected during this period as they are the mainstay of our support for the animals in our care.

Trustees have continued to review expenditure and income sources in an effort to maximize existing resources.

These actions are helping to extend provision into the future, significantly reducing our reliance on legacies, so that we can at least maintain our current provision.

Our strategy at present is to look to increase income from adoptions rather than seek monthly direct debits. This will likely reduce the number of monthly donors as well as impact on our reclaim under the Gift Aid scheme but will help to sustain income streams.

The risk assessment and level of reserves required, has been amended to reflect our change in fortune, although members can see how important it is to continue to seek new opportunities to raise funds and to seek legacies, to help meet the running costs of the Animal Centre and our other activities.

The welfare neutering, assisted treatment schemes and stray cat policies have all helped to improve the plight for animal welfare and decrease the number of unwanted animals within our catchment area.

It is important that we also recognise the worth and contribution that our staff make, without them and our loyal team of volunteers, our facilities would not be able to provide the care that we currently provide to our animals whilst they are resident with us.

It is pleasing to note that income from the door-to-door collection scheme continues to be successful and has been maintained at a level of around £24,000 per annum. We thank all those who decided to support our ongoing success in dealing with animal welfare and cruelty issues in our catchment areas.

Income from the Chester Shop and Animal Centre shop was significantly reduced in 2021 due to closures and albeit that the Chester shop re-opened in 2021, there had been and will be a significant loss in income during the foreseeable future, until the business can be rebuilt. However, we are grateful to Chris Clayton for his sterling efforts in raising significant funding via on-line sales.

Whilst our immediate future is secure due to the difficult decisions and actions taken by Trustees and receipt of significant legacies towards the end of 2021, it is still important that we receive the continuing support of our local community and legacies remain crucial to our continuing long-term success.

### ***Going concern & COVID impact***

Although the coronavirus has significantly affected operations across the country (and the world), 2021 was still seen as a success both in terms of re-homing significant numbers of cats and dogs from our care and a stabilising of our financial position.

The forecast for 2022 is somewhat more worrying as increasing general costs, vets bills, utility bill increases, a reduction in donations as the general public are also looking to reduce their non-essential costs, are significant and will impact on our ability to continue to maintain the level of provision we have in the longer term.

At present, there are no legacy notifications in the pipeline, which is also worrying. These do, however, materialise from time to time and already in 2022, we have received a couple of legacies, unknown to us.

Monthly expenditure is running at around £20,000 per month more than income at present, which is concerning. At present, the Branch can continue to run at full capacity, but this will have to be reviewed before the end of 2022, unless the overall situation changes significantly.

We have had to adapt our operational activities to cope with “lockdown” and the gentle release from Covid’s grip, and it will obviously affect the way we move forward. Although it is clear that the impact from Covid 19 will impact on our business operations, future income streams and general level of activity the trustees retain their view that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable and hopefully longer-term future.

The charity’s free reserves amounted to £273,301 (2020:£252,854)” - for this reason, it continues to adopt “the going concern” basis in preparing the financial statements.

Finally, may I remind supporters that the Wirral & Chester Branch is self-financing and receives no Government funding. The costs of providing our facilities and the support we provide to the local community are significant and we need the continuing support and donations from members of the public, to secure our long-term future.

Anyone wishing to support the Branch’s work should ensure that donations/legacies should refer to the

“RSPCA Wirral & Chester Branch” and not simply “RSPCA” and to avoid any misunderstandings, should quote our Charity number 219766.



## **BRANCH POLICIES**

### ***RESERVES POLICY***

**Policy:** To maintain reserves at a level equivalent to at least three months net running costs.

**Rationale:** The Branch wishes to ensure the continued operation of its facilities and welfare schemes in the Wirral Ellesmere Port & Chester areas. It believes therefore, that such a level of reserves is necessary to enable the Branch to provide a level of stability and certainty, whilst ensuring that there is a sufficient timescale for forward planning. To this end trustees are retaining £50,000 to ensure that they can achieve their aims.

### ***EXPENSES POLICY (to include volunteers)***

All staff/volunteers can claim local mileage in accordance with the agreed mileage rates in place at that time for home visits and approved journeys. For non-local journeys, reasonable petrol costs may be claimed. Tunnel fees/tolls can be claimed where this is the most efficient means of reaching a destination.

### ***HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY***

The Branch has adopted a Health and Safety Policy, which is underpinned by procedures and guidance, as appropriate. The Policy is signed by the Chairman on behalf of the Branch Committee and is reviewed annually.

The day-to-day operation of the policy, procedures etc. are the responsibility of the managers employed by the Branch. Everyone, however, has a responsibility for their own Health, Safety and Welfare and for other visitors/users and welcome suggestions for improvement from our staff and other users.

In view of the impact of the coronavirus, the Branch implemented a Mental Health and Welfare Policy in addition to the Health & Safety Policy, as we recognise the significant impact this has had on staff and volunteers mental well-being during the past two years and its impact for the future.

### **FUTURE PLANS**

The Branch will continue to look at areas to reduce costs and increase regular income streams (e.g., monthly direct debits),

but will also pursue a policy to not only continue with general levels of good maintenance and repair, but to find ways to

upgrade and improve facilities. This will ensure, wherever possible, that we retain a more maintenance free environment

that will help to reduce costs in the longer term and enable managers and staff to continue to give priority to animal

health & welfare into the future. We are also looking to try to secure some grant funding through various organisations.

***K.W.T.Crowden***  
***Treasurer***

***Hon.***

**HOW YOU CAN HELP THE ANIMALS IN OUR CARE**

The cost of running the Wirral Animal Centre exceeds £1,000 a day.

We receive no direct financial support from the Government and relatively little direct funding from the National Society (other than specific grants to help with neutering), which is also experiencing difficult times financially.

We rely completely on fundraising, donations and legacies to keep the Centre open and to offer our schemes of support.

The Government has given charities like ours a boost by setting up its "Gift Aid" scheme, where we can claim the Tax back on any donation that a UK taxpayer makes to us. We can set up direct debits with your bank if you wish to make regular monthly donations. This is something that has been increasing over the past 18 months but that we need your support even more, so that reliance on legacies is minimized. This facility adds around £5,000 each year in additional income.

If you would like to help, then please contact Peter Hattam via e-mail at

[peterhattam@btconnect.com](mailto:peterhattam@btconnect.com) - or

you can telephone - 0151-638-6318 or

write to us at the RSPCA Animal Centre, Cross Lane, Wallasey, CH45 8RH.

Your employer may have a payroll giving facility? If so, you can receive tax relief on your donations, which will be deducted from your pay. Please speak with your payroll section about this option. However, you must specify that the beneficiary should be the "**RSPCA WIRRAL & CHESTER BRANCH**" if you wish your donation to come directly to us.

**Have you considered including the R.S.P.C.A. WIRRAL & CHESTER BRANCH in your Will?**

This is a straightforward process, which will take only a few minutes to complete and your legal adviser will offer assistance in formulating the revision/inclusion. For this Branch to benefit, the bequest must clearly identify the beneficiary as the

RSPCA WIRRAL & CHESTER BRANCH OR QUOTE OUR REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 219766.

Any bequests made to the RSPCA will benefit Headquarters (who provide support via Inspectors and Animal Collection Officers etc. who deal directly with animal suffering and cruelty) but will not directly benefit your local Branch.

We have raised awareness and sought support by writing to local firms of Solicitors, informing them and their clients of our needs.

We really do appreciate everyone's continuing support in ensuring that we can retain all of our facilities within the area that we cover. However, the amount of help we can give is limited by the sum of money that we can raise.

Cruelty exists in our Branch area and we need your continuing support and financial aid to keep our Animal Centre and Shop open. Any suggestions as to ways that we can raise additional funding will also be appreciated.

### ***PLEASE NOTE***

The words "R.S.P.C.A. WIRRAL & CHESTER BRANCH" should be used when remitting cheques, postal orders and especially when making bequests in Wills.

**-THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUING SUPPORT IT  
IS VERY MUCH APPRECIATED-**