

ALMOST HOME ANIMAL RESCUE N.I.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's Constitution, the Charities Act 2011 and "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).

Objectives and activities

The organisation rescues, provides shelter, and works to rehome abandoned companion animals in Northern Ireland. It also endeavours to educate members of the public on how to correctly treat their animals.

The organisation will rescue and rehome stray or abandoned pets. This will give the public the opportunity to rescue an animal and give them a new home. It will also educate the public on the correct treatment of animals. The evidence of this will be seen in a reduced number of animals destroyed in council pounds in Northern Ireland. The local councils responsible for animal welfare will have their costs reduced and this will have a commensurate affect on the rates. This will therefore benefit ratepayers. There is no private benefit for any of the trustees. We do not anticipate any harm befalling the public from the activities of the charity.

The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

We are a voluntary run rescue with no paid staff. Our aim is to take in, care for and re-home stray and unwanted animals at our shelter in Moira. This is laid down in the constitution under which we operate and we became a registered charity on 18th March 2015.

These animals may be from local council pounds which results in a reduction in the numbers of dogs being euthanized at council expense. They may also come through animal welfare cases where animals are being abused and neglected. We also provide a lifeline to members of the public, who, through no fault of their own, may have to surrender their much loved pets. We always keep in touch with these people and let them know when their pet has been successfully rehomed. In the current year, we have rehomed around 920 animals, mainly cats and dogs, but rabbits, birds, pigs, snakes, and ferrets have also been included. Because of Covid, physical home visits have been put on hold, but are now carried out by video call – so far this seems to be working well. Any potential adopter who is not happy with or cannot manage a video call will be offered a home visit. Beneficiaries of our work are residents who may live anywhere in Northern Ireland.

We aim to educate the public in matters pertaining to animal welfare and the care and treatment of animals. We actively encourage spaying and neutering of pets – this helps to reduce the numbers of stray and unwanted animals. Sadly this year we have seen ever increasing numbers of unwanted dogs, cats and kittens and a big increase in the numbers of animals needing our help because of welfare/abuse issues.

We advise on the importance of cleaning up after your pet, thus reducing the amount of time and money being spent cleaning up dog fouling in our parks and on our pavements. A further benefit flowing from our work is in the support given to local businesses e.g. veterinary practices, animal food suppliers and suppliers of cleaning equipment materials. This is incidental but necessary for the welfare of the animals in our care and the upkeep of the shelter.

Achievements and performance

Our fundraising efforts were difficult this year due to Covid. With good practices in place, we still managed to hold 2 street collections raising just over £2,000. We were also invited to collect in 2 local supermarkets which raised almost £900. Our volunteers stepped up as always and the fundraising team worked very hard despite difficult circumstances. They organised the printing of a calendar, raised sponsorship from local businesses to cover the printing costs and sold all 500 copies, held a Santa Paws event and some of the volunteers held raffles – altogether this raised around £6000. We held a very successful Meet & Greet in a local park – we met up with a lot of our dogs with their new owners and met a lot of folks who went on to adopt from us. Our supporters continue to show amazing generosity and support for our work.

ALMOST HOME ANIMAL RESCUE N.I.

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Main achievements

Heather House

Our residents in Heather House, our retirement home, continue to thrive and are much loved and cared for by their own team of volunteers. A new ceiling was added to the house to ensure no heat escaped – the materials were provided by Almost Home and the work was carried out by our amazing team of volunteers.

Our vet calls with them on a weekly basis, more often if required. Sadly we have lost a few little souls this year, but we always aim to have somebody with them when they pass. They are then cremated and their ashes scattered in the memory garden which is not far from Heather House.

Payment is made to Pet's Farewell which is a company owned and managed by 2 of our trustees, Karen and Ian Matthews. They charge Almost Home a nominal fee for this service – it is invoiced to the charity and paid by bank transfer. In the year ending March 2023 we paid them a total of £1,224.

The ongoing sponsorship of the residents and the House itself continue to be very successful. We have been able to invite sponsors to meet their dogs/visit Heather House – these events are enjoyed by both the sponsors and the animals.

Mother and Baby Unit

This unit continues to be full – we have had some 63 litters of puppies through the doors this year – thankfully all have thrived and gone on to find new homes.

Throughout all the work we carry out, we adhere to the rules of the Northern Ireland Charity Commission with regard to running a charity, and also ensure that no harm is caused to any person as a result of any activity carried out by Almost Home Animal Rescue.

We have several other units – the cattery, spay & neuter unit and the main kennel block – all have their own team lead and their own volunteers. We have improved some of the outside runs and bought new crates for the dogs that need to be on cage rest because of either illness or injury.

Financial review

The results are set out in detail on pages 6 to 12. The organisation returned net incoming resources for the year of £156,477 (2022: £190,650) leaving unrestricted funds of £726,360 (2022: £569,88). The unrestricted funds are considered to be essential to provide sufficient funds to cover any unforeseen costs which may arise and fulfill legal obligations of the charity in the event that current levels of income are not maintained.

The trustees have agreed to designate funds at the year end of £55,000 for various projects.

It is the policy of the charity that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to between three and six month's expenditure. The trustees consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised. This level of reserves has been maintained throughout the year.

As stated above, we have ended the year in a very healthy financial position.

Proposed building and repair works will cost approximately £75,000 - £80,000, therefore the trustees have agreed to designate funds of £55,000 towards these costs.

We always have to ensure we have enough funds to pay for the care of our special needs animals, some of which are very costly and to have enough money to cover any emergency which should arise, thankfully we have very generous supporters and we hope to commence the work during the next financial year.

ALMOST HOME ANIMAL RESCUE N.I.

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Plans for future periods

We have a lot of plans for the future, the main ones being a new laundry facility/utility room and a new outside secure off lead area. We carried out some maintenance on our memory garden but hope to enlarge and improve this area.

Structure, governance and management

The organisation is governed by its Constitution. The organisation is not for profit and unincorporated.

The organisation is governed by its Board of Trustees who meet regularly.

The trustees who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

Mrs K Matthews

Mr I Matthews

Mrs E Walker

Mrs A McCalmont

(Resigned 31 May 2022)

Mrs C McCleary

(Resigned 31 July 2022)

None of the trustees has any beneficial interest in the charity.

We currently have 3 trustees who are responsible for the overall decisions made at the shelter. We also have a committee of 8 people who oversee the day to day running of the shelter – each unit within the shelter has its own team leader and they liaise with the volunteers in each area. Some 220 volunteers have been recruited and trained and without their hard work it would be impossible to function.

We are very proud of the fact that the rescue is run on a completely voluntary basis, so that any money we receive is spent totally on the animals in our care and the running costs of the shelter.

We have held 7 committee meetings during the year and a meeting can be quickly arranged if any matters arise which need urgent discussion.

The trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.

E Walker

Mrs E Walker

Trustee

Date: *15/10/24*