

Dear Everyone,

This newsletter contains lots of great updates about the animals in our care and what you are all doing in so very many ways to help as many animals as possible - you can see the difference you all make in the infographic on page 23.

It is fantastic that we have so many volunteers at Raystede - over 300 of you with new people joining all the time. Volunteers are the lifeblood of the charity. Whether you work at Raystede with our animals or welcoming visitors, out in the community spreading the word about our work or raising funds, we couldn't continue without your help - thank you.

I am delighted to introduce you to a new Patron for Raystede - Jo Shiner, Chief Constable of Sussex Police. You can read more about her on page 2. We also welcomed our Patron-in-Chief, Mr Andrew Blackman, the Lord-Lieutenant of East Sussex to visit back in September - see page 7.

With winter and Christmas approaching, don't forget about our Winter Warmers for staff and volunteers (see page 3) and the Festive Fun activities (see page 15) - I very much hope to see you at some or all of them!

Although there is much uncertainty in the world at the moment, I always feel that Raystede is a very special place where we do such a lot of good for animals - and the people who care for them - there's so much positivity and we have lots to look forward to.

I hope this informal newsletter helps us all to keep in touch. As always, I am humbled by the incredible work you all do and the dedication and commitment you show to the animals in our care and each other - thank you so much.

**Stephanie**  
Raystede CEO

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# Welcome to our new Patron

We are delighted to announce that Jo Shiner, Chief Constable of Sussex Police has recently agreed to become a Patron of Raystede. She visited us in July where she learnt about our work, in particular around our STAR dogs, Break Away service and Project Terrapin. She was blown away by the breadth of our work and the expertise of our animal care teams.

Jo became the force's ninth Chief Constable in July 2020 and is the first female Chief Constable in the history of Sussex Police.

In a policing career of over 31 years, Jo has undertaken a wide variety of roles across 3 forces. These have predominantly been operational, both in uniform and within Public Protection commands and CID. She has been a firearms, public order and a critical incident commander for about 20 years up until she became the Chief.

Jo is also a national ambassador for Oscar Kilo 9 (OK9) which is the canine element of the Police Wellbeing Service. Jo is the proud patron of Sussex Search and Rescue and Sussex Police Charitable Trust. She also actively supports other charities such as the Beachy Head Chaplains and has previously sat on strategic Boards for both The Princes Trust and Norfolk Community Foundation.

Jo is happily married and lives with her husband, and much-loved exuberant rescue dog, Rocky. She has been known to rescue many varied animals in the past and is an avid lover of dogs and horses.

Jo says:

*"I am incredibly humbled to become a Patron of this wonderful charity. As an animal lover and someone with a keen interest in animal welfare, I look forward to supporting Raystede in their ongoing work helping both animals and pet owners right across Sussex and the wider region."*







# Winter Warmers for Staff and Volunteers



## FREE SOUP AND ROLL

Daily 12:30pm – 2pm in the Café.

You are welcome to bring  
your own mug and spoon.

Watch out for the occasional  
seasonal special!

## FREE PET FOOD

When available, we will let staff and  
volunteers know – expiry dates may be  
short, first come, first served.

## FREE FRUIT

Apples and pears from Raystede's  
trees – help yourselves.

## FREE HYGIENE PRODUCTS

Available in the staff showers areas -  
please help yourselves.

## FREE CLOTHING!

A 'recycle and rehome' rail is available in  
the Staff Room and in the Lewes shop.  
Items may need repairing or washing.

## 50% STAFF DISCOUNT ON FOOD AND DRINK IN THE CAFÉ

Available for all staff and  
volunteers during their shift.  
Volunteers receive a free hot  
drink during their shift.

## CAR SHARING

Liftshare: [www.liftshare.com/uk](http://www.liftshare.com/uk)

Rideshark: [www.rideshark.com](http://www.rideshark.com)

West Sussex Car Share:  
[www.westsussexcarshare.com](http://www.westsussexcarshare.com)

Or arrange an informal lift  
share with colleagues.

## SPARE UNIFORM

If you get wet or need spare uniform,  
Good quality secondhand items are  
available in the Staff Room.  
New socks too!

# Animal Welfare: Matt Gough

After a bumpy start to the year, it is fantastic that rehoming in all sections has picked up and we are starting to see some real successes. For the Cattery it has been an especially tricky few months with very unpredictable ups and downs in rehoming demand, so seeing 16 cats find new homes in October alone is really positive. It has also been great to see three of our goats (Graham, Pumba, and Tarzan) find a new home after a near three-year break since the last goat found a home from Raystede. Across the board, at six months into the financial year, Animal Care has already assisted 34% more animals than at the same point last year.

I am also pleased that we have recruited a new permanent Head Veterinary Surgeon, Hannah Bannister, who is due to start with us early next year. The Surgery has been staffed with our fantastic locum vets Sam and Vicki for around 18 months now and I am grateful for all they have done in that time. Having a permanent vet employed once more will hopefully give the service even more stability and provide the opportunity for what we do to be reviewed so that we can do even more for animals in need.

As described by Miriam elsewhere in this newsletter, there has been so much going on that again shows how important collaboration across Raystede's teams is to us helping as many animals as possible. With that, thank you for all that each of you does to support Raystede's work.

Matt



Graham, Pumba and Tarzan



# Rehoming

We have been as busy as ever taking surrender requests, with requests of 300-400 animals a month. The reasons around people surrendering their animals are a mixed bag, for example, the cost of living and not being able to meet the animals' behavioural needs.

We have, however, had many successful adoptions over the summer and these early autumn months, with a total of 88 animals adopted from 1 August to 30 September!

During October, we have also had three goats, Pumba, Graham and Tarzan go to their new forever home!

More great news is that three long-stay animals, Tigger and Monty the cats and Koda the dog, went off to their new, lovely families.

Positive news for our fostering: we have had a surge of foster carer applications for dogs, cats and rabbits. This has been super positive in helping get some of our Raystede animals out and helping more people on Break Away.

On Break Away we have a sweet terrier called Wullie and a lovely, little black cat called Lilly who are both doing fantastically in their foster homes.

We have found a foster carer for Loki the dog to go to, which will provide a stable and nurturing home environment for him and increase his chances of getting adopted.

We've had two queens with five kittens each come into our care who have been growing up and getting up to mischief in their foster homes, too.

Amelia



**Break Away Lilly**



**Lilly enjoying a snack!**

# Small Animals

It's that time of year again – tortoise hibernation! As many of you are already aware, the team are using a new method of tortoise hibernation this year, the fridge method. We have recently created a new, insulated area and installed four wine fridges which will house our tortoises over winter.

Whilst this sounds unusual, hibernation can be a dangerous process for tortoises and the fridges provide a stable environment where we can monitor them more closely making it a safer method, especially with the mild winters we have been having! The only tortoise staying awake this winter will be Megan as she has recently recovered from a respiratory infection, and we need to ensure that she is 100% healthy before we attempt to hibernate her. She will spend the winter enjoying her tropical shed and all the food she can eat.



**Tortoise fridges!**



**Tilde**

The Terrapin Project is going swimmingly. We currently have 91 terrapins on site, most of which are out in the lakes. We have closed our waiting list for terrapins over winter as we cannot introduce them into the lake in the cold weather and have limited indoor space.

Staying indoors during winter is Tilde, a 50-year-old Red Eared Slider who is recovering from a respiratory infection, and three other smaller terrapins one of whom is our smallest terrapin resident at just 300 grams! Once Spring returns, we hope to introduce them into the lake along with the other terrapins.

The demand for rescue spaces for rabbits is extremely high nationwide, with over 85 currently on our waiting list, so a new indoor space has been created to support our rabbit bonding service and to help house indoor rabbits over winter. The “Bun-galow” will shortly be ready for its first rescue buns. Unfortunately, the team are having to deal with a new rabbit-related challenge as a new strain of the Rabbit Viral Haemorrhagic Disease 2 (VHD2) has emerged in Europe with cases now thought to be occurring in the UK. This is a highly contagious and fatal disease, so we need to take action to protect our bunnies. Sadly, the current vaccinations do not protect against this new strain, so we are following guidance to isolate all new rabbits (including owned rabbits in for bonding) for two weeks before introducing them to the main rabbit facilities. With minimal isolation pens away from the other rabbits, this is negatively affecting our intake and bonding turnaround. A new vaccine covering this strain is being created so we hope to soon be able to function as normal.



**Bella**

In October we have had a lot of success with rehoming, in particular the guinea pigs and small rodents with nine guinea pigs, five gerbils and four rats going to their new homes – including our guinea pig poster boys Teddy and Smudge! We also rehomed a pair of Animals @ Home rabbits, Atlas and Ocean, to a wonderful family and we wish them all the best!



# Lord-Lieutenant visits Project Terrapin

We were delighted to welcome HM Lord-Lieutenant of East Sussex and our Patron-in-Chief, Mr Andrew Blackman CStJ, to Raystede in September to visit our new terrapin sanctuary. He was introduced to some of the terrapins in the intake, isolation and training areas by Vickie Gorst from the CFS Team and joined by Trustee, Ian Kerr, and Gemma Price, Head of Education, who explained about the poor welfare of terrapins and what Raystede is doing to help them and provide education about these fascinating animals.

He also met much-loved Raystede resident, Gregory Peck the turkey, and Fern, a two-year-old lurcher, found as stray.

The Lord-Lieutenant first visited Raystede in May 2022 to celebrate Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee, where he planted an English Oak tree as part of the celebrations. On this visit, he took the opportunity to view the tree, which is looked after by Sue from the Estates Team.

We are very proud that the Lord-Lieutenant of East Sussex is our Patron-in-Chief and it was a pleasure to show him more of our important work.



# Aviaries

The covering on the top of the Aviaries is currently being replaced by the Estates Team. Due to the prevalence of Avian Influenza in the last few years, we have adapted the Aviaries to comply with DEFRA's regulations, including implementing a double mesh at the front to stop smaller birds getting in. The cover over the top of the Aviaries is designed to prevent the faeces of wild birds dropping through and infecting our birds, so it is important that we keep it maintained.

Boysie is doing well and is continuing with his treatment. He is in good spirits and has been enjoying his time in his flight, playing with boxes and being his usual cheeky self. He still has a way to go but we are hopeful to continue to see an improvement in his condition.



**Boysie**

We have had lots of lovely new volunteers in section recently which we are very grateful for. Having volunteers in frees up some more time for staff to complete other important daily tasks including health checks, claw trimming and enrichment, all of which are important for the wellbeing of our birds.

We have recently caught up all our budgies in our flock once more to health check, weigh and claw trim them. Catching every bird in a flock is a big job but it is important that we check them regularly to monitor their health, weight and general condition to catch any issues they may have early on.

Jade



**Budgie health check**



# Equine

It has been incredibly rewarding for all of us in Equine to watch Mags, Delphi and Saviour thrive in health and happiness. To watch a horse's skin blister on a sunny day because of neglect and toxic poisoning is genuinely heart-wrenching, and as a team we have felt deep emotion for the pain and neglect that was inflicted on these three innocent horses.

The progress these horses have made have totally surpassed my expectation and that is thanks to my brilliant team of equine carers who put passion and love into all our animals and have given them a life worth living.

We are thoroughly enjoying watching Delphi and Saviour just be, and they will remain at Raystede as part of our sanctuary, and we hope in the near future once we have been able to refine a long-term management plan for Mags we can see him off to his new life outside of Raystede.



**Saviour's progress (right to left) in just over 3 months**



**Mags on arrival**



**Mags after 4 months**



**Pumba, Graham and Tarzan in their new home!**

We recently bid farewell to three of our long-time goats, Pumba, Graham and Tarzan. Although saying goodbye was bittersweet, knowing they've found a loving home has brought us comfort. Their new owners have shared updates so far to say how well they are settling and have even built them a goat playground.

We have recently been out on 3-month home visits for Buddy and Timmy, two ponies who struggled hugely with behaviour related issues but in completely different ways. Timmy who was anxious and found change a huge challenge, has bonded so well with his new owner and is thoroughly enjoying his new life. He remembered us and accepted scratches and cuddles during our visit.

Buddy our cheeky 2-year-old has matured hugely, and his calm and gentle owners have done fabulous work with him, continuing his rehab and giving him an environment that is just perfect.



**Cheeky Buddy**



**Timmy's 3 month home visit**

Alice



# Cattery



**Cleo and kittens!**

Since our last newsletter, we've had a turnover of mums and kittens; at the beginning of September, we welcomed Flora and Cleo, each arriving with a litter of five kittens at two weeks old. They've each spent some time in foster, and we're now bringing them back on site to have their neuters/spays, microchips and vaccinations.

We're currently in the process of contacting potential adopters on our kitten list, so that they can go out to their new homes as soon as they're ready.



**Flora's babies**

Adoptions have been going well for us, our board in the office is full of red pen where we've got plenty of meets booked in with potential adopters and cats that are reserved and waiting to go home.

We've also recently had some great success with our long stays including Monty and Tigger, who both went off to their respective homes within the same week!

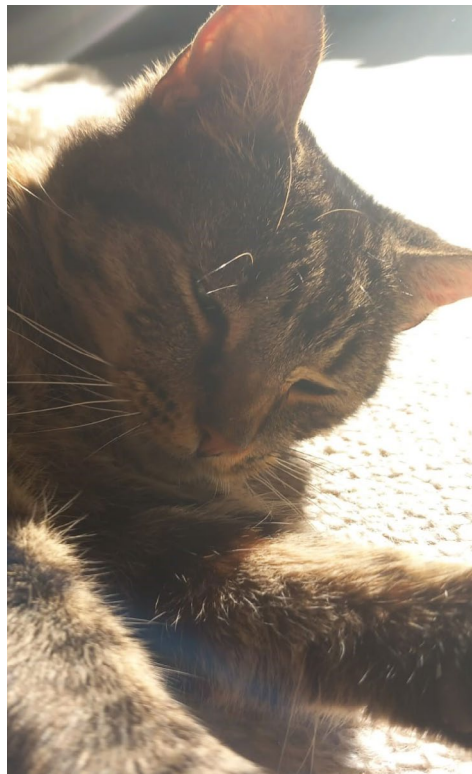
We have also recently sent our very special Gizmo on a trial with his potential adopter. We've already had some lovely photos and updates. All being well, he will be adopted at the end of his trial period.

Surrender requests have really been keeping us busy this year.

We had to close our waiting list again as, sadly, we were receiving surrender requests in such volume that we just couldn't keep up and, as much as we would love to, we're simply not able to help every cat.

We've since been able to reopen our waiting list and are now back to taking requests as normal, helping as many cats as we can in the process.

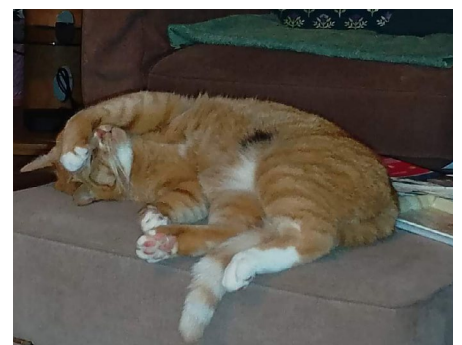
Maisie



**Gizmo in trial home**



**Gizmo at Raystede**



**Tigger at home!**



# Kennels

We are sharing some of the many updates that we receive from adopted dogs, everyone involved in Raystede enables these happy stories.

**Dinky** – *“He is absolutely fantastically gorgeous! We love him to pieces! Thank you so very much for allowing him to live with us.”*

**Willow** – *“Willow is absolutely wonderful! It feels like she’s always lived with us... I am so pleased that I was able to give her a loving home as she has totally captivated the hearts of my friends and family and mine too.”*

**Toby** (one of our STAR dogs) – *“We want to thank the team for the hours you put into Toby’s wellbeing, as it’s thanks to you we have this wonderful little guy to enjoy and have fun with.”*

**Fern** – *“Made herself completely at home and is making new friends (human and doggy). She is such an affectionate girl and loves her cuddles and fuss.”*

**Buster** – *“He enjoyed his first groom and was a very good boy. He got a nice bow tie afterwards. We are so pleased to have him with us and he is very much part of the family.”*

**Coco** (another STAR dog), winning 1<sup>st</sup> in Best Rescue Dog at a show. – *“She is such a funny & cheeky pup & she makes us laugh every day. She still thinks that everything belongs to her, & everything is her favourite.”*



**Dinky**



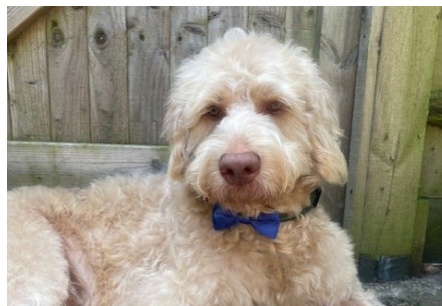
**Willow**



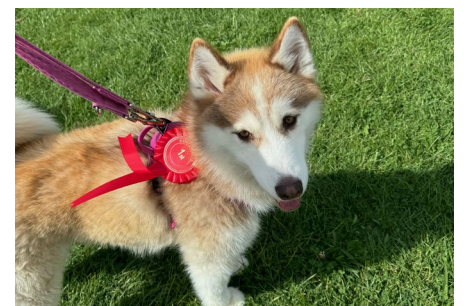
**Toby**



**Fern**



**Buster**



**Coco**

# Animal Care Operations: Miriam Dowding

Animal care has been busy as usual! On 18 September, we hosted a rabbit vaccination day which was a great success. The Surgery Team health checked and vaccinated 43 rabbits on the day and advice on neutering, diets and bonding was given to owners whilst they waited.

Both Kennels and Cattery have had successes with some of their long-stay animals. Koda was adopted earlier this month after being in Kennels for 18 months, he has settled into his new home really well after lots of hard work put in from Ellie and the Kennels Team.



**Moose rabbit vaccination**

Gizmo arrived in the Cattery in March 2024 with a few health issues but after several months of TLC from the Cattery and Surgery Teams, he is now on trial – fingers crossed this works out.

I've been working with the Equine and Rehoming Teams to start offering Animals @ Home to equines. This is where the animal is rehomed via Raystede but without coming to site. Equines will be assessed where they live before being added to our website for adoption. Once the Equine Team have found a match, the meet and loan paperwork will all be completed without the equine needing to come to Raystede. This will allow us to rehome more equines without increasing our capacity.

CFS have been very busy working with the Estates Team to complete the new tortoise hibernation facility and rabbit portacabin, both of which are now complete! The tortoise hibernation facility will allow the tortoises to be hibernated in fridges, enabling the team to manage the temperature and humidity more carefully, providing the tortoises with a more consistent environment for their hibernation. The rabbit portacabin (the old Education portacabin) will allow us to take in indoor rabbits during the winter months when it's too cold to put them outside. In the summer months, the extra spaces will be used for rabbit bonding, allowing the team to bond more single rabbits using our very popular rabbit bonding service. It'll be great to see these new facilities up and running, providing improved welfare for the animals in our care.

Aviaries have had a few staffing changes with Marie Wright changing to a zero hours MSACA contract, she has been replaced by Jamie Laffar who also works in CFS. We also welcomed Dan Woolmer into the Animal Care Team; he was successful in the recently advertised development opportunity in the Aviaries Team and will be completing his animal care qualification alongside working in the Aviaries Team.



**Koda settled into his new home**



**Rabbit "Bun-galow"**



# HR & Volunteering

Emily Nickels started maternity leave at the end of October – very best wishes to Emily and her family.

Congratulations to Dan Woolmer who was successful in his application for the Development Role within Aviaries while he studies to achieve his Animal Care qualification.

We currently have 310 volunteers across the charity. We are always looking for additional support and have 19 volunteering opportunities currently being advertised on our website. If you know anyone who may be interested, please send them our way!

With an ever-increasing team of wonderful volunteers, it was inevitable that we would need the benefits of an electronic volunteer system. This system is called Assemble and is one of the most popular systems used by charities. We have started work on the loading and programming of Assemble and will give further updates early next year. Full training will of course be carried out before the system is rolled out.

We attended the Plumpton College Work Experience and Careers Fair in preparation for this year's Work Experience Programme we offer to support Plumpton students studying for their qualifications in animal management. Interviews by our animal care managers are taking place shortly.

We have six students from Roedean College with us every Wednesday until March 2025, volunteering in every area; as a college they have already raised almost £10,000 for us and their efforts continue.

We have arranged three 'Behind the Scenes' tours of our Kennels (24 people in total) - many thanks to Val and her team. It has proved to be such a valuable opportunity to see and hear about the wonderful work our Kennels Team do with our fabulous dogs whilst in our care. It will also help staff and volunteers cope with visitor questions regarding why they may not see the dogs when onsite.

Many thanks,  
Heidi and Linda



**Plumpton College Work Experience and Careers Fair**



**Kennels tour**

# Welcome and Goodbye

## Welcome

Jenny Mustill	Online Sales Assistant Manager
Mahala Shaw	Animal Care Assistant – Equine
Lucy Redwood	Animal Care Assistant – Equine
Tessa Mason	Animal Care Assistant – Equine
Justine Parsons	Education Officer
Ben Rosenberg	Café Assistant
Keris Lane	Animal Care Assistant – multi-section
Derek Moon	Estates Assistant (was an Estates Volunteer)
Louise Edmonds	Cleaner
Kylie Pope	Cleaner
Chris Sear	Animal Care Assistant – multi-section

## Goodbye

Natasha Wickenden	Animal Care Assistant – Equine
Daniel Blackmore	Café Assistant
Rebecca Dadswell	Café Assistant
Fiona Howell	Café Assistant
Emma Osborne	Trusts Fundraiser
Tanya Vince	Face to Face Fundraiser

**If you know anyone who may be interested in working at Raystede, do point them in the direction of the careers page of our website.**

*Thank you*

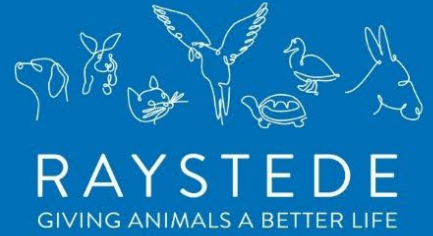
## Employee Assistance Programme

Free phone: 0800 028 0199  
24/7 confidential support

Online health portal: [healthassuredeap.co.uk](http://healthassuredeap.co.uk)



# Raystede Festive Fun!



*Let's all join together for some Christmas cheer.*

## **Christmas Lights Switch On**

**Thursday 14 November, 4pm – 6pm, Raystede Café**  
Mulled wine and hot chocolate!

## **Secret Santa**

Bring a smile to a colleague's face with a homemade, secondhand, repurposed or recycled pressie! Let Louise Hobden know by **Thursday 29 November** if you want to take part.

## **Christmas Jumper Day**

**Thursday 12 December**

Wear your most fabulous, fun, and festive Christmas jumper to work!

## **Mince Pie Mingle & Grand Raffle!**

**Wednesday 18 December, 4pm – 6pm, Raystede Café**

Get together – eat, drink, share your Secret Santa gifts!

Plus free raffle with amazing prizes to be won!



# The Fun Committee

As we approach the year's end, we think everyone will agree that the Fun Committee events are gaining in popularity. So far this year we have had two Thirsty Thursdays, one games evening and a games and silent disco evening.

Our latest event was the Halloween Quiz, hosted by Pete Dadswell. Pete kindly gave his time and expertise free to Raystede which was much appreciated.

The evening was a total success, held in the Café (thank you Gemma) and we managed to fit in over 75 people comfortably. Every team did well, however, the victors were Team 'Thursday Thinkers', a group of Welcome Team Volunteers, who pipped Team 'The Violets' at the final hurdle!

It was such a fun evening; the great thing about it was that staff and volunteers alike had the chance to have fun together after work and perhaps get to know each other a little better. Thank you to SMT for funding the refreshments, they were much appreciated.

The Fun Committee will be planning many more events in the coming months, so please watch this space. Nothing set in stone yet, we will keep you informed!

Thank you for your support.

*The Fun Committee Linda, Mia, Jon, Maisie and Charlotte*



**Halloween Quiz**



**Thirsty Thursday**



# Education

## A Summer of learning

Over the summer holidays we ran 12 Family Learning Days, with a total of 4,624 visitors attending and providing feedback such as *“the perfect day”* and *“there was a buzz about the whole park with lots of keen volunteers and activities for the children”*.

The first half of the summer jumped on the Olympic theme, with a trail based on selecting the gold medal-winning animals in various events, and the yurt turned into a training tent full of enrichment items.

The second half was a celebration of our fabulous new terrapin sanctuary, with visitors following Terry the Terrapin’s journey to Raystede and having the chance to ask the experts from Turtle Tally any chelonian questions. They learnt about why terrapins don’t make suitable pets and how they suffer poor welfare as a result, which made the sight of Terry and friends basking in the sanctuary even more impactful. As well as commenting on their enjoyment of the event, visitors also showed that we had achieved our aim: *“We were considering a terrapin as a pet but have now reconsidered.”*



**Turtle Tally in action!**



**Turtle Tally at Raystede**

## Guinea Pig Day

To mark the national Guinea Pig Awareness Week, we held a Guinea Pig Day on Saturday 21 October which saw 352 piggie people visiting. Enthusiasts and potential owners enjoyed learning to speak piggie and finding out about the housing and care requirements, whilst existing owners attended health check masterclasses led by CFS.

*“It was great fun and any guinea pig owner or future owner should attend, you can never have too much information.”*



**Justine and Finn**



**Guinea pig day masterclass!**

## New member of the team

We are delighted to welcome Justine Parsons to the Education Team (pictured with her dog Finn). Justine told us:

*“I’m incredibly excited to join the Education Team at Raystede! With a lifelong passion for animal welfare, and over 20 years teaching experience, I look forward to expanding my knowledge and making a positive impact on the lives of animals, both at Raystede and in the wider community.”*

# Fundraising

We are very excited about Christmas, an essential time in the annual fundraising calendar. As I write this, we are putting the final touches to our Raystede Christmas appeal, which will be launched after Halloween and will be both digital and direct mail. The campaign theme is keeping our animals warm and safe over the wintertime. Please look out for it on social media - like it and share it to help reach more potential supporters!

We are creating a Christmas-themed page on our website that will list all the ways you can support our animals over the holidays, from buying Christmas cards to volunteering at festive fundraising events. We would love you to join us if you can spare a few hours to volunteer! We have dates available at Royal Victoria Shopping Centre in Tunbridge Wells, Pets at Home Santa Paws Appeal dates and several fêtes and fayres throughout our catchment area.

Christmas Jumper Day is fast approaching, and some companies have kindly already signed up to wear their festive jumpers for Raystede! Christmas Jumper Day is Thursday 12 December, so why not join in the fun and wear something festive to work? Look out for our social media content to like and share and boost our reach!

We are also inviting our wonderful Friends of Raystede to a Christmas-themed open day on Saturday, 23 November. It is our way of thanking our Friends for their unwavering support, and we will close the site to other visitors. Friends of Raystede was started by Miss Raymond Hawkins in 1955 and could well be the UK's oldest continuous regular giving scheme! We have over 170 Friends booked already and will be serving refreshments in the cafe. Our Friends can also walk around the site, so please feel free to thank them and tell them about your work.



**Oscar feeling festive!**

## Fundraising success!

We now have over 3,500 active sponsors! This fantastic success is primarily due to our excellent donor retention and stewardship because we provide sponsor tours - a huge thanks to our animal care teams and tour volunteers. You have delivered 66 sponsor tours this year, and the feedback has been excellent. Our sponsors love to see the impact of their regular donations and hear firsthand about the animals they sponsor.

On 29 August, 24 people took on the Drop360 abseil challenge, raising an incredible £9,214.08 together. We're still expecting some matched funding from Bupa!

Our Fundraising Partnerships Team has stewarded Raystede supporters and facilitated funding for our rabbit bonding and tortoise hibernation conversion, equine shower, and various terrapin-related pumps and shed.

The Corporate Fundraising Team has stewarded 370 corporate volunteers who have carried out 1,850 hours of volunteering. Our corporate groups have loved working with Jeff, Dave, and their respective teams at Peaceways and on our main site. A beautiful in-memory walk has been developed at Peaceways, which has been highly rewarding for all involved.



**Bupa at the i360!**



**Our brave abseilers**



# Fundraising continued

**Why not take on a new challenge in 2025!** Can you brave the Drop 360 or run for Raystede? We'll also have our popular 50 Miles in May virtual event throughout May 2025!

**2 March 2025 - 22 places left to fill in the Brighton Half-Marathon**

**6 April 2025 - 9 places in the 2025 Brighton Marathon**

**27 April 2025 - 10 places in the 2025 London Marathon My Way virtual challenge**

**15 May 2025 - 27 places in the Brighton i360 abseil challenge**

If we have tempted you to volunteer with us or participate in one of our fundraising events, please contact us! [fundraising@raystede.org](mailto:fundraising@raystede.org), call on 01825 840747 or visit us in our first-floor office overlooking the tortoises.

## Shining Super STARS

On Thursday 26 September we hosted an event dedicated to our STAR (Special Training and Requirements) dogs, organised by the Fundraising Team. There was an insightful talk from Dr Sam Gaines, Head of Companion Animals at the RSPCA and Raystede Trustee, about the different challenges around canine rehabilitation and rehoming, a Q and A with Ellie from the Kennels Team and a dog training live demonstration.

Our STAR dogs often tend to stay a bit longer in our care than others. This may be due to their age, size, breed type or because they have medical care needs. Some might have specific requirements from a new home to ensure their individual needs are met or tailored support can be provided.

Our Kennels Team have noticed an increase in dogs (mainly youngsters) that previously had not been provided with appropriate support to learn the valuable life skills they need. These dogs often display behaviours that have been described as 'difficult' and 'undesirable'.

The team work tirelessly to ensure each dog is given the right stimulation and training plus a whole lot of affection too while they are in our care. Any adoption applicants for STAR dogs are provided with the necessary information to help them consider what the continued training and behavioural management or needs would be.

At the event, attendees also got the opportunity to meet former STAR dog, Elder, and his adopter Alesha. Elder was adopted back in December 2022, but as Alesha explained they were fully prepared to continue the behavioural training Elder had started to receive while he was at Raystede.

*"With all the information provided on Elder by the Raystede Kennels Team, we knew that we were in a position to be able to provide him with the right guidance and support. Throughout the adoption process we came in on a number of occasions to meet and bond with him. Even after he'd come home with us, the team were fantastic in providing us with help if we had any questions and he's now such a lovely and gentle dog. All STAR dogs need is some attention and time to build up a relationship with a potential adopter as in a lot of cases, as it was with Elder, it was simply anxiety and they just want to feel safe and loved."*

Wendy



**Elder, former STAR dog**

# Commercial & Visitor Operations

Good news from the Commercial department!

The end of September is halfway through the financial year and at this six-months mark the Commercial overall performance is looking strong. Income after VAT across all areas, our shops, café, pet goods and Peaceways, stands at £802k and the net profit contribution at £206k. We are marginally up on budget and are therefore on track to achieve the full year income and profit targets. We also had an excellent October which has fuelled this confidence further as every section exceeded their income targets.

We are due to sign the lease on our new shop in Langney Shopping Centre in Eastbourne this month, a couple of months later than we hoped, but we are excited to get in and trading ASAP in the new year. We have recruited the team, with a manager, assistant manager and two assistants already secured, and the search is on now for volunteers. So spread the word – Raystede will be open in Langney early next year!

We are also due to sign the lease on a warehouse unit in Newhaven this month. With our existing shops in Lewes, Uckfield and Hailsham all doing really well, plus the new one coming in Langney, we desperately need this warehouse space to help us run the charity shops effectively and efficiently, managing the huge amounts of donated goods they generate. It will also enable us to keep going after the next opportunity and open more shops. The next shop we are lining up is in Hove and we have several more locations in mind too.

You may have seen recently in the news that the area where our Lewes shop is located is due to be redeveloped in the next couple of years; while having to leave the current shop will be devastating, I am pleased to say we are in talks with the developers and looking at all and any opportunities the new development may actually bring for us. Lewes is our 'home town' and I intend to always have a charity shop operation somewhere in the town centre.

Our online shop is going from strength to strength, and we will be relocating Angela and her eBay team to the warehouse in Newhaven. They have outgrown the space available on site so this is a really positive move for them and will help them grow further without any space limitations.

We have exciting news! The Raystede eBay shop now has a fabulous theatre costumes/props and fancy-dress section ideal for theatre groups, professional companies and individuals looking for partywear. The collection features two cloaks from Glynbourne, one of which was originally worn by Figaro during a production at the world-renowned opera house, and many other eye-catching period pieces.

If you're stuck for a period costume, looking for a Tyrolean outfit, playing the part of a princess, fancy yourself as a teddy boy, or simply looking for a line dancing outfit for an evening with friends, we can help. Look no further for bonnets, shoes, jewellery and other props.

These pieces are quirky, different and fun! But be aware, they're all one-offs, so when they're gone, they're gone!

Follow us on eBay to see our new collection and to be notified when we've added more exciting items to our store.





# Commercial & Visitor Operations continued

Peaceways has benefited greatly over the summer with corporate volunteer groups helping to transform the rose gardens and woodland walk - do pop up if you get chance, it really is beautiful. Jeff and the team have been busy with clients as always. In this last six months we have cared for 666 animals through Peaceways with continued high volumes of clients coming to us privately and by referral from vet surgeries or our partners, Coming Home Euthanasia, Coastal Cat Vet, Cloud 9 Vets and Pet Chauffeur. I am in the process of negotiating a new partnership with The Kindest Goodbye, another home euthanasia vet expanding into our area. We are starting to plan now for a cremator next year, and also looking at ideas and options for giving the chapel of rest a makeover and creating a new bigger and accessible one which, as the number of clients coming to us keeps growing, is very much needed.

The Café has been busy with visitors and with our lovely staff and volunteers. We hope you are enjoying the lunchtime soup, and occasional seasonal special! The Café served an incredible 6,625 free sandwiches to staff and volunteers from April to September – thank you Café Team, you do an amazing job of looking after everyone!

The Welcome Team and Engagement Volunteers have done a great job of welcoming and guiding 36,047 visitors between April and September, and from the feedback survey we send out every week, we can see we are delivering a good and worthwhile experience. In September the results show us that 80% would 'definitely visit again', 91% said the visit 'met their expectations', and 92% said their experience was either 'good, very good or excellent'.

Kerry



Janet, JC and Sheila



Hailsham shop Halloween window!

# Marketing

The Marketing Team has had a busy summer supporting most of the other teams with their activities from rehoming to recruitment, Family Learning Days to fundraising events and terrapin signage to the tack sale! We are now ramping up to Christmas with all the various activities that need marketing and comms support. We have actually been planning Christmas since about July so it's great to see it all rolling out now!

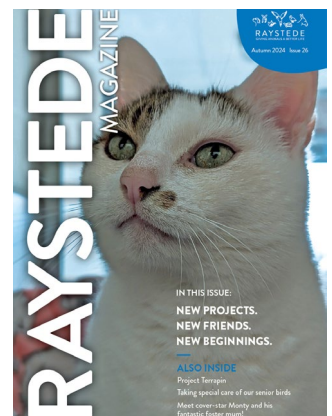
## Media mentions

One of our main functions is to raise awareness of Raystede and our work. One of the best – and cheapest – ways of doing this is via PR. Simon has developed good relationships with the local media and we've had a flurry of great coverage over the last couple of months, including interviews on BBC Radio Sussex and Radio Reverb, online features in Sussex Express and an article on Raystede in the October edition of Sussex Life (page 30), which you can read on the following link: [Sussex Life Single \(pagesuite.com\)](https://www.sussexlife.com/feature/raystede-centre-for-animal-welfare)

Many thanks to everyone who has kindly agreed to be interviewed – we are incredibly lucky to have some great spokespeople who can speak so knowledgeably and with such great passion about our work.

## Raystede magazine

We have just published the Autumn edition of the Raystede magazine, which was mailed to over 5,000 of our supporters. It is also available onsite, in our shops and is being taken out and about in our local community. You will notice that it has had a bit of a revamp. We have rejigged the design, made it more story-led, with larger, more appealing images, educational facts and figures and thank yous throughout the publication. The magazine can also be viewed online at [Magazine - Raystede Centre for Animal Welfare](#) and the next edition will be published in February 2025. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the magazine – it's a great read!



## Community outreach vehicle

The new vehicle for use by the Education and Fundraising Teams to take Raystede's work into the local community has been branded up in a similar way to the Retail van – it will be a great mobile advert and really help with brand awareness.



## Adoption campaign

We have been running an Autumn adoption campaign consisting of updated and improved animal adoption posters onsite and out in the community via our shops, Education and Fundraising Teams, Facebook ads, organic social media and PR. We are featuring 4 animals of the month – for November we will be focussing on Whisper (dog), Moses (cat), Maia and Clio (rabbits) and Kimchi (the cutest, scruffiest little hen!).

You may have also seen the 'Animals at Raystede' blackboard near the Welcome Cabin. This shows the numbers of different animals we currently have at Raystede, together with the numbers of animals adopted the previous month. Many thanks to Sarah, our signwriting volunteer, who kindly updates it every month!

## Finally ...

As always, if there's anything you need help with from branding and copy to promoting a new initiative or capturing our amazing work on video or in photos, please don't hesitate to contact the Marketing Team at [marketingmailbox@raystede.org](mailto:marketingmailbox@raystede.org)



# Raystede – the difference we made in 2023 – 2024

It has been another extremely challenging year for Raystede. We have experienced the highest number of requests ever from people needing to give up their pets and a slowdown in rehoming as people struggle with the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. We can only continue caring for the animals who so desperately need us, thanks to you, our incredible staff and volunteers, and your passion, hard work and dedication. This shows the huge difference you made in the last year – thank you!

**£6,500 per day**  
from money donated to us went on animal care, rehoming, sanctuary and animal welfare education

**Animal healthcare days**  
Our surgery team helped

**88 cats**  
At 2 microchipping days

**53 rabbits**  
At 1 vaccination day

Peaceways, our pet crematorium, cared for  
**1,320**  
animals

Raystede assisted  
**1,655**  
animals...

...which included...

**340 cats**

**130 dogs**

**411 small animals**

**151 aviary birds**

**489 chickens & cockerels**

**50 ducks, turkeys and geese**

**i** We gave pet advice to **3,730** people at **45** events in the local community

You helped us rehome  
**542**  
animals

Our shops welcomed:  
Lewes: 78,000 customers  
Hailsham: 30,000 customers  
Uckfield: 35,000 customers

We had **4,278** animal surrender requests – the highest ever – this included that we were asked to take in **1,606** dogs, **943** cats, **507** rabbits and **277** guinea pigs

During 23/24 Raystede was on the TV twice and also did 20 radio interviews

We helped **18 people & 25 animals**  
through our 'Break Away' scheme which offers short-term care of up to 3 months for people fleeing domestic abuse or needing medical treatment

During the year, **76** people told us they'd left a gift to Raystede in their Will

Animal fosterer volunteers gave us **59,448** hours and our staff gave us **7,728** additional hours caring for animals in their own homes

**Volunteers** gave us **28,000** hours in 23/24

**102** new volunteers joined the team

Total number of Raystede volunteers **241**

**62,000** people visited the main Raystede site

**Over 8,424** people took part in Family Learning Days in 23/24