

## **Trustee Report for the Financial Year Ended 31st December 2023**

The Trustees submit their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31st December 2023 and would like to thank Felicity Huston from Huston & Co Accountants for all her help and support in preparing our final accounts.

### **Review of Activity**

Throughout 2023, we continued to support the alleviation of animal suffering while also promoting the advancement of animal welfare for the benefit of both animals and the public.

We did this in the following ways:

#### **Support for rescues**

We provided financial support to 11 local animal rescues that care for and re-home abandoned, unwanted, mistreated, or lost animals. These rescues face daily struggles with the rising cost of animal care, especially for those with multiple health issues. Our support aimed to help them extend their reach to more animals in need.

#### **Neutering/Spaying programmes**

We funded the neutering/spaying of 240 animals in Serbia, including dogs and cats living on the streets or in low-income homes. We also funded the neutering/spaying of a small number of cats living in similar circumstances in Northern Ireland.

#### **Emergency relief and support**

We continued to act as an emergency source of funding for the immediate relief of animal suffering, particularly through Ub Dog Pound in Serbia. Every month we provided support for veterinary care — including emergency operations, blood tests, x-rays, and scans. We also funded regular worm, flea, and tick treatments for the 150+ dogs living there. Since starting this support, we have seen an incredible improvement in the dogs' health.

In addition, we provided better-quality food for malnourished dogs and puppies. This greatly improved their quality of life and, in many cases, meant the difference between life and death.

In July 2023, we made our 11th trip to Ub Dog Pound in Serbia, taking with us 86kg of much-needed supplies — including blankets, beds, coats, bowls, toys, supplements, sunshades, water pools, and more. These items were donated by the public, who in turn were educated on the importance of good animal welfare and the value of kindness and care.

During this trip, we also highlighted the importance of neutering, showing how, without control measures, the number of stray and unwanted animals can quickly become a

major issue for both animals and humans. We visited one of our neutering coordinators in Serbia to see firsthand the challenges faced when animal populations are left unchecked.

We also assessed many dogs for suitability for rehoming. Later, we provided funds for 14 dogs to receive all necessary tests and veterinary care. In 2023, while we are unsure how many dogs were rehomed within Serbia, we know that 9 dogs found loving new homes in the UK with our help. For these 9 dogs, life changed beyond recognition.

### **Community fundraising and education**

From March to November 2023, we held monthly car boot sales. These were not only a great source of income but also an opportunity to promote good animal welfare, engage with the local community, and, in some cases, find solutions to problems people faced with their pets. Often, through networking, we were able to help rehome animals when no other solution could be found.

Our car boot sales also served as valued community events, offering social connection and providing opportunities for both buyers and sellers — helping people save money or earn extra income during the rising cost of living.

### **Charity shop and hub**

In November 2023, we opened our charity shop and hub. This was an investment not only to provide a steady income stream but also to give something back to the community. It is a place where like-minded people can come to pick up a bargain, seek help with pet-related issues, have a chat, and feel part of something that makes a difference.

Through the shop and car boot sales, we expanded volunteering opportunities. We now have a fantastic team of 15 volunteers who are the backbone of our charity. Thanks to them — and our supporters — we can change and even save the lives of animals.

### **Organisational Structure**

Animal Support Trust has been registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland since 21st December 2022 and is governed by a constitution.

### **Purpose of the Charity**

To support the alleviation of animal suffering and promote the advancement of animal welfare for the benefit of both animals and the public, anywhere in the world.

## **Financial Review**

Throughout 2023, the charity maintained a stable income through car boot sales, street collections, raffles, appeals, auctions, and donations. Since November, our charity shop has provided a welcome new source of income. As the charity is managed by a small team of trustees, our aim is always to maintain a reserve fund to cover six months of running costs should the need arise.

## **Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities**

The trustees are responsible for preparing the annual report and financial statements in accordance with relevant laws, and for keeping proper accounting records to detail transactions and safeguard assets.

## **Statement of Disclosure to Auditors**

At the time of approving this annual report, the trustees confirm that, to the best of their knowledge, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditor is unaware. The trustees have taken all reasonable steps to ensure that any relevant information has been identified and communicated to the auditor.