

ALMOST HOME ANIMAL RESCUE N.I.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 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 1,125 animals, mainly cats and dogs, but rabbits, birds, pigs, snakes, and ferrets have also been included. Because of Covid, physical home visits had been put on hold, and were carried out by video call – this seemed to work well so we have carried on in this manner. 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 our highest ever numbers of unwanted dogs, cats and kittens and a big increase in the numbers of animals needing our help because of welfare/abuse issues. The shelter is full to capacity and it is heart-breaking to be unable to offer help in some cases.

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

At Almost Home, we have a fantastic fundraising team who go over and above in terms of giving up their time to organise events to raise funds for the rescue – this is after having given up their time to complete several shifts with the animals each week. Several events were held throughout the year, the highlight being a gala ball held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the shelter. Local businesses donated prizes for our auction and the ball was attended by over 100 people. Throughout the year we also held our popular Meet and Greet, a pub quiz, a sponsored doggie walk and sold our usual very popular calendars and our now renowned Santa Paws event.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Main achievements

Heather House

Our older residents continue to thrive in the wonderful environment within Heather House, loved and cared for (and thoroughly spoilt by) their own team of volunteers. They have vet visits each week, their own personal groomers and this year have enjoyed several trips to local dog parks in the company of their slaves!

The ongoing sponsorship of Heather House goes from strength to strength – the admin for this is undertaken by 2 of the volunteers. They also arrange open days for sponsors to come and meet some of the residents.

Sadly, as is to be expected, we have lost a few residents this year – they are always treated with dignity and as far as is possible, they are never alone as they pass over to Rainbow Bridge – they are privately cremated.

Payment is made to Pet's Farewell for this service – the business is owned and managed by two of our trustees, Karen and Ian Matthews. They charge the rescue a nominal fee which is invoiced to the charity and paid by bank transfer. In the year ending 31st March 2024 they were paid a total of £1,105.

Mother and Baby Unit

This unit continues to be full – we have had some 67 litters of puppies through the doors this year. We had 16 mothers who gave birth in the unit – mainly animals who had been removed because of welfare issues and sadly we had several litters where mum died and the babies were left - 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.

Cattery

Our cattery continues to be full with vast amounts of cats and kittens being handed in as found, abandoned or just not wanted! The unit has its own team lead and team of volunteers. In the current year over 200 cats and kittens were rehomed

We have several other units – the 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. We have created a new area for the pigs and are currently in the process of buying a pig ark for them and fencing off the area more securely.

Financial review

The results are set out in detail on pages 10 to 12. The organisation returned net incoming resources for the year of £128,098 (2023: £156,477) leaving unrestricted funds of £854,458 (2023: £726,360). 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.

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.

The trustees have designated £605,000 (2023 - £55,000) out of unrestricted funds, for various building and repair works for improvement to the premises. 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.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Plans for future periods

We have a lot of plans for the future. Sadly at present there are some ongoing legalities concerning the land on which the rescue sits but hopefully in the not too distant future this will be resolved and we can get on with all our improvements.

In the meantime, we carry on caring for all our residents – they are well fed, exercised and loved until such times as they are not 'Almost Home' but forever home.

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 H Jarvis

(Appointed 10 October 2024)

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

We currently have 4 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 6 committee meetings during the year and a meeting can be quickly arranged if any matters arise.

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

Mrs E Walker

Trustee

23 January 2025