

Welcome to our Review of 2024

IN 2024 WE...

Trapped, neutered
and released

20 feral cats
and kittens



Peaches living
as a stray



Peaches
rehomed

Distributed

5,500 MEALS
FOR PETS VIA OUR LOCAL FOOD BANKS

Ran free microchipping
sessions for cats

120 (up **55%** on the last year)



Helped

50 OWNERS

in financial hardship to pay essential vet bills
to keep their pets safe



Spoke to

**870
SCHOOL
CHILDREN**
ABOUT ANIMAL WELFARE

Rescued over

200 animals

including dogs, cats,
hamsters, gerbils, rats, mice
and a whopping 69 rabbits!



WINNIE AND HER
DAUGHTER MANGO

Neutered

170 ANIMALS
**UP 60% ON
LAST YEAR**

Closed the doors of our
Dartford Charity Shop after over

20 YEARS
OF RAISING VITAL FUNDS



RSPCA.

Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
RSPCA - Kent North West Branch is a separately registered
Charity. Charity number 210633. We are responsible for
raising our own funds from local donations.

Visit our website www.rspca-kentnorthwest.org.uk to find
out more about our work and how you can get involved.
Follow us on Facebook (RSPCA - Kent North West)

rspca-kentnorthwest.org.uk

Achievements and Performance

2024 was our busiest year on record. Our income was £217,187.40 (up from £206,661.66 in 2023) and expenditure £275,895.44 (up from £239,604.53 in 2023). The Charity had a deficit of £56,759.29. At the year-end we have a balance sheet of £1,043,825.04 which represents just under 4 years of reserves. The Charity remains in a healthy financial position.

Demand for our support increased again from residents in our Branch area. The reasons include a local lack of veterinary capacity and continued increase vet costs for pet animals along with the cost of living crisis. We worked hard and increased our impact but finished the year with a deficit of £56,759.29.

Providing our key services

Our key animal welfare achievements in 2024 included;

- We took in 209 animals that were in desperate need (98 cats, 64 rabbits, 5 dogs and 42 small furies). Over 100 of these had been rescued by RSPCA Inspectors from situations of abuse or neglect. Most of the rest were sick or injured stray cats which urgently needed help. We pride ourselves on offering an exemplary service to our local RSPCA Inspectors and will work alongside them when our skills are needed. We rehomed 103 animals ourselves in 2024 and for all of the rest we paid all of the veterinary and boarding costs to enable them to go to RSPCA Rehoming Centres. We are grateful to RSPCA Canterbury, Ashford, Hastings and Thanet branches for allowing us to use their excellent facilities and services.
- We neutered 172 animals (86 cats, 40 dogs, 41 rabbits and 5 small furies) costing £9,414.11 (up from £5,647.79 in 2023). Neutering is very important to prevent future suffering, and we intend to keep increasing this service to the community.
- We helped 50 local pet owners who were in receipt of benefits and unable to fund essential vet costs for their pets. Without our help these animals would have suffered and may have had to be rehomed. When we can support responsible owners and help them to keep their pets then we do so.
- We microchipped 121 animals (up from 77 in 2023). It became a legal requirement for cats to be neutered in 2024. Emma, our Animal Welfare Officer, is trained to implant microchips. She ran a number of free cat microchipping sessions in areas of financial hardship. These were very well attended and many of the cats went on to need further services from us such as neutering or vet treatment.

Meet Pumpkin and Spice as featured in The Kent Messenger October 2024



Pumpkin and Spice were found dumped in faeces covered pet carrier by a road in Swanscombe. A concerned member of the public spotted them on the 18th October and took them to a local vet. They had obviously been shut in the tiny carrier for a long time. Despite their terrifying ordeal, friendly and confident two year olds Spice (fluffy female tabby) and Pumpkin (male ginger short haired) proved to be incredibly resilient. They were soon ready to find a loving new home together. Sadly Pumpkin and Spice were just another example of the growing number of animals being abandoned in our Branch area. Thanks to our friends at Canterbury RSPCA Centre for finding them an amazing home where they could stay together.

Going above and beyond

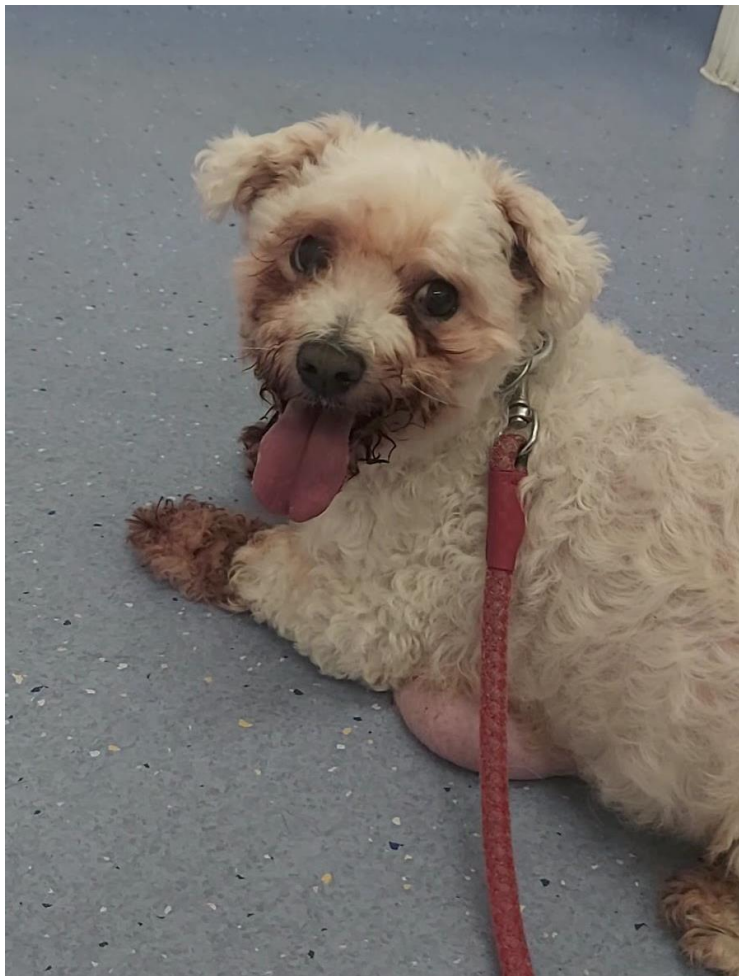
Rescue, neutering and microchipping are the bread and butter work of local RSPCA Branches. At RSPCA - Kent North West Branch we always try to push ourselves further to tackle specific problems in our Branch area. We have therefore developed these additional services to address specific local needs.

- **Food banks** - in 2024 we donated 5,500 meals for cats and dogs to local food banks. We work with a number of food banks and so far, have never had

to say no to their requests. We also provide information for food bank clients to enable them to access our other services for their pets such as neutering.

- **Educational Outreach** - In 2024 Emma reached 870 children providing 20 hours of educational talks. The purpose of the talks is to encourage empathy with animals thereby promoting good animal welfare for the pet owners of the future.
- **Branch Helpline** - We operate a very busy Helpline and often receive more than 100 calls per month. Trustee and Branch volunteer John Bowey gives up a huge amount of his time running the helpline. He is a valued source of support and advice to the public, often calling in from much further afield than just our Branch area.
- **Support for vulnerable pet owners and those in crisis** - In recent years we have found that we have the time and resources to be able to go further than the Inspectors are able to in terms of offering ongoing support to those in acute need. Mental health and age-related impairment are amongst the most common reasons Inspectors ask for our help and Emma steps in where most Branches cannot. Dealing with these owners is time consuming and complex but often there is just no one else and we feel that we do it very well.

Teddi's Story: Compassion in Difficult Circumstances



We were asked by national RSPCA staff if we could step in and help with this complex situation. Concerns had been raised about the welfare of a little dog called Teddi who had a clearly visible growth on his chest that had gone untreated. It was apparent that while Teddi was very much loved, his elderly owner was struggling to meet his needs. She was living with dementia, and without regular support, could no longer recognise or respond to Teddi's declining health. Social services and care providers were already working to move the owner into accommodation with more support.

We stepped in to help Teddi, starting with a veterinary assessment at no cost to the owner. The results were heartbreaking: Teddi was suffering from several serious, age-related conditions, many of which had conflicting treatment options.

We began the delicate process of helping the owner understand that Teddi was nearing the end of his life. This wasn't easy, especially as her health made it hard for her to fully grasp what was happening. At the same time, we made sure Teddi remained comfortable and pain-free. After ongoing conversations and support, we were able to work with the next of kin—who held power of attorney—to formally transfer Teddi into our care.

Teddi was taken to Harmsworth Animal Hospital for a full and compassionate assessment. Although we had a space ready for him at one of our centres, the veterinary team agreed that trying to manage his many complex health issues would not be in his best interest. The kindest decision was to let him go peacefully.

Throughout the process, we worked closely with housing officers, carers, social workers, and the family to ensure both Teddi and his owner were cared for with dignity and empathy. Everyone involved wanted what was best for Teddi, and we're confident that—had his owner been well—she would have made the same decision out of love for him.

Our involvement enabled Teddi to stay with his owner for longer than would have been possible without our oversight. We balanced Teddi's medical needs and quality of life with the undoubted benefits that he brought to his lifelong companion. Teddi's story is a powerful reminder of how animal welfare and human wellbeing are deeply connected. It also shows the importance of working together with compassion and understanding when people and pets are both in need.

Some cherries on the cake in 2024

In 2024 we rebranded along with the rest of the RSPCA and we hope you like our new look!



Welcome to our brand new team of Volunteer Drivers - Emma is out on the road 3 days a week but the demand never stops. So we advertised for volunteer drivers to assist Emma and we were delighted with the response. The original idea was that the volunteer drivers could get rescued animals where they need to be without delay and also save us time and money. Alex, David, Julie, Martin and Pamela answered our call and between them drove hundreds of miles in 2024, getting animals swiftly to places of safety. The team has really embraced the wider work of the Branch and quickly stepped up to support Emma as the work servicing the local food banks grew. They are there to collect and deliver food and we simply couldn't do this work without their hard work.



Welcome to our new Trustees - A charity is only as strong as its trustees and we are always seeking new people to join us. In 2024 we welcomed Ali, Androniki and Susanna who have the skills and experience to really strengthen our Board. If you would like to find out more about volunteering or becoming a Trustee then contact becky@rspca-kentnorthwest.org.uk

200th Anniversary Celebrations of the RSPCA - We were proud to join in the national celebrations in June of the 200th Anniversary of the RSPCA. We held our own "One Fun Day" in our Dartford Shop which was a great success with our customers. The Shop looked amazing and we made a display showing the history of the Branch dating back to before the 1960s. All of our branch staff and volunteers received a commemorative set of badges to mark the occasion as you can see with some of our team at Gravesend Shop.



An RSPCA Impact Award for our rabbit rehoming - Meet Edward who was typical of the 69 rabbits that we found homes for in 2024. He arrived with us in an awful state. He was missing much of his fur and his claws were growing into his feet. He had been confined in a small space and had been sitting in his own urine and faeces. Rabbits are such long suffering animals and we find that they bounce back very quickly once they settle in with us. They immediately appreciate the proper space and cleanliness as well as environmental enrichment and perfect diet. You can see the transformation which was made complete when Edward went to a new home where he is much loved and with a female rabbit for company.



Although we have only been rehoming rabbits for a few years we have rehomed nearly 200 and our hard work has not gone unnoticed. In 2024 we beat off very stiff competition in winning an RSPCA Impact Award in recognition of achieving so much without our own animal centre. The name on the Award should definitely read "Judith" and not "Becky", as it is Judith who has the skills and does all of the hard work caring for our rabbits (ably assisted by Sarah, Becca and Betty).

Partnership Working - We want to extend our gratitude to all of the veterinary practices in our area and further afield who support us in this work. In recent years we have extended this to a number of local Charities which we assist including New Hope, South East Dog Rescue, Dartford Animal Rescue Team, Bexley Cats Protection, Animal Samaritans, Jean Redgrave Rabbit Rescue and Spirits Rest Horse and Animal Sanctuary. We also worked with local Police, Dog Wardens,, Lost and Found Group, SLAIN, Bluewater, Jollyes the Pet People Superstore, Asda Greenhithe and a number of Morrisons supermarkets in our area. In addition to our

local RSPCA Inspectors, we pitched in and helped with animals from South London when that RSPCA Branch had to cease operations.



We also foster an excellent mutually beneficial relationship with Emma's counterpart in Canterbury and District Branch. Lin and Emma often collaborate on public events and microchipping days, sharing educational resources and ideas.

Our Local RSPCA Inspectorate Groups

We want to extend our thanks to all the RSPCA Inspectors and Animal Rescue Officers (AROs) who work in our area;



ARO Paige Havlin was called to a Sika Deer trapped in a garden in our Branch area. As you can from the picture it was a full-sized adult with huge antlers so she had to be careful. With a little bit of ingenuity, she got the caller to close all the curtains and made some funnelling and eventually herded the deer out into the surrounding area. Luckily it seemed to know the location and got away into nearby woods.

Inspector Kirsten Ormerod rescued 2 German Shepherds and a cat from a property in Gravesend where they had been abandoned by an owner who had moved out. The terrified dogs were in poor condition and appeared not to have been outside or on a lead in a long time. Arrangements were made to take them to private boarding and it transpired that they were mother and daughter and very bonded with each other. We had the dogs transferred into our care and were delighted when German Shepherd Rescue Elite found a great foster placement for them. The first 2 photos show them when the Inspector discovered them and the final picture is a much happier and healthier pair who were rehomed together

