

RSPCA.

Cumbria North & East Branch

Registered Charity Number: 232262



Mel and Eric



Gus

ANNUAL REPORT

For the Year ending 31st December 2024

STATUTORY STATEMENT OF PUBLIC BENEFIT BY THE TRUSTEES

The RSPCA Cumbria North & East Branch is an unincorporated charitable association and separately registered branch of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, carrying out its direct animal welfare in the area of north and east Cumbria.

The Trustees have reviewed the outcomes and achievements of our objectives and activities for the year to ensure that they are 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 published by the Commission.

The Branch's animal welfare work, though local in nature, helps people in need to care for their animals, and has a moral benefit for society at large by promoting kindness and preventing or suppressing cruelty to animals. We provide subsidised veterinary treatment for animals and belong to local people on low incomes. We do this mainly through the Branch Clinic and with vouchers towards private veterinary treatment.

This work benefits those on means tested benefits by giving them financial help to obtain care for companion animals in need of veterinary treatment.

We provide subsidised neutering of companion animals for those in the Branch area on low incomes through the Branch Clinic.

This work helps to control the dog and cat population through neutering and benefits those on means tested benefits by giving them financial help to neuter their companion animals. It benefits the general public, as a whole, by promoting responsible pet ownership.

We support the RSPCA Inspectorate by taking in, free of charge, mistreated or abandoned companion animals, providing any veterinary treatment necessary, through the Branch Clinic.

The Society's Inspectorate rescue animals in distress and enforces laws against the mistreatment of animals in England and Wales by bringing prosecutions. This work is key to the 'prevention of cruelty' part of the RSPCA's objectives and promotes humane sentiments towards animals which has a moral benefit for the general public, as a whole.

We rehome animals in need, at low cost, to people willing and able to have a companion animal.

Our policy to charge a reasonable adoption fee aims to highlight the personal and financial commitment of pet ownership. It would not be in the interest of animals, and therefore fall outside our objectives, to rehome to those who could not afford them.

We provide volunteering opportunities for those who wish to support our work, including trusteeship, volunteering and fundraising.

This benefits local people by providing the possibility of doing work which is compassionate and rewarding. The following Trustees' report gives greater detail on how, and the extent to which, this 'public benefit' has been achieved during 2024.

RSPCA CUMBRIA NORTH AND EAST BRANCH

Registered Charity No. 232262

Branch Centre and Veterinary Clinic

28 Close Street

Carlisle CA1 2HB

ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ending 31st December 2024

Board of Trustees

Hon. Chairman: Vacant

Hon. Treasurer: Mrs S. Smith

Hon. Secretary: Mrs A. Armstrong

Miss L. Carruthers

Mrs L. Morrow

Mrs K. Richardson

Auditors: Lamont Pridmore

Bank: NatWest, Carlisle

Consulting Veterinary Surgeons: Craig Robinson Vets Ltd.

The Trustees Annual Report for 2024

Welcome once again to the trustees' reports, firstly to that of the work of the branch veterinary clinic. This year has been disappointing once again in terms of numbers seen in the clinic itself and, *again*, clients have missed appointments without letting us know, wasting the vets time (and fee). The 'Statement of Animal Welfare Statistics' which we submit monthly to the national society illustrates this 'disappointment' – the monthly average of animals seen at the clinic was down this year to 55.2. There were peaks and troughs and in April the numbers seemed to be picking up, 'peaking' at 81 then gradually decreasing with the 'trough' of only 28 animals seen in November in the clinic itself. Although several more animals could have been seen directly at Craig Robinson Vets each month as being an emergency or in need of urgent treatment.

The number of cats and dogs getting repeat prescriptions each month remained constant, but while the prescriptions are written up each month by our vets the animals generally only need to be seen by the vet in the clinic every 6 months. Clinic protocol means dogs requiring neutering needed to be examined first at the clinic, cats did not need to be seen prior to referral for neutering. While the above may go some way to account for the decline in numbers, this lack of numbers of pet owners booking appointments is perplexing to say the least, in light of the continued rise in the cost of living and increasing costs of private veterinary treatment.

With our clinic costs such as rent, rates fixed and those of 'Utilities' increasing, but the revenue in the form of clients' consultation fees decreasing led, in the face of this, to me (with my clinic manager hat on, as well having worked in the clinic for over 30 years) undertaking an evaluation of the way the clinic worked and questioning its cost effectiveness *now* - in effect a 'cost-benefit' analysis.

The clinic and Craig Robinsons use the same veterinary computer programme system and, on questioning each vet attending the clinic, each felt they could work more effectively the way they worked at their own practice, that was essentially working 'solo' in the consulting room. This was trialled and with other slight administrative changes, it did work to reduce the time the vets were charging for seeing clinic clients.

Another, but major, fixed cost was the (one) paid employee; originally contracted to work three hours per clinic session, but with the declining numbers and the 'new' system of working, her role was agreed to be now redundant. Our employee was offered another role, namely an enhanced reception role but declined and decided on taking a redundancy package. She was with us for eight years and we thank her for her contribution towards the running of, and her commitment to, the clinic and wish her well. With the minimum wage rising and again with the declining numbers in mind it was decided not to employ anyone else just now until we see if numbers pick up in 2025. My own thoughts/ideas on why the clinic is underused is that of demographic and social change in the areas once our 'heart land', also a one-hour window, in middle of day for an appointment, is no longer convenient/ logistical for potential clients.

To end on a more positive note, with the Act requiring cats to be microchipped coming into law in June, we launched a 'Snip and Chip' campaign in April subsidising even more heavily the amount cat owners on benefits would need to pay to have their cats neutered and microchipped, or those cats who had already been neutered, to be microchipped. Our average is 2- 3 per month so when we 'snipped and chipped' 10 in May we hoped the campaign had really taken off, however, despite advertising the scheme in the vets and on our website, the numbers reverted to the norm! And, while it made a small dent in the number of cats breeding indiscriminately, as I will leave my cat re-homing colleague to report, the number of unwanted kittens she was asked to take in was as high as ever.

Income generation

In common with most charities we rely on legacies to fund our work. We were lucky to receive a large legacy several years ago which is still keeping us 'afloat'. This year we received the final payment of a 2023 legacy and notification at the end of the year that we were to receive a small (but equally welcome) legacy from a retired nursing sister. Along with several smaller funeral donations, we also received a thousand pounds donated in memory of a younger local man whose family came to the clinic to personally present the money and learn what we do in the clinic and of the animal welfare work we do in the rural branch area (as this was late December, this will show in the Financial Accounts for 2025). As we say each year, we haven't the person-power to fund raise ourselves, so these donations are a lifeline for the branch.



And finally.....

Our thanks go to ***all*** the staff at Craig Robinson Vets Ltd for their support. Lesley and Allan Doyle at Pawfection Cattery who take in our waifs and strays. Karen and Tony Aitkin who fosters and socialises kittens. From the National society, AWO Graham Carter who we can call on (and hope he feels he can call on us) and our Branch Partnership Manager Denise McCabe for her advice and support.

CAT REHOMING IN 2024

2024 proved to be a very busy year for taking in and rehoming just under 70 cats and kittens in this area. We are very lucky to be able to rent six units in a lovely private cattery, run by genuine cat lovers. They take brilliant care of our cats and give them lots of TLC, as some can come from not so brilliant backgrounds, as a result are very scared and frightened when they first come in. We also have a foster home we can use, Karen and Tony love to look after the 'kittens' who arrive into our care, either signed over or 'found'.

We started this year with the brilliant news that our two 'oldies', Legs and his sister Misty, had been offered a home, were soon adopted and now living a life of luxury and pampering at the good age of 15, soon to be 16! We were asked to take in several young cats from a home, where the mum had moved out, with the rest of the household due to move soon, but no one could take the cats. Signed over were 4 adults, one a mum and 4 kittens only 3 weeks old, but with the news one was already chosen, and would be adopted when old enough. Dotty proved to be a really lovely mum and her little ones soon grew into playful little kittens, finding homes easily,

Rebecca, a grey tabby, decided to give birth in a gentleman's garden in an old suitcase. She had already had one kitten when he rushed her to the vets, where she then went on to have another two kittens. She was checked over and found not to be microchipped and sadly, after being advertised, did not have anyone come forward for her. She did find a lovely forever home after her kittens had gone to their own homes.



Rebecca & her 3 kittens

I was asked to take in two young girls, when I arrived to collect them, the lady said she thought one was pregnant. They were taken to be checked over, as we do with any we take in, and I was told that it wouldn't be long until she gave birth. She had 3 lovely black and white kittens, with the help of Lesley from the cattery who gave her lots of strokes and encouragement.

A magnificent grey Maine Coon was taken in after being signed over to our Inspector, he had a lot of matted fur and was left outside in all weathers, rain, hail and snow, but was the sweetest boy you could meet, a typical gentle giant! He was adopted by a couple who had recently lost their beloved cat, so were very taken with him and he has settled down so well with them in the countryside, where he loves to sit in the sun watching them in the garden. (Please see front cover for his picture).

In a secluded country area, there were several kittens running about with their mum. She had been fed by a concerned man, who also started feeding the kittens when they were old enough. He was concerned that the kittens would remain feral like their mum, so called us to see if we would take them in, he was quite happy to catch the mum and take her to be neutered and ok about taking her back to his and keep feeding her. His two neighbours already had beds for her in their shed and greenhouse. We managed to take in 5 of the 6 kittens, but sadly the one left, totally evaded all of us, even with our trap set ready and waiting.

Nearer the end of the year, I received a call about a tabby who suddenly appeared in a man's garden with two lovely kittens about 3/4 weeks old, just starting to wobble along. He had purchased an outside, waterproof cloth, kennel type of bed so she could shelter with them as it was raining most of the days she was there. I took the trap round and set it, meaning to leave it for a while and come back, but she was so hungry (even though she was being fed) she just went right into it straight away. The kittens were so easy to pick up and had doubled in numbers!! The man had heard squeaks in next doors garden and looked over the fence to find two tiny kittens looking back at him. For my sins I decided to foster the whole family. We called mum Rachel and the four kittens, Mel and Kim (on the right) because I was told they were girls and the boys Eric and Ernie.



Treasurer's Introduction to the Financial Accounts for Year ending 2024

I would like to present the Financial Report of 2024.

Our aim as trustees is to promote animal welfare in this area. We offer subsidised veterinary treatment for pet owners on benefits at our Clinic in Close Street, Carlisle.

The inspectorate is supported by our branch, taking in cats signed over to them. We use a private cattery for all the neglected and unwanted cats and are lucky to have a foster home, to take in any found or signed over kittens.

We count ourselves fortunate to have the stability of a large legacy left to us in 2017, to help us throughout the year, although it has reduced over the years, we still have enough to take us through to the foreseeable future.

As with many other Charities, the number of Legacies left to us has reduced compared with a few years ago. This year the total of our legacies amounted to just under £16,000 compared to 2023, where the total was just under £47,000.

Our van is still proving to be dependable and reliable, only requiring the usual yearly service and MOT, with minimal extra work being carried out, to keep it in good order.

At the beginning of 2024, the private cattery we use, had to increase their fees to coincide with the current rising cost of living and utility expenses, which is reflected in the "Cat boarding and rehoming fees" section in the financial accounts.

Unfortunately, due to the lack of clinic clients and the current utility charges increasing, along with other cost increases (vet's bills etc) we had to try and find a cost-effective way to run the clinic. The difficult decision was made for our only paid member of staff to be made redundant.

We have decided to look into the clinic expenses going into 2025, to see where we can save on any expenditure connected with it.

If anyone would like to ensure that their bequest is used solely for animal welfare work in the Branch area, the wording is as follows:

*'I bequeath to the **Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Cumbria North and East Branch (Reg charity no. 232262)** for the general purposes of the Branch, the sum of £..... free of all duties and taxes payable at my death and I declare that the receipt of the Honorary Treasurer or other proper Officer for the time being of the said Branch shall be sufficient discharge to my Trustee'.*

I would like to thank everyone who supports our local Branch, without your involvement we would not achieve the standards of welfare which we do.

Susan Smith (Hon Treasurer)

THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

CUMBRIA NORTH AND EAST BRANCH

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024

THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

CUMBRIA NORTH AND EAST BRANCH

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RSPCA CUMBRIA NORTH AND EAST BRANCH

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024

	Note	£ Unrestricted Funds	£ Restricted Funds	£ Total Funds 2024	£ Total Funds 2023
<u>INCOMING RESOURCES</u>					
FROM GENERATED FUNDS					
Voluntary Income	1	37,765		37,765	68,435
Investment Income	2	3,338		3,338	3,005
	3	18,776		18,776	25,332
FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES					
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES					
		59,879	0	59,879	96,772
<u>RESOURCES EXPENDED</u>					
CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	4	115,532		115,532	90,094
ALLOCATION OF SUPPORT COSTS	5	1,735	0	1,735	2,317
GOVERNANCE COSTS	6	936		936	896
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED					
		118,203	0	118,203	93,307
Net incoming resources		(58,324)	0	(58,324)	3,465
Gain (Losses) on investments	7	53		53	(365)
Transfers between funds		(58,271)	0	(58,271)	3,100
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS					
TOTAL FUNDS AT 1st January 2023					
		233,618	0	233,618	230,518
TOTAL FUNDS AT 31st December 2023					
		175,347	0	175,347	233,618

RSPCA CUMBRIA NORTH AND EAST BRANCH

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2024

	Note	£ Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	£ Total Funds 2024	£ Total Funds 2023
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible Fixed Assets	10	3,298		3,298	4,123
CURRENT ASSETS					
Stock		20		20	20
Debtors				0	0
Investments	7	5,732		5,732	5,679
Cash at Bank & in Hand	9	188,961		188,961	230,379
		194,713	0	194,713	236,078
CURRENT LIABILITIES					
Sundry Creditors		22,664		22,664	6,583
NET CURRENT ASSETS		172,049	0	172,049	229,495
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		175,347	0	175,347	233,618
NET ASSETS		175,347	0	175,347	233,618
FUNDS					
Undesignated Funds		175,347		175,347	233,618
Designated Funds		-		-	-
Restricted Funds		175,347		175,347	233,618

RSPCA CUMBRIA NORTH AND EAST BRANCH

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024

	2024 £	2023 £
1 VOLUNTARY INCOME	Unrestricted	
General Donations/Fundraising	354	79
Legacies	15,590	46,764
National scheme entitlement (door to door)	20,438	19,786
Donations and subscriptions	1,383	1,806
	<u>37,765</u>	<u>68,434</u>
2 INVESTMENT INCOME		
Standard Chartered	394	394
Nat West Bank	2,944	2,611
	<u>3,338</u>	<u>3,005</u>
3 INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES		
Contribution to Animal treatments	18,776	25,332
	<u>59,879</u>	<u>96,771</u>
TOTAL		
4 CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES EXPENDITURE		
Boarding and Rehoming Fees	32,936	20,409
Rent & Utilities	4,379	5,096
Clinic Insurance	34	34
Stationery and postage	2,488	1,878
Telephone	2,903	2,739
Van expenses	1,249	1,555
Clinic Repairs	567	314
Clinic costs - security, cleaning, sundries	448	310
Clinic admin & support	9,649	7,918
Vet consultations & fees	42,273	40,575
Drugs and medicine	10,408	9,266
Head Office backdated claims	8,198	
	<u>115,532</u>	<u>90,094</u>
5 ALLOCATION OF SUPPORT COSTS		
Bank charges	910	1,287
Depreciation	825	1,030
	<u>1,735</u>	<u>2,317</u>
6 GOVERNANCE COSTS		
Independent Examiner Fees	936	896
	<u>118,203</u>	<u>93,307</u>
TOTAL		
Total of Receipts over payments (payments over receipts)	<u>(58,324)</u>	<u>3,464</u>

RSPCA CUMBRIA NORTH AND EAST BRANCH

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023 (cont)

7 INVESTMENTS

	2024 Value £	Cost £	2023 Value
£5,340 £1 Standard Chartered Plc 7.375% Pref Stock Non-Cum Irred Preference Shares	5,732	5,868	5,679
	<u>5,732</u>	<u>5,868</u>	<u>5,679</u>

8 Clinic Income & Expenditure

	2024 £	2023 £
Income for year	44,289	50,552
Expenditure for year	81,347	66,991
Excess of Income (Expenditure) for year	<u>(37,058)</u>	<u>(16,439)</u>

9 Cash at Bank

	2024 £	2023 £
Balance on Deposit Account with the Nat. West	187,284	218,340
Current Account	1,677	12,039
	<u>188,961</u>	<u>230,379</u>

10 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	IT Equip £	Fixtures etc £	Motor Vehicles £	Total £
Costs to 1st January 2024	7,910	3,853	15,893	27,656
Additions during year	0		0	0
Less Original cost of disposals during year			0	0
Costs to 31st December 2024	<u>7,910</u>	<u>3,853</u>	<u>15,893</u>	<u>27,656</u>
Depreciation to 1st January 2024	7,176	3,797	12,560	23,533
Less Depreciation on assets disposed of during year			0	0
Charge for year	147	11	667	825
Depreciation to 31st December 2024	<u>7,323</u>	<u>3,808</u>	<u>13,227</u>	<u>24,358</u>
NET BOOK VALUE 31st December 2024	<u>587</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>2,666</u>	<u>3,298</u>
NET BOOK VALUE 31st December 2023	<u>734</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>3,333</u>	<u>4,123</u>

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF
THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS
CUMBRIA NORTH AND EAST BRANCH TRUST

I report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 31st December 2024, which are set out on pages 1 to 4.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

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

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts (under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011);
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act); and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

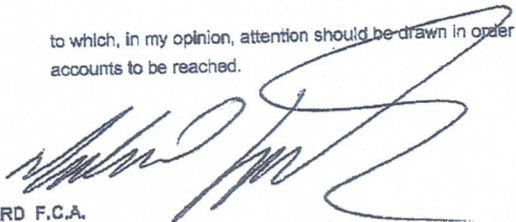
Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and the seeking of explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and, consequently, no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a true and fair view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

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

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements to keep accounting records in accordance with s130 of the 2011 Act; and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act and the regulations made thereunder have not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.


M UPWARD F.C.A.
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT
LAMONT PRIDMORE
31 LONSDALE STREET

CARLISLE

28th June 2025

2024 Annual Report to Branches Cumbria Group

The current team consists of Inspector ARO Graham Carter covering Cumbria. Inspector ARO Nick Green, Inspector Amy McIntosh and Inspector Carl Larsson covering South Cumbria and North Lancashire. Finally Rob Melloy Chief Inspector.

Martyn Fletcher - Inspector Martyn Fletcher passed away unexpectedly in May after working for the animal charity for 24 years. Martyn, a former police officer in West Yorkshire and accountant, was well known in his community. He would often have local people - as well as the police and local vets - reaching out to him for help in dealing with animal welfare issues at all times of the day and night and he was always happy to assist. Throughout his career with the RSPCA he helped save hundreds of animals and also helped many people who needed advice in caring for their pets. He also brought to justice those who had committed serious animal cruelty offences and was trained in specialist rescues as part of the charity's rope and water rescue teams. Martyn was really respected in the community for his work and passion for animal welfare. Lots of people would call on his expertise and I know local vets and the police would be in touch with him at all times and he would always have his phone turned on and offer to help when needed. It was the same with work colleagues - even if he was on a day off - he would say they could call him if needed and he would always make himself available for them - and the animals.

He was a real outdoors man and loved being in nature and was a climber which made him a natural rescuer. During his career he spent time as an RSPCA Water Rescue Technician involved in several rescues of people and animals during large scale flooding incidents. He also spent time on our rope rescue team and the casualty animal specialist team. He was also a true gentleman, always willing to go the extra mile to help people as well as animals. Once the water rescue team revisited a street in Morpeth in Northumberland in 2008 where they had rescued people and animals the day before. The devastation was obvious to all. When arriving at one house they had visited, they found Martyn with a broom in hand, helping the elderly homeowner clean up the mess. Martyn, who was also a keen photographer, won a number of commendations for his rescue work including saving a stag which had become entangled in a tree on a river - as well as the rescue of a sheep from a cliff top in Shap, Cumbria. Martyn was proud to be an RSPCA Inspector. He was - among many things - passionate about animal welfare, a diligent case officer with a particular interest in wildlife crime, and the go-to officer for help in the Cumbria area. He was a fiercely loyal colleague and will be missed by all those who knew him.

Appleby Horse Fair - Once again we had a large team of Inspectorate colleagues from across the country come up to Appleby for the Fair. Because of the way the dynamic of the Fair has changed we now have three phases to the operation. In Phase 1 we have a small team in the area around Appleby as there are always lots of horses and owners who turn up early for the fair. We are on the ground checking on the welfare of the animals from the Friday before the Fair starts. Phase 2 is when we deploy the large team of 32 Inspectorate staff. This is the main event of the Fair itself in its traditional time slot. We are assisted during this time by staff from World Horse Welfare, Redwings, Blue Cross and Bransby Horses. Phase 3 is the mop up stage which is the Monday and Tuesday after the fair. This is carried out by just 2 officers who are making sure that nothing has been left behind and carrying on investigations started during the first 2 phases where necessary. This year there was unfortunately a death of a horse early on at the Fair. We believe this horse had been worked to the point of exhaustion and then collapsed and died. There is an ongoing investigation.

Work carried out at the Fair was; 355 Interactions, 8 Warnings, 3 ongoing investigations. Animals that came into care: 25 (+5 puppies together) (15 equines, 2 dogs, 6 puppies, 1 kitten, 1 domestic rabbit, 2 wild rabbits, 1 duckling, 1 captive bird, 1 wild bird). This year Westmoreland and Furness Council delegated powers under the Animal Welfare Act to the RSPCA team. This made our operation so much more efficient as we didn't need to rely on the Police to use their powers. We were able to act far more quickly to secure animals and get them to safe places for treatment when required. Getting powers for RSPCA staff under the Animal Welfare Act is a national target for the RSPCA. I understand that the Welsh Parliament may be close to giving powers to the Inspectorate in Wales. However, Cumbria and Westmorland and Furness Council beat them to it. The first ever Horse taken into possession by an RSPCA Inspector using powers under the Animal Welfare Act was named Fletcher after our much missed colleague and Appleby Fair Veteran Martyn Fletcher.

Court Cases - A Woman from Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria – starved a six-month-old puppy to death and dumped her body in a freezer bag. The woman was prosecuted by the RSPCA after the body of a Staffordshire bull terrier type dog called Ariel was found in the Ormsgill area of Barrow in May 2023. The puppy, who weighed 7kg, had deteriorated over several weeks and was described by a vet as “emaciated”. Sweeney told the inspector that Ariel belonged to her. She said she hadn’t starved her pet and that the dog had been ‘sick for several weeks’, before she left her body in a place she ‘liked to go’. A post mortem report was carried out which showed that Ariel had no body fat. When interviewed by the RSPCA about what had happened, Sweeney said Ariel had stopped eating her food but there seemed to be no obvious reason for this. She said she didn’t seek any veterinary help and continued to watch her pet deteriorate and lose weight for ‘about four or five weeks’. She said Ariel had shown no outward signs of illness and she didn’t believe she was suffering. No veterinary help had been sought at any time, primarily, she said, due to concerns about the cost. She stated there was no one she could have asked for help, and she wasn’t aware that the RSPCA or similar welfare organisations could have provided financial assistance. Sweeney pleaded guilty to one offence contrary to the Animal Welfare Act 2006. The court heard in mitigation that she had poor mental health and that she was the primary carer for three children. In sentencing the woman received a 12-week custodial, suspended for 12 months. 20 days of rehabilitation activity; £157 victim surcharge. Disqualified from keeping animals indefinitely with a minimum of 10 years before she can appeal.

A Cumbria man who mistreated 28 owls has been handed a 20 week suspended prison sentence. A man from Walney, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria was also disqualified from keeping all birds for five years after pleading guilty to three Animal Welfare Act 2006 offences; for causing unnecessary suffering to a tawny owl and a barn owl - and not meeting the needs of a further 26 owls. He was also put under a curfew from 9pm to 7am for a period of one month. He was sentenced at Preston Crown Court on 17 May. This case began in 2022 but due to the backlog in the court system was only heard May 2024. The court heard that the man kept a total of 31 owls, ranging from tawny, snowy and eagle to Indian scops, burrowing and Australian boobooks. Five of the birds were kept at his residence and at a lock-up in Barrow-in-Furness. When RSPCA inspectors visited the two premises on 8 March 2022 to check on the birds’ welfare, they found owls with obvious neurological conditions and others with current or previous injuries, which did not appear to have received the necessary veterinary care. In most cases, the birds were being kept in cramped unsuitable conditions - including dog crates not much wider than their wing-span. RSPCA Inspector Amy McIntosh said: “When I attended the address up to assist police with a warrant, I found two tawny owls stacked in dog cages on top of each other. Both of them were showing neurological conditions. One was rolling around in his cage unable to stand properly. The owner told me the owls had been given to him by vets and that they were wild owls. He said they had been in this condition for a number of months”. On the same day, Inspector McIntosh moved on lock-up premises where police had to force entry. The RSPCA and vet surgeon examined each of the 26 birds kept there. Inspector McIntosh added: “The lock-up unit was very cramped with a large number of cages containing numerous owls of various species. The cages varied in size from larger enclosures for the Eagle Owls to some cages which were simply small dog crates. None of the cages appeared to contain any water. There was very little natural light getting into the unit and it was dark inside. Some of the owls were visibly disabled with hanging wings indicating they had broken a wing at some point”. The vet examined each owl and their enclosures before each was placed into animal carriers. In total, 26 owls were removed from this lock-up site. The Vet said that his overall impression of the lock-up premises was that it was very dark and the housing of all the birds was inadequate. There were no windows, and the lighting was all switched off. It was dusty, incredibly cramped with numerous owls housed both together and in close proximity to other owls. Later that day, when the Vet visited the owners house to examine a further five birds, he found more owls showing injury, illness and housed unsuitably. He reported that one owl appeared to have a serious neurological deficit, including a marked head-tilt, and that the owner had said that the bird had been behaving that way since he got it. The bird was unable to stand, and was constantly rolling on the floor of the cage. This bird, and another owl in very poor condition with a wing fracture, were put to sleep to curtail their suffering. In addition, he was very concerned that gravely debilitated and injured owls were being kept and that despite birds of prey being adept at hiding clinical signs of disease, three birds were clearly in physical distress.

Multiple Animal Case in Barrow-in-Furness. 1 Spaniel, 4 cats and 7 Guinea Pigs removed from a property after the spaniel was taken to the vets in a collapsed, emaciated state and crawling with fleas. Whilst awaiting a court date the defendants decided to acquire 4 kittens of which 2 died when put back in the flea ridden house. The surviving 2 were seized. The case was in Barrow-in-Furness Magistrates court for a Sec 20 hearing on 19th December 2024, which was successful. This means the RSPCA can re-home these animals after a 21 day appeal period.

Rescues - 22 dogs were removed from a static caravan near Seascale, Cumbria. The elderly gentleman owner was taken into secure care by police and social services. The owner had clearly been struggling to look after himself and had allowed the dogs to cover the inside of the caravan in excrement. The elderly gentleman was taken into secure care by police and social services. He agreed to relinquish ownership of all the dogs. Cumbria branches did a great job with rehoming some of these dogs.

13 cats were removed from a property in Dalton-in-Furness. Cats were living in filthy conditions. The owner of these cats was clearly not coping with the cats and asked the RSPCA to re-home all the cats in the property. They were signed over to the RSPCA and taken to GMAH for vet care before going into branches.

In December, ARO Graham Carter attended an incident where a swan had crash landed through glass panels at a garden nursery greenhouse. He was taken to the massive greenhouse and located the swan walking around under the plant benches. He eventually caught the swan and examined it and to his surprise it didn't have any injuries. He bagged it into a swan bag and released it on a local lake around half a mile away. Another happy ending. Swans sometimes land on wet roads that they mistake for rivers but this is the first time I have heard of one attempting to land on a green house.

Chris Towler - Inspector Chris Towler resigned from the RSPCA at the end of the year after 39 years of dedicated service. Chris is a well loved character and will be missed by the team. Though he has promised to join us for social events to roll out his latest "dad Jokes" on us. In his career Chris has improved the lives of thousands of animals, prosecuted many offenders and helped innumerable colleagues along the way. We all wish Chris a long and prosperous retirement.

Chris And Stella Norman, Milnthorpe Kennels and Cattery - Chris and Stella moved on from their business at Milnthorpe kennels and cattery. Chris and Stella have been a huge asset to the Inspectorate team in Cumbria. They always seemed to be able to find us space at any time of the day or night for pretty much any domestic animal. Over the years they have helped us to help thousands of animals. Including, on one occasion, a batch of over 200 rabbits with only a few hours notice!

To Conclude - These are challenging times for the Cumbria Inspectorate team. We are very few but have high hopes of a new recruit Called Lucy who will be joining us when she finishes her training in April. As we are so few and cover a very large area we are very grateful for the work of the branches and our Volunteers. Without these people giving up their time we wouldn't be able to do nearly so much for animals in need.

So from the team THANKYOU!

Structure, Governance & Management

Cumbria North and East branch has as its governing document the National Society's Branch Rules (amended in 2006.) In this branch the trustees are in effect committee members. They are appointed at the Annual General Meeting by polling over 50% of the vote in a secret ballot, which takes at the AGM, by those eligible to vote under RSPCA rules.

All eligible branch members are sent a nomination form with the notice calling the annual general meeting, enabling them to put themselves forward for election, if proposed and seconded by a member of the branch. Non branch members can also be co opted to the committee and subsequently act as trustees. The maximum number of elected committee members is 14 and 3 co options are allowed in any one year.

All trustees are asked to sign a 'Declaration of Willingness to Serve as a Trustee' and appraised of the duties and responsibilities of Trusteeship. Induction to policies & procedures for, and training of, trustees is undertaken by the Branches Development Advisor.

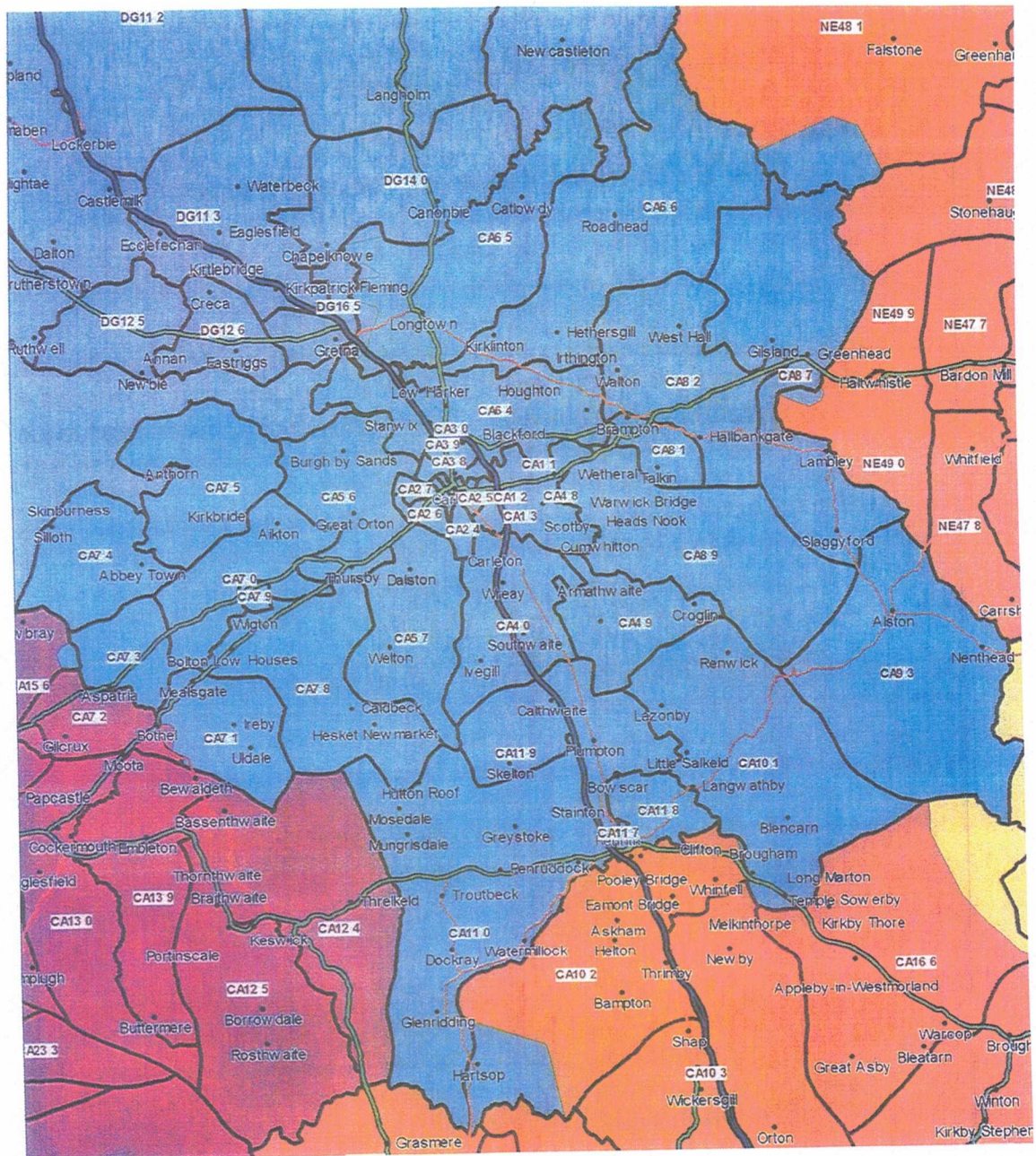
The organisational structure of the branch is that of three executive officers, the honorary chairman, treasurer and secretary, appointed by ballot, at a meeting held directly after the AGM, to make day to day decisions in the running of the Branch. Any major policy decisions are put to the committee for ratification. The committee meets two monthly.

The branch has specific risk management procedures in place which are always being re evaluated, and we are continuously working towards new policies and procedures.

The secretary is also responsible for the administration of the Branch Clinic.

The branch has a Re-homing Coordinator for cats, who liaises directly with the private boarding cattery where the cats are kept, awaiting re-homing, visiting regularly to check on their general health and wellbeing, obtaining veterinary treatment, if necessary. The Re-homing coordinator, place these animals in suitable new homes, after carrying out a home visit to assess the home's suitability for the animal chosen and also carry out post-homing checks.

Cumbria North and East branch is connected to the wider RSPCA network by a Trustee attending North Regional Board meetings and of course the National Society, under whose guidelines the branch operates. The RSPCA's Chief Vet, as well as licensing the Branch Veterinary Clinic, updates the branch on new veterinary medicine guidelines and provides recommendations as to 'best practice'. Contact with the RSPCA Inspectorate is maintained through the RSPCA National Control Centre and on a 'face to face' basis when an animal signed over to the RSPCA is taken into Branch care.



Branch Mobile: 07718 065995
Welfare, Neutering & Microchipping

Rehoming Mobile: 07487 582495
Cat Adoptions & Sign overs