



Registered Charity 232265

RSPCA Sunderland, Hartlepool & South Tyneside Branch

Annual Report 2009

We are very pleased to present to you the RSPCA Sunderland, Hartlepool & South Tyneside branch Annual Report for 2009.

The charitable objects of the RSPCA are to promote kindness and to prevent or suppress cruelty to animals and to do all such lawful acts as the Society may consider to be conducive or incidental to the attainment of those objectives.

The RSPCA Sunderland, Hartlepool & South Tyneside branch is a separately registered charity. It does however, comply with the Rules and Guidelines issued by the National Society of the RSPCA and works tirelessly to achieve the Society's objects throughout branch area.

The National Society Council Appointed Trustees – Tim Bray, Kath Airey and David Mawson, govern the Branch. None of the Trustees of the Charity have been involved in a related party transaction. Since the Branch has been under the Trusteeship of Council Appointed Trustees, and with the aid of the National Society Staff the animal welfare work has continued in the Branch area.

The branch is looking to appoint locally elected trustees recruited from the branch membership. An induction and training programme is available to all potential and existing trustees.

The branch holds accounts with Natwest in Washington and Barclays bank in Team Valley. The Accountant for the branch is Ainleys Accountants in Sunderland.

Achievements & Performance for 2009

Neutering & Microchipping

The Branch continued its vital animal welfare work throughout 2009.

Throughout the year the branch offered free neutering to pet owners in the branch area. The project proved a great success with a total of 1585 animals being neutered – 1102 dogs, 148 cats 222 rabbits and 113 miscellaneous (guinea pigs, rats and ferrets).

The branch has also focused on encouraging people to get their pets microchipped. At numerous special free microchipping events at community venues around the branch area a total of 3594 animals were microchipped. This includes 2246 dogs, 1139 cats, 95 rabbits and 114 miscellaneous (ferrets). Many of our events were supported by Durham Constabulary, Northumbria Police and South Tyneside District Dog Wardens.

Welfare Assistance & Rehoming

The branch also gave financial veterinary assistance to the owners of 46 dogs, 52 cats, 14 rabbits and 7 miscellaneous (rats, guinea pigs, ferrets) animals.

Animals brought in by the Inspectorate continue to be rehomed through the RSPCA Regional Animal Centres at Great Ayton & Felledge Cattery near Chester-le-Street.

The branch also rehomed 11 rats and 1 rabbit.

Other activities

During 2009, a total of 60 feral cats were trapped, neutered and released back to site.

Financial Report

The total expenditure for 2009 was £226,737 with a total income for the year of £274,589. This provided a net surplus for the year of £47,853.

Branch Reserves Policy

At the end of 2009 the Branch had total reserves of £420,623. This is approximately 22 months of our annual running costs. The Branch aims to have between 12 and 18 months running costs in reserve to ensure that our work can continue in a managed way should the income reduce significantly for any particular reason. There are no restricted funds within the reserves and all the money held by the Branch is available for pursuance of the charity's objects. The trustees are conscious of the need to increase the animal welfare activities of the branch.

Risk Assessment

During 2009 the major risks to which the charity is exposed, as identified by the Council Appointed Trustees, will continue to be reviewed and further systems established to mitigate those risks.

Our Plans for the future

Shop

Our shop in Hartlepool continues to be our major source of income. The shop made a profit of £21,981 in 2009. Thank you to everyone who has donated items for the shop.

The staff and volunteers in the shop work extremely hard. Thanks also go to Linda the Shop Manager and Wendy the Deputy Manager as well as all the volunteers.

Plans are underway to open another shop in Chester-le-Street to provide an additional

source of income for the Branch. Other suitable sites for additional shops will also be looked at in the future.

Volunteers

The branch has several volunteers helping us out at our Charity shop, home visiting, at fundraising and microchipping events. The plan is to continue to recruit additional volunteers to help support our work, in particular those who may have the time and skills to become local trustees of the Branch.

Supporting the Inspectorate

We will continue to work closely with RSPCA regional HQ and the Inspectorate team to identify the best ways the Branch can continue to support animals identified as a priority. During 2009 we provided vaccinations for rabbits via Felledge Animal centre for Inspectors and Animal Welfare Officers and also provided a neutering voucher book scheme for officers in the Branch area to distribute to members of the public they identify with 'animals at risk'.

Public Benefit

The trustees have reviewed the outcomes and achievements of our objectives and activities for the year, to ensure they remain focused on our charitable aims, and continue to deliver benefits to the public. We have complied with the duty under the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Commission.

Under the Charities Act 2006, the advancement of animal welfare is recognised as a distinct statutory charitable purpose. This legislation and the Animal Welfare Act of the same year indicate an acceptance by society that treating living creatures with compassion has a moral benefit for the public as a whole. Whilst this public benefit is clear, it is sometimes difficult to quantify and must be balanced against any detriment.

We provide subsidised veterinary treatment for animals, which are sick or injured and belong to local people on low incomes. We do this through a voucher scheme. This work benefits those on means tested benefits by giving them financial help to obtain care for companion animals in need of veterinary treatment.

We provide subsidised neutering and microchipping of companion animals for those in the Branch area on low incomes. This work helps to control dog/cat/rabbit and ferret populations through neutering and benefits those on means tested benefits by giving them financial help to neuter and microchip companion animals, thereby promoting responsible pet ownership.

We respond to enquiries (both direct and via the Society's national call centre) from the public about animals locally. The public benefits from knowing that we can intervene to assist animals in need.

Within the terms of our governing document, we support the National Society and the local Inspectorate by providing vouchers for neutering to be issued by the Inspectors to members of the public in greatest need.

We provide volunteering opportunities for those who wish to support our work. This benefits local people and companies by providing the possibility of doing work, which is compassionate and rewarding.

Branch merger

Following the merger of Hartlepool & District and Sunderland & South Tyneside branch from 1 July 2009, we now have a larger Branch area and the benefit that comes from economies of scale. We will continue to build on this through our activities in 2010 and beyond with a clear focus on animal welfare activities and the priorities set by the RSPCA National Society.

Thank You

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has helped the branch in any way in 2009. This includes our team of volunteers who have helped out at chipping events and during RSPCA week.

We would especially like to thank neighbouring branches for continuing to accept animals from our branch area. We pay for the associated veterinary costs for these animals which come in directly from Inspectors and AWOs.

Thanks also to Debbie Fowle, Manager at Great Ayton and Maggie Eden, Manager at Felledge and the staff at both centres for their support. Inspectorate Groups North 10 & 11 area also thanked for all their help during the year.

A special thanks also to Lisa Hogg our Branch Co-ordinator.

Thank you for your support.