

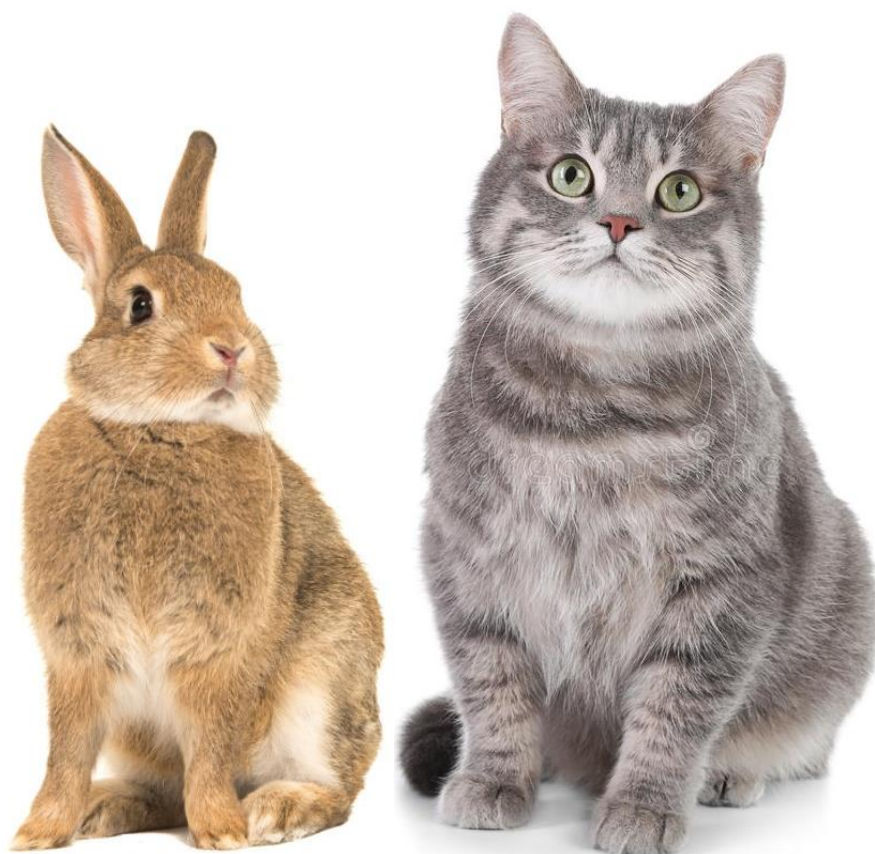


**RSPCA Bedfordshire
South Branch**

Registered Charity No. 259020

Annual Report

**The trustees present the annual
report for 2019**



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**RSPCA Bedfordshire
South Branch**
Registered Charity No. 259020



Introduction

The trustees present their annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 December 2019. The trustees are satisfied with the performance of the charity during the year and the position at 31 December 2019 and consider that the charity is in a strong position to continue its activities during the coming year, and that the charity's assets are adequate to fulfil its obligations.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Bedfordshire South Branch (Registered Charity 259020) is a branch of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Registered Charity 219099). Our governing document is the RSPCA Branch Rules 2012.

Conflict of Interest

The branch has a comprehensive Conflict of Interest policy and mitigation strategy to manage the conflicts. Conflicted Trustees leave the room when appropriate and cannot partake in any discussions or votes related to the connected party. Each committee meeting begins with any updates to conflicts of interest. A staff and pay subcommittee has been established, with only non-conflicted Trustees, to manage the pay and conditions of all staff employees (including the Branch Manager).

The branch Board of Trustees in 2019 managed a number of conflicts of interest:

Matthew Ridley (Chair) as a connected person to Alison Sutton (Branch Manager)

Emily Atkins (Membership Secretary) as a connected person to Alison Sutton (Branch Manager)

Deborah Blissett (Secretary) and Jade Blissett (Trustee) as connected person to each other on the committee

Kirsty Atkins (Trustee) as a connected person to Alison Sutton (Branch Manager) (Until AGM May '19)

Matthew Ridley (Chair) and Kirsty Atkins (Trustee) as connected person to each other on the committee (Until AGM May '19)

The branch aims to increase the number of non-conflicted Trustees over the next 12 months. We plan to achieve this by a recruitment campaign across our area to find Trustees both with an interest in animal welfare and the skills required to help manage the governance and strategy of the Branch. If you are interested in finding out more about becoming a Trustee please email chair@rspca-bedfordshiresouth.org.uk

Reference and administrative details

Charity Details

Charity Number: 259020

Registered Address: 34 Springfield Road, Luton, LU2 3HF, Tel: 07510 390872

Shop Address: 117 Dunstable Street Amphill Beds MK45 2NG, Tel: 01525 838040

Trustees during 2019

Matthew Ridley – Chair

Paula Brooks – Treasurer

Deborah Blissett - Secretary

Emily Atkins

Kendall Morris

Dee Pani

Sally- Anne Wright

Jade Blissett (Elected AGM May '19)

Darren Kelso (Co-opted – September '18 – AGM, Elected AGM May '19)

Kevin Upshaw (Co-Opted – November '18) – Until AGM (May '19)

Tanya May (Co-Opted – August '19)

Kirsty Atkins (Until AGM May '19)

Staff

Branch Manager – Alison Sutton

Shop Manager – Marie Moir

Deputy Shop Manager – Sharon Cutler

Deputy Shop Manager - Tania Spittle

Accountants & Independent Examiners

Parbery Davies & Co Chartered Accountants, Counties House, 1 8a Victoria Street,
Dunstable, Beds, LU6 3BA

Bankers

Barclays, 16 High St N, Dunstable LU6 1JZ

NatWest, 81 High St, Bedford MK40 1YN

Volunteers

Volunteering for us is one enjoyable way of helping animal welfare and can be very rewarding. Our volunteers make a huge contribution to the work we do to prevent cruelty and promote kindness to alleviate suffering of animals.

With such a wide range of volunteering roles available within our branch, there is bound to be a suitable opportunity for you. Volunteering with us is a great way to meet likeminded people who share the same enthusiasm for animal welfare. As a volunteer you can gain important transferable skills in fundraising, finance, campaigning, team building etc.

Anyone can volunteer, we value diversity and encourage volunteers from all sections of the community. If you would like to find out more please contact Alison Sutton on 07510 390872 or volunteers@rspca-bedfordshiresouth.org.uk.

There are many ways you can help us make a difference, no matter how much time you have available or the level of commitment you can afford to give. Before you join us as a volunteer, you will be asked to complete a volunteer application form, attend an informal interview and provide referees for us to contact. When you start as a volunteer you will be provided with an induction programme and any training you may need to carry out the role.

Charity objectives and public benefit statement

The objectives of the Branch are to promote the work and objectives of the Society - to promote kindness and to prevent or suppress cruelty to animals by unlawful means, with particular reference to the area of the branch, in accordance with the policies of the Society. We are to concentrate on our charitable aims and continue to deliver benefits to the public.

Under the Charities Act 2011, the advancement of animal welfare is recognised as a distinct statutory charitable purpose. The legislation and The Animal Welfare Act of the same year indicated an acceptance by society that treating a living creature with compassion has a moral benefit for the public as a whole. Whilst this public benefit is clear, it is sometimes difficult to balance against any detriment. The Branch's animal welfare work, although local in nature, benefits society at large, and also aims to help people in need with the care of their animals.

The Branch provides assistance, all year, to unwanted, abandoned and sick animals. We support our local Inspectorate by taking in mistreated or abandoned animals, including pets whose owners suffer ill health, financial difficulties, loss of housing or pass away. The Society's Inspectorate rescues animals in distress and enforces the law against cruelty and mistreatment of animals in England and Wales by bringing prosecutions. The work is key to 'The prevention and suppression of cruelty' part of the RSPCA objectives, and promotes humane sentiments towards animals which involve their moral benefit to humankind as a whole. The branch offers help and advice to rehome unwanted animals or strays. We take

in numbers that reflect the space we have for the most abused and neglected animals and in order of most need. We think this is fair and compliant with welfare needs. The adoption fee charged is reasonable and highlights the ongoing personal and financial commitment of pet ownership. Animals in our care are given a health check, wormed, flea'd, vaccinated, neutered and microchipped. We respond to enquires from the public via telephone and email direct to the Branch Manager at info@rspca-bedfordshiresouth.org.uk.

The Branch raises money to support its work through its charity shop in Ampthill, which also help to promote our rehoming, neutering and other messages in line with RSPCA policies, campaigns and values. The Branch provides volunteering opportunities for those who wish to support our work, including fostering, raising awareness of animal welfare issues through the promotion of campaigns, fundraising and retail opportunities in our shop. This benefits local people and companies through providing the possibility of doing work which is both compassionate and rewarding and offers experience which may assist participants in finding paid work. We thank our volunteers for their hard work, dedication and commitment.

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

Short term aims

Increase trustees and volunteers

Concentrate on fundraising to increase revenue by means of grants and events

Focus on our Social Media Strategy to ensure we are reaching as many people as possible

Long term aims

Increase resources through finding a suitable location for another charity shop.

Update rabbit fostering equipment and increase rabbit fosterers

Reduce Reserves to target

Statement of Trustee's responsibilities

Charity law requires the trustees of the charity to provide financial statements each financial year which give a true and fair view of affairs of the charity and the incoming resources and application of resources for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently

Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent

State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements

Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose, with reasonable accuracy, the financial position of the charity and enables them to ensure that the financial position of the charity and the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Chairs report

I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the RSPCA Bedfordshire South Branch for 2019.

It has been a busy year as usual seeing the branch rehome 151 animals. As a branch without an animal centre all our animals are rehomed via our team of fosterers who look after animals in our care in their own homes. After being an objective for many years the branch has this year introduced a dog fostering scheme which has grown quickly and is helping both dogs for rehoming and case dogs whilst they await the outcome of prosecutions by the inspectorate. We have recruited a fantastic team of fosterers, a fostering coordinator and expect the scheme to go from strength to strength in 2020.

Our largest income streams continue to be receipts from the National RSPCA Door-to-Door and our shop. In 2019 fundraising accounted for £1,828

The inspectorate has continued to transition from their previous “patch” based way of working towards their jobs being allocated by the National Control Centre via their new Wilberforce system. For the branch this means we work closely with a larger number of inspectors than we have before. We continue to have a great relationship with the Inspectorate taking in animals for rehoming or helping find suitable alternatives should we not be able to assist as a branch. As part of our strategy to reduce our reserves we have allocated the inspectorate funding to use for “Treat and Leave” – this provides Inspectors means to offer neutering, flea treatment etc as required where they normally would issue a notice giving the owner 7 days to do so themselves where they do not believe they would comply. This reduces repeat visits by the Inspectorate and helps ensure animals in need are treated more quickly.

In 2019 we have continued to see an increase in costs, especially for the shop where a living wage increase, pension contributions and moving to paying overtime (to allow

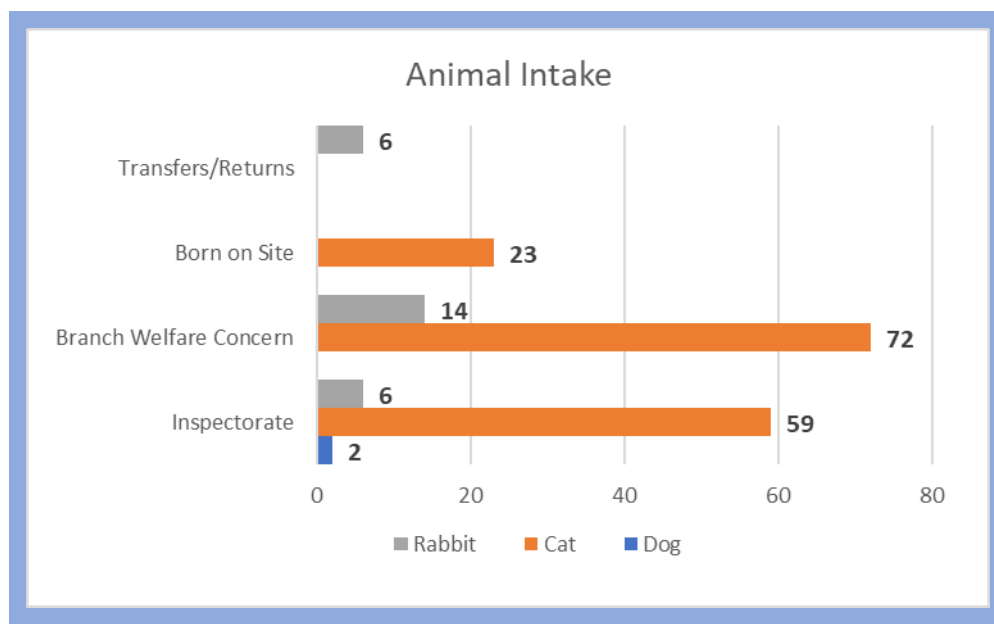
our Branch Manager to not have to cover all shop staff holidays) have all contributed. The shop continues to be profitable – however there is a strong focus in 2020 on how to increase income to ensure this remains the case.

Cost pressures notwithstanding, our Ampthill shop has again made a significant contribution to the branch both financially and in terms of helping to raise awareness of the work that we do. It provides a great opportunity for volunteers of all ages to help us raise both the money and awareness we need to support our animal welfare work. We have now been in the shop for over 6 years and are in the process of renewing our lease so are looking at a light refurbishment in 2020 to ensure it continues to reflect positively for the branch and serves us for many years to come.

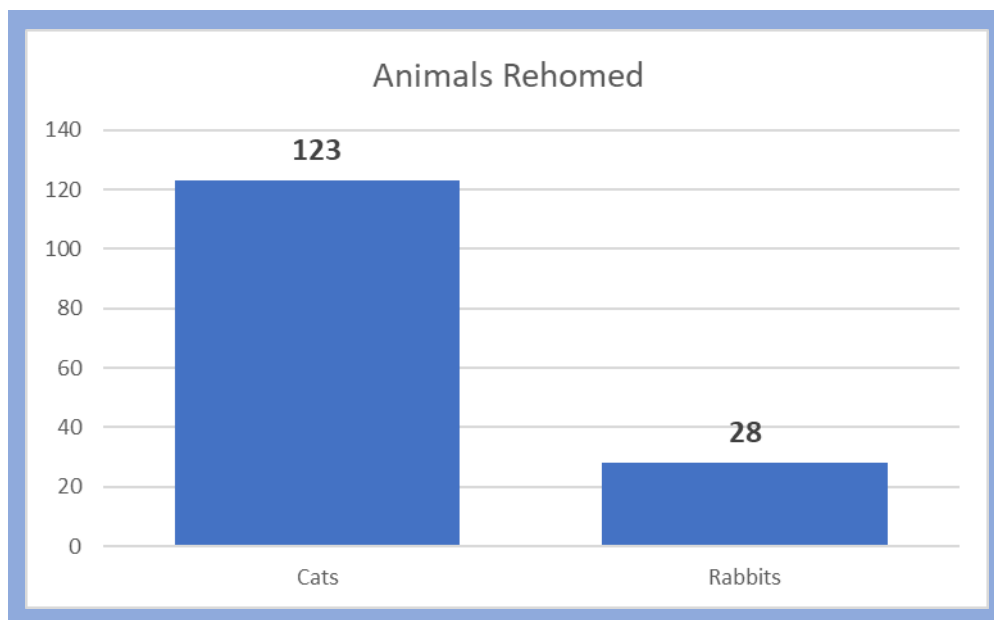
The branch continues to go from strength to strength, but this would not be possible without the hard work of our members, volunteers, staff, customers and donors. On behalf of myself and everyone in the branch – Thank You!

Matthew Ridley, Chair

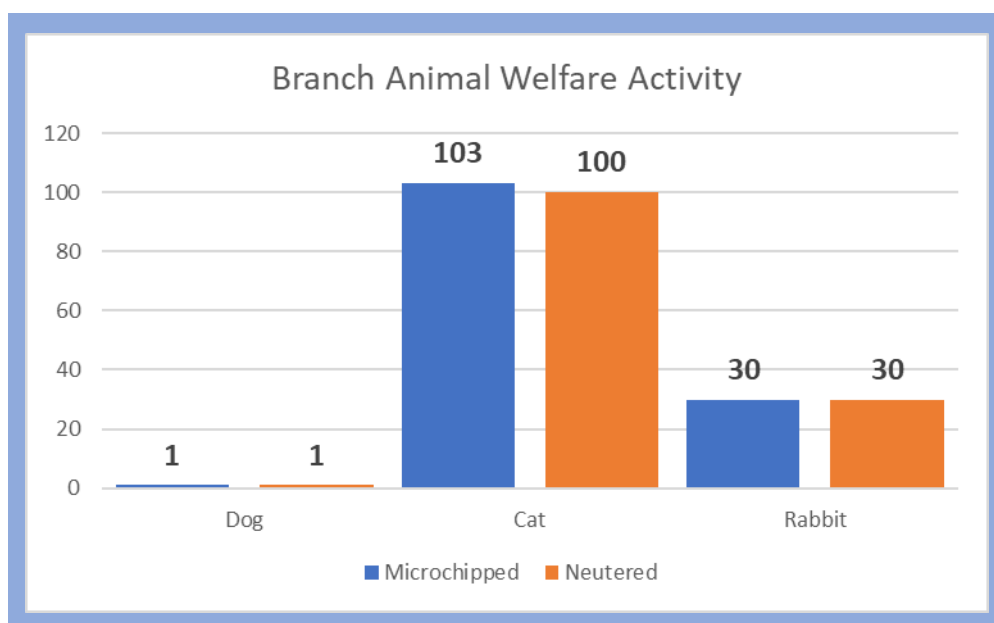
Branch Statistics



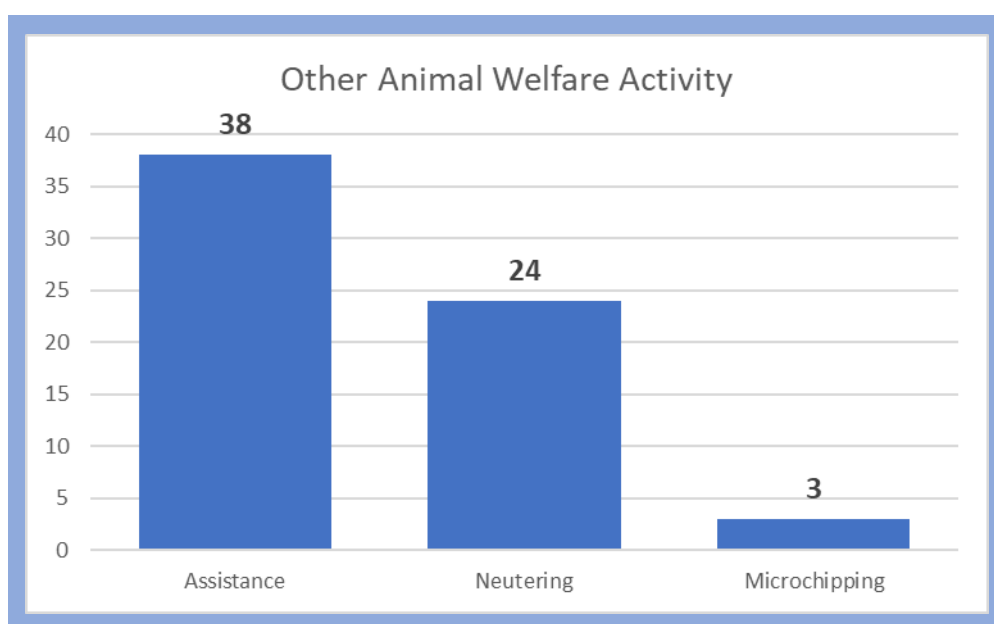
This year the branch took in 182 animals in total, the highest volumes coming from local animal welfare concern and the Inspectorate



We successfully rehomed 151 cats and rabbits



We Microchipped 134 branch animals and neutered 131



We also assisted 38 other animals, Neutered 24 and Microchipped 3

Treasurers Report

The income for the year is up on 2018 by £1,362, due to an increase in Adoption Donations and Donations from the public. Total Income for the year of £95,035 is higher than 2018, but below the Budgeted income of £97,074.

Fundraising increased due to us running more events in 2019 compared to 2018. In 2018 Crafternoon Tea income was £943.80 compared to 2019 when only £698.77 was received. In 2018 Waitrose Green Tokens scheme gave us £333.00 which we did not subscribe to in 2019, but the 50th Anniversary raffle brought in £407.10, Dunstable Market, Houghton Hall dog show and Pets at Home produced a combined income of £559.05. Legacy donations of £341.00 was another additional income not received in 2018.

Gift Aid Income was only requested once in the year, so this looks a lot lower at £536.11 than the £2,121 in 2018 and VAT recovered from HMRC is lower in 2019 than 2018 most other areas have increased.

The expenditure has increased by £10,314 to £88,197, compared to 2018 of £77,883 this is below the Budgeted expense of £102,357 where we had expected to increase costs by nearly £25,000 on 2018 figures.

The expenditure increase is due to increased Welfare costs of £2,648 compared to 2018 of £2,253 and shop salaries increased due to the National Minimum Wage increase, this also meant the staff were now eligible for a pension.

Fundraising costs increased to £989 which means the Fundraising profit for the year was £1,042. We reviewed our Fixed Asset register and removed equipment we no longer had with a write off value of £326.

The 2018 shop insurance was not invoiced until June 2019 so two years insurance have been paid in 2019 with £164 being a prepayment for 2020.

In 2018 the trustees agreed that it was unfair for the shop manager to personally cover the cost of car parking and we agreed to pay this. In 2019 car parking of £541 is an additional cost, although this is below the Budget of £675.00. Also in 2019 the shop staff were provided with RSPCA logo t-shirts at a cost of £101 which was below the Budget of £150.

The Net Income for the year is £6,838 which is above the Budgeted deficit of £-5,283 by £12,121.

This is mainly due to the Budget allowing for an increase of Fosterers and purchasing equipment of £2,700 when only £944.80 was spent.

Welfare animal costs were below the Budget of £5,000 as very little Inspectorate Welfare help was given.

A new gazebo for Fundraising was not purchased with a Budget of £1,000 and the shop refurbishment Budget of £10,000 was not used.

The General Purpose Fund stands at £166,016 for 2019 with £25,000 set aside again for a new shop.

The Balance Sheet is also generally in line with 2018, with an increase in the Bank Current Accounts being the reason for the increase.

Net Assets less Current Liabilities Total £191,016 compared with £184,178 for 2018.

Paula Brooks, Treasurer

Animal Welfare

In the last year, we have successfully rehomed 123 cats and kittens as well as 28 rabbits - most with the help of a team of volunteer fosterers. Fostering in a home-environment gives the animals the best chance of recovery and/or development, meaning a much better chance of a successful rehoming. We have some lovely stories from some of our team of fosterers, we thought we would share with you.

Dog Fostering

One of our biggest success stories this year is that we managed to set up and start our Dog Fostering scheme. This started in September 2019 when we took on our first fosterer Julie. A few weeks after starting fostering a call came through to the branch from an inspector who had picked up a small dog, she was about 12 years old, that had spent a very troubled last 5 years being kept inside a home. The poor little dog had not seen a vet or been outside in 5 years. We weren't sure what breed she was, so after her first check up at the vets, she went straight to a groomer and after 4 hours this is what appeared! (see the first photo) We think she is a Shih Tzu cross. We called her Daisy, Daisy had nails growing into her pads that caused her to be lame, she was deaf, had an ulcer in one of her eyes - which meant her sight was impaired and it was also discovered she had only two teeth. Taking Daisy to her fosterers was definitely a day not to forget: bearing in mind she hadn't been outside for 5 years we were worried she would not be house trained. Surprisingly, Daisy coped very well and with the help of her very patient fosterer and a few puppy pads she adapted incredibly well and became house trained very quickly. Her day of arrival was very sunny and on opening the back-door Daisy sniffed the air and gingerly took her first steps outside; watching her walk into the sunshine and trot around the garden was absolutely heart-warming and emotional for all. Daisy spent the next few months growing in confidence and enjoying life. Sadly, a few months later, Daisy started to lose weight and was not eating. After lots of tests and discussions with the vet it was decided to try one last course of treatment and if her weight and health did not improve, we would have to maybe let Daisy go. Her quality of life is not what we'd have hoped; she slept nearly all day and still was not eating. Four weeks later, things had improved greatly and Daisy was diagnosed with a kidney complaint but with a healthy diet and regular medication, she could go on to lead a happy life. We then had to start thinking about who could offer Daisy her perfect 'forever home', Daisy's fosterer Julie had grown very attached to her but also knew that if she were to keep her, she couldn't foster for the branch again. We put Daisy up for rehoming and very quickly a wonderful lady called Lorretta came forward enquiring about adopting Daisy. Lorretta has lots of experience of rehoming dogs with special needs and could offer Daisy the best home. Daisy was rehomed and settled in perfectly with her new owner and 5 other dogs. When we went to do a post-home visit Daisy was like any other dog, once again we all became a little emotional. It was so lovely to see Daisy running (yes running!) in and out of the garden

playing with the other dogs and living a wonderful life. Our first experience of dog fostering had been a roller coaster of a ride but one we would all go through again in a heartbeat.

We would also like to tell you about Ruby, who was our first case dog. Fostering case dogs is a very rewarding but long process and case dogs can be in our care for anything from 6-18 months and sometimes even longer. The foster space we offer for these dogs can benefit them immensely as they can enjoy a home environment while waiting for their case to go to court.

Ruby

This is a report of our first Dog Fosterer's Experience

'Alan and I lost our German Shepherd at the end of August 2019, at the age of 13.5 years. Obviously we were devastated and the house seemed very empty, but we knew if we went out looking for a dog then we would have come home with a dog not thinking through the process properly and perhaps choosing the wrong dog for us. Within a week we applied to become fosterers with the RSPCA Bedfordshire South Branch thinking this would give us the chance of experiencing life with different breeds and perhaps, within time, we would find the perfect dog for us. The fostering process was quite protracted and in fact we nearly went out looking for a dog to adopt.

Towards the end of October, we were approved and Ruby came into our lives in early November. Ruby was a Cavalier King Charles spaniel, the smallest of the spaniel breed, which was a very big change for us from having 2 medium to large dogs previously. Ruby was a puppy farm bitch, 8 years old, who was frightened of everything. We had problems getting her to eat and drink and this would cause some toilet problems. We also had to be very quiet moving around as any tiny noise would send her scurrying to the comfort of her bed. She didn't seem to like males in the house. Alan could walk her and whilst at the local pub she would sit on his lap and perhaps fall asleep so she obviously felt relaxed with him but as soon as we opened our front door then she would scamper away from him. Alan always fed her, we gave her fresh cooked meat and dry food. She was on epilepsy tablets twice a day and Alan gave her the tablet wrapped in the meat. She would come to within about a foot of him and take the food and tablet and then scamper back to her bed. In all the time we had her, 3 months, she would never come right up to Alan to take the food. I could do anything with her and she followed me around the house, was quite happy for me to put her harness on and asked to be picked up for a cuddle. Gradually as time went on her confidence grew in all aspects, although she was never enthusiastic about her food or water. We just gave her all the attention we could, she walked about 2 to 3 miles a day, quite often just with Alan, and by the time she went to her new home, her tail was up and wagging away and she just blossomed every day. As we were regular walkers, one of our dog walking acquaintances, approached Alan and asked about Ruby, and a few days later she came to find us because she wanted to adopt Ruby. This lady went through the fostering process and has now been able to adopt Ruby. Ruby is loved to bits by this lady and I am sure she will never lack for anything at all. She has re-named her Ruby Tuesday I think you will find.

Fostering Ruby gave us a lot of satisfaction and we are so pleased that we were able to help her find a very happy forever home which she truly deserves after such an awful life before.

Overall, our experience of fostering has been very enjoyable, satisfying and challenging and a very good project for us both to do together and it keeps us fit.'

Ruby – Her Happy Ever After

As mentioned above a lady came forward who showed an interest in adopting Ruby, sadly case dogs can't be adopted until after the court ruling or if the previous owner signs them over. While Ruby had a lovely foster home with Janet and Alan it was decided that a new foster home would be best for Ruby that had another dog. When Diane showed an interest in adopting, we came up with the idea to let her foster until a court decision had been made, later in 2020. Things changed for Ruby and Diane and in January we had the best news that Ruby had been signed over and could at last be re homed.

Here are a few words from Diane about fostering and adopting.

“Thinking about my experiences of fostering and then adopting dear little Ruby are firstly that the home check and paperwork was carried out in the most easy and professional way, I always felt that I had a really good backup system with RSPCA Bedfordshire South to dispel any worries that I might have had. That was so important to me. It was also very important to me to get Ruby into a good routine and to make her feel safe and secure and loved in her new home. That was very easy due to the very calming nature of dear Poppy Peanut my other rescue dog, (Ruby adores her) this helped her to settle so much. Ruby has now been in her forever home with me for two and a half months she has the sweetest of natures and has settled in so very well. Ruby and Poppy are a huge and important part of my family and long may it be so.”



Ruby before



Ruby after

Cat fostering

Our cat fostering team has had another great year and has been responsible for helping to re home 123 cats and kittens.

Our cat pens have continued to be a big success enabling the inspectorate to drop off securely at any time day or night. This is what one of our long-term fosterers had to say about a recent fostering experience.

Gruffy

‘‘A lot of the time, we have no idea what our foster cats have been through. But we know, roughly, the circumstances of how they’ve come into our care and, when they arrive, we fervently promise they’ll never have to go through ‘that’ again. That, from here on in, they’ll be loved and cherished and treated right. On many an occasion, they arrive at mine utterly terrified and it takes time, patience and a lot of soft encouragement to bring them around to believing that not all humans are horrid. To make them believe that there is love and kindness in the world.

Gruffy had a most spectacular original name on her pedigree paperwork. But Gruffy was a nervous, frightened soul, used only for breeding. To make matters worse, she’d miscarried a couple of times and only managed a small litter when she was finally able to give birth. So, to a breeder, she wasn’t worth the cost and, through a series of lucky contacts, she found her way to us.

She buried herself miserably under a blanket in a box in my Foster Room – and stayed there. Slinking out only during the middle of the night to eat or use the litter tray. Days passed, and all I’d catch is a glimpse of an eye as I would sit and read to her in the evenings or hear her hissing if I passed too close to her box while cleaning around the room. The evening I opened the door to the Foster Room and she was sitting on the top of the cat tree, I held my breath. Not only was she a BIG girl, she was very, very hissy if I stepped too close.

Undeterred, we continued with the routine of me sitting on the floor and chatting or reading to her in the evenings – her sitting atop her cat tree watching me angrily.

One evening, chatting away about my day at work, I absent-mindedly picked up one of the string toys and waved it about as I nattered on. Suddenly, she stood up in the tree, glowered at me and started to climb down from the tree - glaring at me all the while. I thought, ‘‘If she’s about to attack, I’ll not be able to jump up and get out the door in time! I’m just going to have to sit here and take it...!’’ I braced myself. She stomped over to me. Took the string toy end between her teeth and backed up towards the tree. Climbed back to the top with the string toy and settled back down. The toy now belonged to her. End of.

But it was the beginning of her softening. She wanted to play. LOVED to play. And loved to purr. But if she was alarmed or nervous – she’d stand her ground, wrinkle her nose and growl or hiss menacingly.

“You’re not that tough, really, are you? You’re a bit like The Gruffalo.... all big and scary, but actually quite a softie....” The name stuck for me - although shortened to Gruffy. And before long, Gruffy would follow you around, batting toys in your direction in the hope you’d play. Gruffy wanted company and she wanted to play.

Our Gruffy found her forever home with a wonderfully eccentric lady whose calm assertion of “however long it takes” warmed my heart. Whenever a nervy foster moves on, there’s no telling how long it’ll take them to settle. Lyndsey didn’t mind. She had all the time Gruffy needed and, best of all, Gruffy would have company in the form of a semi-feral that Lyndsey had taken on a couple of years prior. The semi-feral had taken a VERY long time to settle, so Lyndsey wasn’t fazed that Gruffy might not be the perfectly friendly cat right away.

And the name remains stuck! I had only intended it as a nickname but she’s still Gruffy – although often referred to as Princess Gruffy LouLou. She enjoys her days with her sidekick, Lady Pyewacket.

I was once asked: how do you foster and not get attached? The answer is: you don’t. You get attached to every single one. For me, every single one is STAYING FOREVER the moment they’re through the door. And then they recover, and they bounce back, and they start to shine. Their personalities peek through and begin to blossom. Their quirks bubble up. You wrap your heart around them and you love them, hairballs and all. And then you find them the perfect home and let them go to that perfect home to continue to grow.

You cry as you wave them goodbye. You sob as you clean down the room. And then you dry the tears away and you wait for the next soul who needs some time – time to recover and heal. And learn that there’s love - ready and waiting for them.

It’s the best thing I’ve ever done.”

Gruffy after



Pippa

“I have been a fosterer for the RSPCA Bedfordshire South for over 3 years now, and have now had 97 cats in, and 96 cats out of my house (ok, I gave in and kept one!).

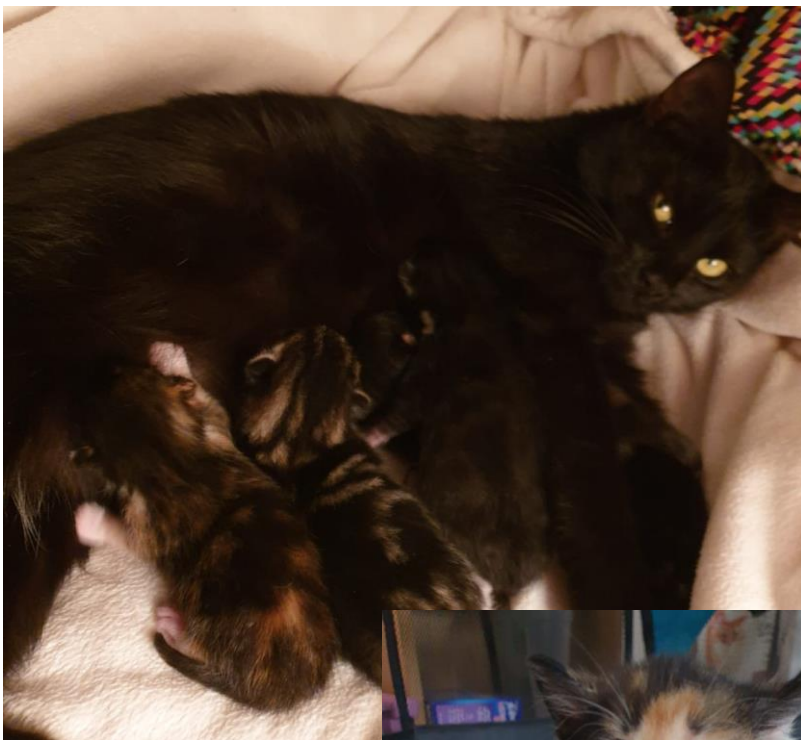
In May of 2019, a very obviously pregnant and very obviously young cat came into my care. I named her Pippa, and began the usual care for a pregnant cat. I flea and worm treated her, fed her with kitten food and ensured she had a supply of fresh water, and provided her with a warm, dark and private place for her to give birth in. This was the bottom of a wardrobe, where many kittens had already made their appearance! Pippa's young age was particularly concerning, she was estimated to be only 5-6 months old. Despite being fed with increasing frequency and quantities, Pippa gave us all lots of laughs by stealing pouches of food and carrying them to her 'quiet place' to rip apart and eat. The first time finding her 'stash' of empty pouches was quite a comical eye opener!

Pippa had been with us for around 3 or 4 weeks when she finally went into labour. She initially wanted to stay next to me, with my hand on her as she progressed through early labour. On approaching second stage (the pushing stage), she made her way to her birthing area. Her distress by this point was obvious. While she was entirely silent; she was restless and fearful. I prepared some items I thought I might need; a heated mat, disposable gloves, dental floss and scissors. Pippa's first kitten was a female tortoiseshell. As the kitten – along with membranes and placenta – delivered, Pippa did not act. Usually, the birthing mummy will tend immediately to the kitten, clearing their airways and stimulating them to breathe. It seemed that Pippa was frozen in terror. I held my breath as I allowed some time for her to react on instinct (wherever possible, it is best not to intervene), but she continued to remain in shock. For my first time ever as a fosterer, I was needed to intervene. I removed the membranes from the kitten, used a soft face cloth to dry her and stimulate her, and laid her on the heated mat. She did not respond. I took her to Pippa, hoping Pippa would react, but she did not. I continued rubbing and warming the kitten and she started making tiny gasping sounds. Knowing this did not necessarily mean the kitten was ok, I carried on while hoping she would begin breathing regularly for herself. After a painstaking time (it could have been 2 minutes, it could have been 10), she began breathing. She was still reasonably floppy, but I could feel her little body fighting. I used the dental floss (ha! You wondered what that would be for, didn't you?) to tie the cord between the kitten and the placenta, then I cut the cord. Meanwhile, Pippa was pushing once more. I covered the first kitten with a warm blanket and turned my attention to Pippa.

The second kitten was thankfully born in good condition, and thankfully Pippa had regained her composure; responding exactly as I had hoped for. She licked the kitten to stimulate him (a black and white boy) and (apologies for those easily grossed out), chomped through the cord without any input from me. The third kitten (a tabby boy) followed very soon after, needing only minor assistance from me. Nothing more seemed to be happening, so I tried to encourage Pippa to feed the kittens. She took some interest in the kittens, but made no attempt to nurse them. The first kitten was still less active than her siblings, but she was

breathing regularly and making some movements. Suddenly, Pippa began to push again. A fourth kitten! Another tortoiseshell girl was born. Unfortunately, the speed in which the fourth kitten was born seemed to shock Pippa once more, and she failed to respond. I reacted quicker myself this time, and repeated my actions of drying, stimulating, warming. This kitten responded fairly quickly, and was soon squealing along with her siblings. I also had to tie and cut her cord. Pippa, visibly exhausted, flopped down for a well-deserved rest. I helped to nudge the kittens towards her, and they began to nurse.

I'm delighted to report that after her initial shaky start, Pippa adjusted into motherhood beautifully. She nursed when they wanted to nurse, she cleaned them and kept them warm. She took them back to bed when they started to wander and gave up when they got big enough to ignore her! We named the kittens (in order of birth) Kit-Kat, Freddo, Rolo and Twix. Happily, for me, a good friend of mine went on to adopt 2 of the litter, and she chose Kit-Kat (who I was very attached to following her initial ordeal) and Rolo. They have been renamed Matilda and Joey, and I've been able to watch them grow into lovely family pets. The other two kittens were adopted together to another loving family, and Pippa – after being spayed – went to another loving home.”



Rabbit Fostering

Unfortunately, over the past few years our rabbit fosterers have diminished in size and this is something we hope to increase next year. Our team of three fosters have done a fantastic job in helping to rehome 28 rabbits this year and we are very grateful to them all.

Here is what Michelle has to say about one of her foster bunny experiences.

“Nigel is indeed the bunny that came into foster care at The Branch that tugged on everyone’s heart strings from day one. Nigel was very lucky to of been rescued by one of our fosterers that had seen someone was going to “just release him outside in the fields as couldn’t keep him anymore”

Our fosterer knows by experience that when people threaten this it’s usually followed through if no one steps forward to take the bunny and as Nigel was local to her she decided to take the drive over and rescue the poor soul. Michelle had been in contact with the “owner” who then decided he wasn’t the owner and he had actually found the bunny and as he wouldn’t bond with his bunny, he could no longer keep him. There is nearly always a different story behind bunnies coming in. Michelle was made aware by previous pictures that Nigel wasn’t in a great condition and he also looked like he may be blind in one eye or could have a cataract as one of his eyes didn’t look good and that was just from pictures. On arrival to collect Nigel the front door opened and the rabbit was handed over to Michelle who instantly knew this rabbit wasn’t well and in a bad way.

Michelle took the rabbit home and started her long process of listing Nigel’s conditions along with doing all she could to settle Nigel for the evening. A vet appointment was urgently booked for the following morning to get an accurate diagnosis of his condition. Nigel’s conditions were not good and that was just by looking at him and assessing him visually. Nigel had bite marks all over his body which co-insides with what the “owner” had said in regards to bonding, Nigel had bits of his ear missing, he had a cataract in one eye, mites, was so underweight his back bone was showing, slight head tilt and we can also confirm he was definitely a boy!!!! The worst bit was yet to come when Michelle noticed he wasn’t eating so she took a look in his mouth to see teeth like she had never seen before in a rabbit. Nigel was treated for EC (a parasite that effects rabbits) straight away and in the next few days Nigel was vaccinated, chipped and neutered. He had his first dental where his front teeth top and bottom were filed down. The vets had said to monitor his teeth but Michelle had already asked if we should have his teeth taken right out as it was clear a poor diet was given to this rabbit and the amount of neglect this rabbit had suffered was something no one wanted to think about. Michelle took Nigel home and monitored him but had already spoken to Alison at South Beds and stressed his teeth may need to come out. Nigel was due his second vaccination a few weeks after neutering and, in that time, Nigel’s teeth had grown back so much Michelle asked that his teeth were removed once and for all. Within days he was back in having his front teeth out and Nigel was such a trooper and recovered well again after being sedated to have his teeth out considering he is an older bun at around 4-5 years old. Nigel remains in foster care with Michelle and will for some time as we need to see how

quickly his teeth grow back but hopefully as he will be on the right diet and with a constant supply of fresh hay for his teeth. Nigel's progress is being followed by many and such a special home will be needed for him when the time comes as Michelle is adamant he deserves an indoor home where he is constantly monitored and loved as it's something he has never had until he found his fosterer and The Branch."



Nigel before



Nigel after

Animal welfare in our area is not just about the animals we foster below are a few stories about wildlife that needed the help of our fantastic officers.

In Toddington a nest of baby wild rabbits was accidentally disturbed in a muck heap. They are now all doing well at a wildlife hospital.

On Good Friday we were called to rescue a badger with its head stuck in a drain in Luton. It's thought that the male badger may have been trying to find water when he got his head trapped in the plastic down pipe and may have been there a couple of days before someone noticed him in the bottom of their neighbour's garden. The Fire and Rescue Service assisted us and had to gently drill into the concrete around to get the drain out. They then tried to saw into the plastic to get the badger free but this was very risky to the badger who obviously was not happy! The badger was taken to the Wildlife Hospital with the drain still around him and was then sedated while it was removed. He made a full recovery and was released back near the garden a couple of days later.

In Ampthill we were called to help our neighbouring group with a stray Wallaby! The animal had been seen bouncing down a new housing estate on a Sunday afternoon and shocked residents managed to corral him into the back garden of an empty new house and shut the gate. We managed to get the scared escapee safely into a large kennel using a net, Wallaby are very stressful animals so we took every precaution not to stress/chase him. We have no idea where he came from but he was taken to a zoo to have a new home, but sadly he died several days later.

Last but not least was a sad story regarding 5 cats abandoned outside the L&D hospital just before Christmas. This was an appeal that went out from the Inspector.

‘Family of cats abandoned in box outside L&D Hospital’

The RSPCA is appealing for information after five cats were dumped in a cardboard box with a note asking for someone to give them a home for Christmas. Two adult female cats and three little ten-week-old kittens were found inside a cardboard box outside Luton and Dunstable University Hospital in Lewsey Road at about 8am on Monday (November 25). A staff member for the hospital clinic spotted the cats and contacted the RSPCA and Inspector Melanie Fisher came to rescue them. They were found in a box which was taped up with a note on it which read: “Need a home. Merry Xmas - please help them.” RSPCA animal rescuer, Melanie said: “These cats were abandoned in a box outside the hospital early on Monday morning. Thankfully they are all in good condition and have obviously been well looked after previously. They are socialised and nice and friendly but sadly someone has left them behind. We understand that people’s circumstances can change which might mean they can no longer care for their pets but dumping an animal is never the answer. Luckily, these cats were found by a kind member of the public and are now being cared for by the The Branch. The RSPCA is appealing for information to see if anyone recognises the cats, or if they saw anything unusual between 7am and 8am on Monday outside the hospital. Elle is believed to be the mum of the others. Anyone with information is asked to contact the RSPCA on 0300 123 8018. The family of cats include two-year-old tabby and white cat Elle, who is believed to be the mum of the others, one-year-old tabby female Dee who is believed to be her slightly older daughter as they are very close, and two black and white and one tabby kitten named Amber, Lance and Penny. If no owner comes forward then the cats will be rehomed,” Melanie explained. “Let’s hope they can find a loving forever home before Christmas!”

On Christmas Day 2018, the charity received 934 calls to its cruelty line - the highest number for five years and almost a third more than in 2017. This winter, the RSPCA expects to take in more than 10,000 animals in need.



ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

BEDFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Registered Charity No: 259020

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2019

Parbery Davies & Co
Three Counties House
18a Victoria Street
Dunstable
Beds
LU6 3BA

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

BEDFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2019

Statement of Trustees' Responsibility

The trustees are required under the Charities Act 2011 to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the charity's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year (unless the charity is entitled to prepare accounts on the alternative receipts and payments basis). In preparing the financial statements giving a true and fair view, the trustees should follow best practice and:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ascertain the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with applicable law and regulations. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.


M RIDLEY

Matt Ridley
Chairman
On behalf of the Trustees

Date : 15/07/2020

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS
BEDFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the RSPCA
Bedfordshire South Branch

We report on the accounts of the District Branch for the year ended 31st December, 2019, which are set out on pages 3 to 7.

Respective Responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts and you consider that the audit requirement of section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act) does not apply. It is our responsibility to state, on the basis of procedures specified in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under section 145(5)(b) of the Act, whether particular matters have come to our attention.

Basis of Examiner's Statement


Our examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently we do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent Examiner's Report

In connection with our examination, no matter has come to our attention:-

1. Which gives us reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements to:
 - keep records in accordance with section 130 of the Act; and
 - prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the Act,have not been met; or
2. To which, in our opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understating of the accounts to be reached.

Three Counties House
18a Victoria Street
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.....
Parbery Davies & Co.
Accountants

Date: 20/07/2020

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

BEDFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 2019

	<u>Total</u> <u>2019</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>2018</u>
<u>INCOMING RESOURCES</u>		
Subscriptions & Donations	2,782	2,070
Adoption Donations	8,055	4,970
Legacies & Memoriam Donations	341	-
Door to Door	26,739	26,509
Fundraising	2,031	1,760
Gift Aid	536	2,121
Sale of Goods	46,410	46,183
Recycling	3,491	3,409
Commission & Other	20	140
VAT Recovered	4,535	6,417
Bank Interest	95	94
	<u>95,035</u>	<u>93,673</u>
<u>RESOURCES EXPENDED</u>		
<u>Direct Charitable Expenditure</u>		
Veterinary Fees	-	2,253
Boarding	-	-
Fostering	15,367	13,481
Fundraising Costs	989	114
Gift Aid Costs	402	255
Cost of Goods Sold	433	-
Shop Salaries, National Insurance & Pensions	22,331	16,712
Rent	12,943	12,651
Rates	750	980
Shop Insurance	200	-
Equipment Hire	1,030	907
Light & Heat	900	1,048
Telephone and Internet	580	627
Motor and Travelling	703	115
Cleaning & Refreshments	-	-
Repairs & Maintenance	1,228	944
Sundry Expenses	482	359
Credit Card Charges	601	545
Depreciation	2,812	3,661
	<u>£ 61,751</u>	<u>£ 54,652</u>

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

BEDFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 2019

	<u>Total</u> <u>2019</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>2018</u>
<u>Management and Administration</u>		
Staff Salaries, National Insurance & Pension	21,428	21,066
Branch Contributions	1,378	-
Accountancy	1,570	1,239
Legal & Professional Fees	-	-
Hall Hire	51	33
Insurance	657	572
Postage & Stationery	640	294
Website Costs	120	24
Loss on Disposal of Fixed Assets	326	
Loan Interest Charged	-	3
	<u>26,170</u>	<u>23,231</u>
	<u>87,921</u>	<u>77,883</u>
<u>NET INCOMING RESOURCES</u>		
<u>/(RESOURCES EXPENDED)</u>	7,114	15,790
<u>FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD</u>	<u>159,178</u>	<u>139,388</u>
	<u>166,292</u>	<u>155,178</u>
Fund for repayment of loan to HQ	-	4000
Fund for provision of new shop	-	-
<u>FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</u>	<u>£ 166,292</u>	<u>£ 159,178</u>

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS
BEDFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH



BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER, 2019

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
	£	£
<u>FIXED ASSETS</u>		
Tangible Assets (Note 2)	11,249	14,641
<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>		
Debtors and Prepayments	3,755	3,338
Bank Tracker Account	47,624	47,452
Bank Current Accounts	129,080	119,594
Cash	34	58
	<u>180,493</u>	<u>170,442</u>
<u>CREDITORS - Amounts falling due within one year</u>		
Creditors and Accruals	726	905
<u>CREDITORS - Amounts falling due after one year (Note 4)</u>		
Branch Loan	-	-
	<u>726</u>	<u>905</u>
<u>NET CURRENT ASSETS</u>	<u>179,767</u>	<u>169,537</u>
<u>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</u>		
	£ 191,016	£ 184,178
General Purposes Fund	166,016	159,178
HQ Loan repayment Fund (Note 5)	-	-
New Shop Fund (Note 6)	25,000	25,000
	<u>£ 191,016</u>	<u>£ 184,178</u>

Approved by the Trustees on 15/07/2020 and signed
on their behalf by :

M RIDLEY

PJ BROOKS

Matt Ridley
Chairman

Paula Brooks
Hon. Treasurer

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

BEDFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 2019

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

a) Basis of Accounting

The Financial Statements are prepared under the historical cost convention, in accordance with applicable accounting standards and the Statement of Recommended Practice on Accounting by Charities.

b) Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

Tangible Fixed Assets will be capitalised where they have an as-new value above £350 and are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost or valuation of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful life on the following basis:

Equipment	-	20% pa on reducing balance
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c) Taxation

The branch is registered as a charity and is exempt from taxation.

d) Incoming Resources

- i. Subscriptions and donations and bank interest represent the amount receivable during the year.
- ii. Shop takings, fundraising activities, Gift Aid, legacies and memoriam donations are accounted for in the year in which they are received.

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS
BEDFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 2019

2. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

<u>Cost</u>	<u>Equipment</u>
Balance Brought Forward	34,347
Additions	-
Disposals	5,699
	<u>£ 28,648</u>
<u>Depreciation</u>	
Balance Brought Forward	19,706
Charge for the Year	2,812
Charge on Disposals	5,119
	<u>£ 17,399</u>
<u>NET BOOK VALUE</u>	
2019	<u>£ 11,249</u>
2018	<u>£ 14,641</u>

3. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES

No remuneration was paid to the trustees in the year.

4. PROVISION FOR NEW SHOP

Funds have been ring fenced to finance a new shop in 2021 of £25,000.

5. RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

Matt Ridley was officially appointed as Chair on 11th February 2019.

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS
BEDFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 2019

6. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

Alison Sutton, Branch Administrator, is related to Emily Atkins, Membership Secretary, however there were no transactions between parties during the year.
Alison Sutton, Branch Administrator, received a gross salary during the year of £21,000 (2018 - £20,750)

Door to Door income of £26,739 was received from the National Society of the RSPCA during the year. (2018 - £26,509)

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS
BEDFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

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