

ALMOST HOME ANIMAL RESCUE N.I.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025.

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 effect 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 900 dogs, 160 cats, 13 rabbits, and degus, guinea pigs, birds, hens and ferrets have also been included. During Covid, physical home visits were 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.

ALMOST HOME ANIMAL RESCUE N.I.

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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 Speed dating event held in February for Valentine's day – many of our dogs were taken out to the event held in a local recreation space and members of the public were invited to come and meet them. This proved very popular and quite a few of our longer term residents received home offers. Other events included days out for the dogs to various dog parks, a quiz night, Meet and Greet in Lurgan Park, Santa Paws event, bring your dog to work day and a sponsored swim at Helen's Bay. Our ever popular calendar sold almost 1,000 copies with the animals pictured being previous Almost Home residents who have happily been rehomed and each page of the calendar is sponsored by a local business.

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, with the admin for this 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 and privately cremated.

Payment is made to Pet's Farewell for this service – the company is owned by Ian Matthews who was a trustee of the charity during the year. During the year, Pets Farewell provided cremation services to the charity of £2,160 (2014 - £1,105). At 31st March 2025 an amount of £900 (2024 -£nil) was owed to Pets Farewell by the charity.

Mother and Baby Unit

This unit continues to be full, we have had many litters of puppies through the doors this year. We had 14 mothers who gave birth in the unit, mainly animals who had been removed because of welfare issues. Sadly we had several litters where mum died and the babies were left, but thankfully all have thrived and gone on to find new homes. Included in this number were 10 cockapoo puppies which were seized at Belfast Port en route to the mainland as part of an illegal puppy farming trade. This has led to Almost Home having a close working relationship with DAERA and welfare authorities.

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 160 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. A pig ark and mud matting was ordered for the pigs and is now set up in their fenced off area.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Financial review

The results are set out in detail on pages 7 to 15. The charity returned net incoming resources for the year of £146,680 (2024 - £128,098) leaving unrestricted funds of £1,001,138 (2024 - £854,458). 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 funds of £700,000 (2024 - £605,000) out of unrestricted funds, for the cost of proposed remedial works. 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.

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

(Resigned 10 October 2024)

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

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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 210 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 5 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

12 January 2026