

Our supporters are awesome!

THANK YOU. Our winter appeal, *Hope for the Hopeless*, raised an outstanding total of **£62,415**, which is incredible, making it the most successful annual appeal we have ever had.

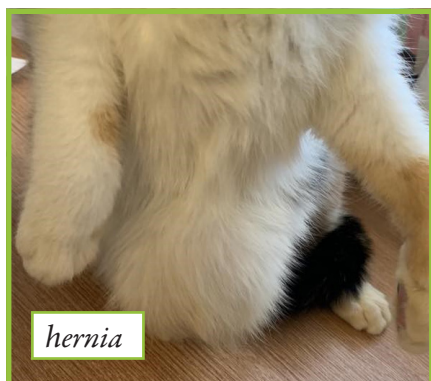
We were relieved and grateful for your support and generosity, and we really didn't expect this when so many of us are feeling the pinch of the cost of living.

This means so much to us and the animals, it ensures that we can continue to be here for them and carry on our work, bringing hope for a better future to even more animals in 2024. **Every single penny will be used wisely to help more animals and do it better.**

Your money is already helping - Vet costs continue to increase, costing £150,000 last year. Your support helps us to stop pain and suffering for hundreds of animals.

In January we admitted a group of kittens to our Wales rescue from a colony that has got out of hand on a farm. There were 9 kittens approximately 3 months old. They were not used to human contact so needed socialising, as well as worming, de-flea, health checks, neutering, vaccinating and microchipping. We were concerned to find that three of the female kittens had umbilical hernias. One who we named Abi, had an extremely large hernia, the largest our cattery staff have seen!

Abi was checked out by our vet immediately to ensure it was not a tumour. Luckily this was confirmed as a hernia and Abi was booked in



hernia

for her surgery alongside the other kittens. However, the vet advised us to wait a month for her until she had grown a little more as a precaution. We were warned that she would require cage rest afterwards, and that she would need a special mesh inserted over her wound, which would cost an additional £150.

Abi's surgery went well, she was a little flat for a few days after her surgery, but our experienced cattery staff sat with her and encouraged her to eat. Within a few days, she was much more herself and was sat up and playing with her toys. She was on medication for pain relief and to fight any potential infection. When she saw our vet to have her stitches removed, they were concerned with swelling on her abdomen, which seemed quite profound still, so we kept her on cage rest and closely monitored her. Abi is such a sweet girl, she has come a long way from the terrified little kitten who was admitted, she plays happily with her toys and adores attention. She has so much energy while playing with her toys,

it has been quite difficult at times to keep her calm during her recovery!

At time of writing her siblings had already settled in their new homes, the vet was very pleased with Abi's progress, and we were getting ready to find the perfect family for her.



Abi

We are so please we were asked to help these kittens. Had Abi's hernia not been detected and removed, there was a real risk as it continued to grow it would of greatly threaten her quality of life and survival.

Thank You - We Couldn't Do It Without You

Great news as Ozzy goes home.

Many of you will have followed Ozzy's story since we rescued him in 2022 as a piglet.

Abandoned with another piglet, found wandering on a road near the rescue we had to treat him for ear mites and give him medication for his skin and nursed him back to health. Sadly, Toffee the other piglet he was found with had maggots in his wounds to the extent that they were eating him alive - we couldn't save him.



Oswald went on to live with another rescued piglet Otis and they were getting ready to go to a new forever home early last year when tragedy struck. Otis suddenly became very unwell, very quickly, it was serious, and he was in a lot of pain so on advice from our vet we had to let him go. This is so hard and it breaks our hearts, Ozzy lost another friend and the chance of a home, as we needed him to be adopted with a pig companion. Thankfully, Ozzy kept his spirits up and he got loads of attention and adoration from his dedicated fan base at the rescue.

In March this year Ozzy finally went to a fantastic new home to live with another pig Marcel who has sadly lost his companion too. As we went to print they were getting to know each other and enjoying new friendship.

This fantastic outcome for Ozzy achieved with determination and love fills us with joy and drives us on to do this for every animal that comes under our wing. We would like you to share this success, and it is a success made possible by you. You are as much a part of the rescue team as we are - so well done you. And Ozzy sends you a HUGE THANK YOU for giving him a happy safe life.



The impact of fads and trends.

Remember the Mutant Ninja Turtles in the 90's? Lots of kids rushed to get match-box size terrapins from pet shops.



250,000 were imported from the USA. The inevitable happened when the children lost interest.

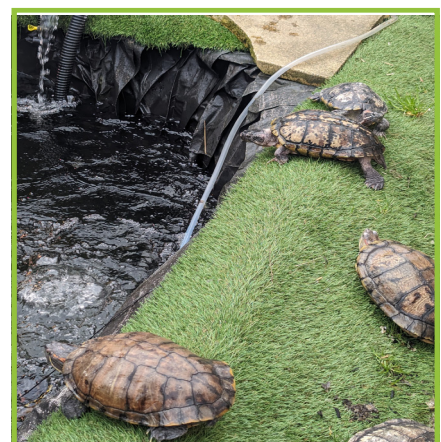
10 of those have lived at Freshfields ever since, being cared for by our committed and top Wildlife and Small Animals Team. Last month, we secured them a space together at a rare specialist sanctuary!

You should have seen them go when they arrived! Its Club Tropicana for them now, with large ponds, poolside basking and provides them more ability to behave naturally.

We are all delighted. Thank you so much - Yorkshire Terrapin & Tortoise Rescue for helping them.

The lesson - Pets are a lifelong commitment, and they grow. Encourage people in your life not to buy from pet shops or breeders.

Responsible = RESCUE.



Thank You - We Couldn't Do It Without You

Happy ever after for Moose!

We couldn't be happier to tell you the fantastic news that all of our XL Bully type dogs were safely placed in their new forever homes before the start of the year. We are beyond grateful to their new loving families and to each and every one of you who reached out a hand and a heart to a paw in need and helped secure their future.

We are delighted to give you an update on Moose. His new family clearly adores him, and tells us that Moose has settled in very well. He has a big brother to look up to and show him the ways of home life. Moose shows his gratitude by licking his brother's ears! He already has his own armchair and enjoys a massage from his human

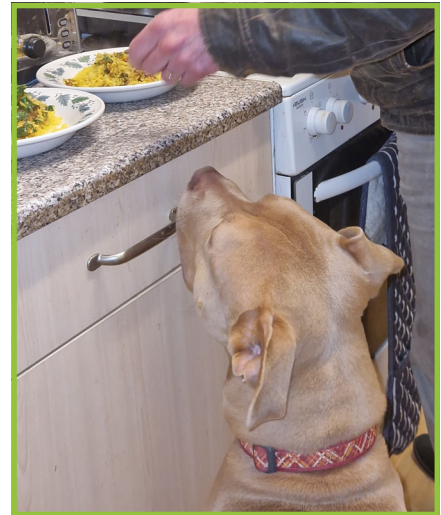


mum. Moose is so relaxed in his home he is sleeping soundly; snoring loudly after a run around and a nice big meal. The best place for a sleep is his humans lap - typical big boy thinks he is a lapdog. He's loving beach life, but isn't sure about the sea - barking at the waves before retreating. Moose didn't know what to make of snow - as a



youngster it was the first time he'd experienced it! It was scary at first then became great fun to leap around in.

Moose has plans to be an office worker, and is studying his Dad at work on the computer, resting his head on him when it's time for a



break. He wants to be involved in all aspects of the household, including supervising the food preparation to see if it's up to standard.

Moose's new mum says 'Moose is now a big part of our family. Thank you, Freshfields, for finding him for us'. We knew Moose would blossom in a stable, loving environment, but we're still bowled over by his transformation. Moose just loves his family's company so much, and the feeling is obviously mutual.

Enjoy your happiness Moose; we wish you years of fun and adventures!

Hundreds more animals need your help.

Rescues are under such pressure and there is an increasing number of animals being brought to our doors, or worse still, abandoned. Animal welfare is still low on the

agenda and most grant making bodies exclude animal charities from their remit. We rely on 99% of our donations from aware, responsible and compassionate

supporters like you to enable us to carry out this vital work.

THANK YOU.

*Don't forget to enter our **Raffle**, you could win £500. Please return your ticket stubs, payment and return slip in the enclosed envelope by 31st May. Thank YOU.*

Rabbit Welfare - the hutch is not enough

Rabbits are one of the most misunderstood animals in terms of their requirements and care needed. They are often referred to as the silent sufferers.

Rabbits need an environment that allows them to move freely and explore as they would if they were in the wild. Providing rabbits with an ample amount of space to stretch, be up on their back legs, run, lie down and stretch their whole body, and binky is very important for their welfare. A binky is the jump and twist that rabbits love to do. Most hutches available to buy do not provide this alone. Rabbits need access to space such as an enclosure or run at all times. They also require enrichment in the form of tunnels and platforms and an opportunity to dig and forage.

As prey animals rabbits are naturally nervous, so it is important that their enclosure or housing has a safe spot that they can escape to if they feel unsure. They should also be provided with a sleeping area, and away from the sleeping area, a dedicated toilet spot. Rabbits can use a litter tray too.

Rabbit's value companionship over food!

They are extremely sociable creatures and not having a companion leads to boredom and can cause stress. They also feel safer with their own kind.

Rabbits need to be introduced properly this is called bonding. We can successfully bond your lone rabbit – please ask us. Different neutered sexes tend to be the best fit, although some same-sex bonding does happen.

There are many more abandoned rabbits than rescues can find places for, so neutering is essential they are famous for how



quickly they breed! A female can have **four to eight babies every 30 days for approximately 6 months** of the year! Neutering not only removes unwanted pregnancies, it also removes the risk of womb infections and uterine cancer in females. Eliminates prostatic and testicular cancer in males. It also reduces aggressive behaviours, particularly in males and helps to litter train your rabbit.

Rabbits hide pain and illness well.

It is important to regularly health check their eyes, ears, mouth, skin and coat, nails and their bottom. Rabbits with faeces on their bottoms are more at risk of Flystrike a horrendous condition which in many cases results in death or euthanasia. Typical signs of Flystrike include not drinking or eating, lethargic and noticeably quiet, a strong smell from their living area, open sores or visible maggots on the skin, and diarrhoea. The most common health problems seen in rabbits include Obesity through poor diet and Dental Disease. As their teeth continue to



grow throughout their lives regular teeth checks are essential. Rabbits **DO NEED TO BE VACCINATED** many people believe their rabbits will not be affected by lethal diseases if they are not mixing with other rabbits. However, the diseases are spread by biting insects such as fleas, or midge's so **ALL** unvaccinated rabbits are at risk, wherever they are.

With the right environment, a good diet and regular health checks your rabbit can stay fit and healthy and live a long, happy life.

You can find out more about Rabbit care on our website.

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