

CEO: Stephanie Smith

Dear everyone,

I have recently been meeting and showing Raystede to various guests, including the Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex. It is a pleasure and a privilege to do this as they are amazed by how much we achieve at Raystede and always impressed by how determined we are to help animals.

I have met with the Mayor of Lewes and separately the Mayor of Seaford. Both are also Lewes District Councillors with lots of useful contacts and knowledge.

I very much enjoyed the Friends of Raystede events in October, it is heart-warming to meet so many of our generous supporters.

It is easy to get bogged down in the day to day at Raystede but Matt and Miriam recently made time to attend the international animal welfare conference (see page 19). When he got back, Matt wanted to focus on how positive Raystede's mission is and how much joy there can be in the work that we do to achieve it – and how important it is to remember that when things are tough. Matt said:

“I would like to highlight that even compared to the rest of the world, we do extraordinary things at Raystede. I am excited to be part of doing more of that in the future, and hopefully we can enjoy the journey to achieving Raystede's ambitions in the months to come.”

On Wednesday 22 November, all staff and volunteers are invited to drop into the Meeting Place where we are spending a day (11am to 3pm) dedicated to the main site – how to improve it, what the problems are, ideas for changes. How would you redesign our site if you could start again with a blank sheet of paper?

I hope this informal newsletter helps us all to keep in touch. A big thank you to everyone across the organisation – staff and volunteers - you are all making everything possible through your own special contribution to the Raystede team.

Stephanie Smith

CEO

In this issue

- Welcome Wendy - Head of Fundraising
- Marketing says farewell Rachel, welcome Ben
- Winter Warmers
- Julia & Janice shadow the Equine Team
- Christmas Fun
- ICAWC conference



Early morning radio - eek!



Tiny



Winter Warmers for Staff and Volunteers



FREE SOUP AND ROLL

Daily 12:30pm – 2pm in the Café.

Please order via the whiteboard
in the Staff Room.

You are welcome to bring
your own mug and spoon!

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

Rideshark: www.rideshark.com

West Sussex Car Share:
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

For those of you who often set foot on the main site, you will have seen the fantastic progress made on Project Terrapin over the last few weeks. It seemed to accelerate from little more than a brick base to a near complete building, education pavilion, and some very smart new fencing in the blink of an eye. The next few weeks will see interior work being done with electricals about to begin as I type. I will look to arrange an opportunity to show you what has been created as soon as it is safe to do so.

Elsewhere, lots of other things have been happening on site too. Another British Hen Welfare Trust (BHWT) collection day was hosted where we assisted them in rehoming 200 chickens. This is great news especially with the difficulties we have faced helping birds due to the ongoing effects of the national avian influenza outbreak from over a year ago. It has been fantastic to see some excellent vinyl coverings being applied to some of our dog exercise runs. These stop visitors adversely affecting the dogs by crowding around the glass, meaning the runs can now be more frequently used. They also have engaging information on them to help give visitors an insight into what we do.

For everything in relation to the other animals we help, the theme has been BUSY! Sadly, much of this busyness has been down to so many people asking for our help, but our incredible animal care teams have been doing all they can to provide space for these animals and, even better, find them new homes.

This cannot happen without the support of the wider Raystede team, so for all of your input and help into making this possible I would like to say a big thank you!

Matt



BHWT hens October 2023

Surgery: Sam Coe



Sam Coe

The past few months have been busy and interesting in the surgery. I am a locum vet, Sam Coe, who has taken over from Alice.

A kind donor has made it possible for us to have a prep room examination light and we also have a new dental X-ray. Getting this type of equipment means that we are comparable to many private practices in terms of what we can offer our patients.

Our cases have been as varied as ever. A recent intake of guinea pigs has meant that we are seeing many more of them than usual. These cute patients require extra special care during surgery because of their small body size and they are particularly vulnerable under general anaesthesia. Our vet and veterinary nurse have been doing some extra days so that we can provide focused care for these patients.

As usual, we are seeing many cats and dogs. A recent emergency caesarean section gave us the joy of four beautiful kittens. Cases such as this make our day! Mum and kittens are doing well.

Thanks, Sam

Rehoming: Meg Shortiss

We are still very busy in Rehoming taking surrender requests, the numbers are much higher than earlier in the year. We were asked to take 559 animals in August which has been the highest number on record - although 110 of these were fish! Adoptions seem to have picked up a little bit and as always, it's lovely to see the animals go to their new forever homes.

Both Miriam and I have been excited to give dog adopters the lovely new Raystede dog leads!

Break Away is busier at the minute as well. We recently had a pair of cats join the scheme called Lynxie and Zorro, they are both doing very well in foster. You may remember we also had another cat called Ernius on Break Away; he was reunited with his owner after four months of being in foster. It's safe to say they were very happy to see him!

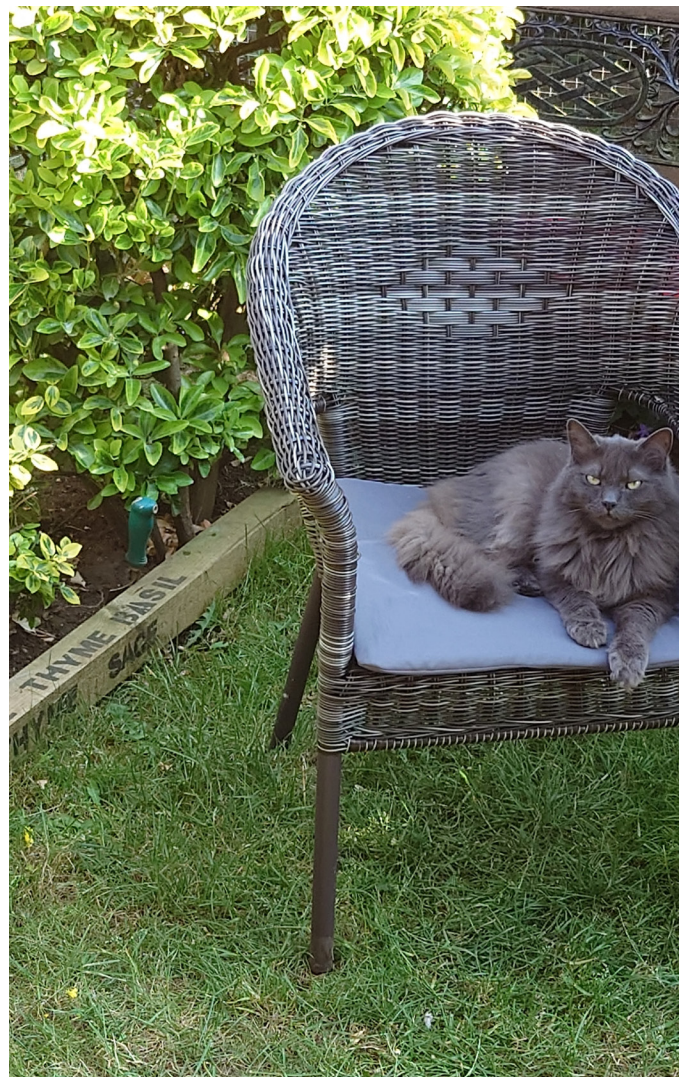
We are still looking for both dog and cat foster carers.

If you know of anyone interested, please direct them to our website.

Thanks



Ollie's adoption - with his new branded lead



Ernius

Small Animals: Vickie Gorst

As autumn draws in, our main priority is to focus on preparing the tortoises for hibernation – Sheldon usually dictates when this process begins as he’s a lot more sensitive to the weather changes and is the first tortoise to slow down and get sleepy. The Smalls Team have been busy weighing, measuring and bathing the tortoises, along with collecting tortoise faeces for parasite checks. Next, we will be getting the sheds ready with deep bedding for them to dig down in (everyone’s favourite job...).

We have been inundated with guinea pigs in the last couple of months. We assisted the RSPCA with a guinea pig hoarding case and took in 16 of the 45 guinea pigs that were seized, and another 10 baby guinea pigs from a separate case of accidental litters. Half of the baby guinea pigs are “lethal white” which is a genetic issue caused by breeding two incompatible breeds together. All these babies are blind, deaf and most are missing front teeth which are common issues associated with their condition. Despite this, they are all happy, gaining weight and popcorning around their enclosures (albeit bumping into a few things). We are currently exploring removing all their incisors to prevent ongoing dental issues.



Brandy, Whiskey, Rum



Cloud - a lethal white guinea pig

We have had some successful rehoming with rabbits recently, our longest stays Brandy, Whisky and Rum have finally been rehomed after over a year in our care. They came in as eight-week-old kits from an accidental litter and, due to their wild-looking appearance, they were constantly overlooked. We have had updates from their adopter, and they have settled in beautifully and the long wait was worth their new home! All our seven giant rabbits have also been rehomed. They originally came to us due to uncontrolled breeding and poor conditions - two adult females and five four-week-old kits – very skinny and riddled with ear mites. After a lot of time and veterinary treatment, they were finally ready for rehoming! All of them have found wonderful homes with giant-friendly enclosures.

October saw the British Hen Welfare Trust complete another collection day with us where almost 200 hens were rehomed from a caged farm. The Smalls Team took in a small number of these hens to bolster our small flock. As they were from a caged farm, they had never truly been outside. Typically, these hens are pale, balding, very nervous of people and the outside world. Slowly, the girls are getting a little braver and have ventured outside into their isolation pen, having their first proper forage and dust baths. Soon these hens will look a lot healthier and will be storming over to staff looking for tasty treats!

Aviaries: Sarah Gorringe



Zammy & Coochie

An altercation in one of our aviaries between a group of birds who had lived together for a few years left one of our birds with terrible injuries. Cherry, one of our hen ringnecks, was immediately sent to Coastways for an emergency appointment. Unfortunately, despite best efforts by the exotics vet team to save her, we lost Cherry on the operating table. Despite having an unfortunate start in life with a terribly upsetting backstory, and a future that would have looked bleak without rescue, Cherry found a home at Raystede and spent many years down in the colonies chewing up the wood and making burrows for herself. She was a beautiful, unique and resilient bird who met all challenges head-on.

Due to the issues with the group of Alexandrines and ringnecks, we have had to separate some of our birds for their own safety, which has further limited the space we have available in the aviaries. Alex can now be found in aviary six, closer to the public pathway entrance if anyone wants to go and say hello.

To add to the sad news, Coochie, our elderly red-lored Amazon, passed away after a short illness and a visit to the specialist exotic veterinary team at Coastways. He had been at Raystede for 22 years and had reached the grand age of 51! Some of you may recognise him from the recent magazine (the handsome bird pictured in the aviaries section) but others might have fonder (or perhaps not given his naughty reputation!) memories of him from his time in the aviaries. He was a feisty soul who aged gracefully and still gave us all the runaround when trying to handle him with his terrific crocodile-rolls and evasive manoeuvres despite his arthritis. He amazed vets with his resilience, athleticism, intelligence and speed, and will be very missed by many who got to know him over the years.

Sadly, Coochie left us with his long-term companion of more than 40 years. Zammy, a double yellow headed amazon, is not very confident on her own. She spent her whole life bossing Coochie around so without him, she seems somewhat lost. We have started to introduce her to a possible new friend, Horrid, another one of our older amazons without a companion. We are cautious, and introducing them slowly in a neutral space, especially after the recent difficulties we have had with groups of birds. Introducing birds to each other can be a huge risk but can also provide huge rewards if we get it right. At the moment, it is too early to tell if they are going to be fast friends or not, but we are hopeful that there's a chance that the two might become companions for each other.



Horrid & Zammy

Cattery: Maisie Byrne



Bella

Cattery continues to be busy; it feels like kitten season hasn't stopped this year! After sending off the Harry Potter cats and kittens to their new homes, we found ourselves with more! At the beginning of August, we took in a group of three abandoned strays. One of the cats (Lily), was heavily pregnant and gave birth here a week later. She has since been in foster with her little ones and will be returning to us very soon, as we begin the search for their forever homes. We have a group of three older kittens, Nikos, Santi and Athena, who came in as part of a larger group from a hoarding situation. With new arrivals, Carly and her kittens, and our newest arrivals, Pumpkin and Luna, we are all being kept on our toes by the little ones!

Besides Lily and her babies, we also have Bella in foster care, she's a lovely older girl who we are currently treating for hyperthyroidism. We are managing her condition with medication until she stabilises. Her foster carers love having her, but she does have a taste for the houseplants! We've recently taken a pair of Maine Coon cats onto the Animals@Home scheme. We've previously had success with Animals@Home with a cat called Winston and a pair called Riggs and Murtaugh. We've since had updates from everybody, and they have all settled into their new homes brilliantly.



Demi & Richie

Although we are always busy with adoptions in the Cattery, we do still have some long stays with us. Tiny, who has been with us for eight months continues to do well now that her health needs are being met and managed. She has lots of interest, which is great, but always seems to miss out; we continue to be hopeful that her perfect person will come along soon! Demi and Richie, an older pair who joined us in March, are still with us. Richie is a lovely, chatty boy and Demi continues growing in confidence, we hope that they find their forever family soon!

We recently sent one of our long stays, Matilda, to her forever home, and are pleased to report that she's getting on really well with her new family.



Nikos, Santi & Athena

At the end of May, we took in lovely Shadow, whom we mentioned in the previous newsletter. She came to us in very poor condition, looking about 10 years older than she was! Despite her bad start, she is a lovely and sweet natured cat. Whilst she was with us, we managed her dry and itchy skin with baths, mousses, brushes and a special diet; gradually her fur started to grow back. She recently found a home with a lovely family, who were willing to continue meeting her needs at home. She has only just gone home so we eagerly await an update from her new family.

We recently welcomed Maria to the Cattery Team, who has taken over from Vicky. Vicky left us to pursue a career in veterinary nursing and will be missed, but we are delighted to have Maria join our lovely little team.

Equine: Darcey Brett

We would like to welcome two lovely new additions to our equine family - Timmy and Prince. They arrived together and have almost completed their two weeks in isolation and will soon be able to join our herd.

Prince is a 21-year-old Shetland with a sweet personality and enjoys all the attention he can get. Timmy is a 6-year-old Shetland and is very shy and timid. His previous owners suspect he was subject to a nasty upbringing due to his fear with tools and general handling, but he has been doing exceptionally well. He is becoming more confident with our team and learning to love cuddles and grooming, so with lots of positive reinforcement he will certainly come out of his shell.

We are continuing our rehab journeys with some of our equines as instructed by our physio, Laura. In recent weeks we have been able to move things up a step and you might have seen us out and about long-reining or working over poles in the sand school. We have a schedule carefully laid out by Alice and Megan with different exercises each day, varying in difficulty with, of course, some much-deserved days off.



Prince

We are long-reining Pixie and Sally in the school over some poles (flat and raised) to increase their strength and flexibility and encourage them to engage their hindquarters.

As the exercises gradually increase in difficulty, the horses will extend their strides and work over their backs.

We work closely with Laura to ensure we are doing everything at the right pace as each animal responds differently to every exercise. Hopefully in time we will have lots of very comfortable ponies, ready to find their forever homes.

Buddy has had some physio due to experiencing some locking in his stifles. This is very common in young horses, but if they have finished growing it can often be a sign of a long-term problem. We are tracking Buddy's growth by drawing around him weekly on a whiteboard.

So far it looks like he still has growing to do, which is a good sign. Buddy has really come on since his arrival, he used to greet us with his two front hooves flying at our faces and now he has calmed and enjoys walking around site, nibbling his lead rope and looking at the birds and the bees.



Timmy

Equine Shadow: Julia Skinner & Jan Cameron

Julia and Jan from the Fundraising Team had the benefit of shadowing the Equine Team for a day in August...here is a snapshot of their day.

We arrived early, suitably dressed, and started off poo picking, and this seemed a running theme of the day! We walked Graham and Pumba around the site and the rest of Fundraising came out to say a cheery hello as we went past - we think they were very jealous so expect more shadowing requests to come your way Alice.

We even got to have a ride around in Gareth (and drop some poo off in the yard). After mid-morning it was more poo picking over with the donkeys, but as an extra treat we helped to groom Poppet and Angelica and take them for another walk around the site.

After lunch it was time to groom and walk the horses and ponies.

It gave us such an insight into just how hard the team work, working to tight deadlines with some very back-breaking chores.

It seems to never stop in Equine.... and for the rest of the Animal Care Teams!

We can't wait to pester another Animal Care Team for our next shadow shift!



**Julia & Jan
with Graham & Pumba**



Jan with Angelica

All in all, it was a fabulous day.

We would like to thank Alice, Megan, Darcey, Jess and Sheila for their patience with having us 'newbies' for the day.



Julia with Poppet



Gareth - poo drop off!

Kennels: Holly Wilson



Charlie

Now we are back up to full staffing, after Heidi joined us from Smalls, we have started to fill back up again with quite a few oldies coming through the doors. We have had a couple of social boys who had very brief stays before finding loving homes; 11 year old terrier, Charlie, and 8 year old staffie, Ollie, whose family are repeat adopters with a love of elderly staffies. They came to us a couple of hours before Ollie arrived saying they were ready for another after their recent loss, it was definitely fate!

A couple of months ago, Dolly the 7 year old Pomeranian, arrived. You may have heard her shouting her way around site! What she lacks in size she makes up for with noise and huge levels of sass! Unfortunately, her family couldn't afford the vet bills for a large lump on her bottom. After much poking, prodding and testing, her lump was removed at Fairfields. Luckily, the lump was benign and she has now recovered. She definitely enjoyed all the pampering whilst healing and has us all wrapped around her little paws!



Micky

We also saw the arrival of Micky, a 12 year old chihuahua. After having lived his whole life with one family, he was surrendered as he was not getting on with the younger, bigger dogs in the home. He has a few age-related health issues and recently had half of his teeth removed, with just one remaining on the top row, and is feeling much more comfortable. He is such a sweet, loving boy who will have hopefully found his retirement home.

Finally, a quick update on long stays, Proki and Elsie, who have now been in their new homes for a few months. They are both doing well, have been on a couple of holidays already, and loving their new lives!



Ollie



Dolly

HR & Volunteering: Heidi Christmas and Linda Hawkins

Next month, we have the pleasure of welcoming our first cohort of students who are embarking on their animal care qualifications at Plumpton College. We believe that hands-on experience is an essential component of these courses and that's why we are particularly excited to announce the relaunch of our Student Work Experience Programme. The guidance and mentorship of our animal care teams will make a significant difference in these student's educational journey and aligns with our 'value' of being passionate about our work and the sharing of our knowledge.

We have booked 1 day first aid courses scheduled to take place on 1st and 21st November. These courses are a crucial part of our commitment to maintaining a safe and prepared environment for our staff, volunteers and visitors. This training will provide an additional 14 staff members with the skills and knowledge to act as first aiders in case of medical situations. A life-saving reminder – it's important to remember we have a defibrillator located on the external wall to the right of the reception entrance.

Ongoing training is an essential part of our commitment to providing professional development for our staff. Part of this process involves the review of our suite of iHASCO online courses and our aim is to complete all expired courses and any courses that are yet to be started, are completed by the end of the year. To facilitate this, reminders will be sent out shortly. We appreciate your cooperation and commitment to maintaining our high standards.

The other 'high point' is that we now have 191 volunteers as part of our team and are expecting this number to pass the 200 mark following the recent volunteer drop in events held in our 3 high street charity shops.

Many thanks,

Heidi & Linda



Bees at Plumpton College

Welcome and Goodbye

Welcome

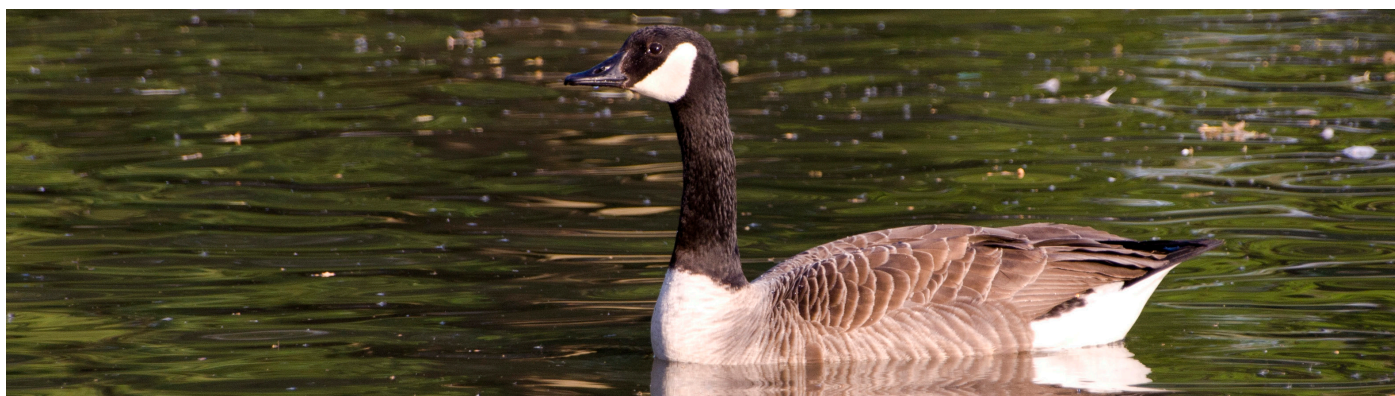
| | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Josselyn Dunk | Shop Assistant |
| Francisco Winsor | Café Assistant |
| Cherry Carr | Café Assistant |
| Lynne Fowler | Onsite Shop Assistant/Driver |
| Alarna Hills | Café Assistant |
| Emma Clements | Café Assistant |
| Maria Luck | Animal Care Assistant |
| Wendy Bardsley | Head of Fundraising |
| Natasha Wickenden | Animal Care Assistant |
| Ben Langford-Biss | Digital Communications Manager |
| Fiona King | Shop Assistant |
| Katie Allen | Animal Care Assistant |
| Grace Dell-Louth | Animal Care Assistant |
| Daisy Hooper | Assistant Shop Manager |
| | |

Goodbye

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Alison Mitchell | Assistant Shop Manager |
| Pete Daniel | Environmental Operative |
| Alice Hasell | Veterinary Surgeon |
| Emma Lewis | Animal Care Supervisor |
| Lucy Oliver | Café Assistant |
| Aiden Hill | Café Assistant |
| Lucinda Hunt | Shop Assistant |
| Jessica Smith | Animal Care Assistant |
| Rachel Simm | Marketing, PR & Communications Manager |

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





RAYSTEDE
GIVING ANIMALS A BETTER LIFE

Raystede Festive Fun!

Let's all join together for some Christmas cheer.

Christmas Lights Switch On

Thursday 16 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 Grainne know by Friday 1 December if you want to take part.

Mince Pie Mingle & Grand Raffle!

Wednesday 13 December
4pm – 6pm, Raystede Café
Get together – eat, drink,
share your Secret Santa gifts!

Plus free raffle with amazing prizes to be won!

Staff & Volunteers Christmas Party

Thursday 14 December, 7:30pm
Date and venue TBC



Education: Cat Bray

PACE (Pet Advice in the Community Events)

Life has been interesting out in the community with Cat and Lyndsey trying out new locations and meeting a wide variety of people who would like to chat about their pets or bring their dogs over to visit the Pet Advice stand. They even had a family who drove all the way from Ticehurst to a remote park in Hailsham to visit the stand because they had seen our post on Facebook. They were considering surrendering their dog and wanted to find out details but also wanted some tips on its behaviour to see if there was anything else they could try.

Over the summer the PACE team, along with Maria, our vet nurse, engaged with, and helped a total of 2,688 people.



Onsite events

Teja and her team launched a Rabbit Awareness Weekend and Guinea Pig Awareness Day.

Both were extremely popular and we felt uplifted to know how seriously people are taking responsibility for their small animals. People seemed to get so much from the days and one lady visited all of the mini talks and was writing notes and considering all aspects of guinea pig care before she adopted some new guinea pigs.

Family Learning Days drew huge crowds this summer amounting to 3,228 visitors engaging with a variety of activities and fun trails. We have very positive feedback from these events.



Cat at Education stand

Fundraising Team: Wendy Bardsley

Wendy Bardsley - Head of Fundraising

I have completed two months at Raystede as Head of Fundraising and no day has been the same! I've gone from meeting Gregory Peck with visitors to being accosted in the café by a group from a local care home with handmade doggy treats and then directing traffic in the car park, all in a morning's work. I've learnt so much about terrapins I'm thinking about writing a book. Honestly, I've learned that I have a lot to learn about animal welfare and I am totally blown away by the level of passion and dedication here at Raystede to ensure the best level of care and enrichment for the animals we look after.

You can read my bio on the website, so I just want to thank you all for a warm welcome and for sharing your time and expertise over the past two months for my induction. My job is to facilitate fundraising to bring in lots of money for our cause, but we can't do that without all of you, and you have been amazing judging by all the gratitude from the Fundraising Team below.

Thank you!



Wendy & Betty Boo

Fundraising can't do it without you!

As we come to the end of the summer, Fundraising wants to thank colleagues right across the organisation for all their support—a special mention to the Estates Team for keeping it all looking so beautiful.

Zara and Emma want to thank the Education Team for collaborating on the schools' plan and the Commercial Team for helping to facilitate groups on site.

Sponsor Tours have been very successful this year with a high number of supporters visiting the site. Marianne and her team would like to say a huge thank you to everyone from the animal care teams who made these events happen. The positive feedback from our supporters reflects the fact that these tours make our supporters feel more connected and valued.

Lisa, who looks after Raystede's major gifts, is also grateful to the animal care teams who have spoken so knowledgeably about their work to our generous supporters when they visited the site. This adds great impact and a feeling of involvement with Raystede for the donor. It often prompts a donation or an increase in giving the next day!

Also, a big thank you to everyone who supported the recent application to Pets at Home. Emma is delighted to share that the local BUPA foundation is keen to support our Family Learning Days and another corporate supporter, First Central, is funding some more mud mats this winter.

We have hosted nearly 40 corporate volunteer groups this year! This is an excellent way to engage with companies, and it is only made possible with the support of many different teams across Raystede. Mikayla has received lots of positive feedback from people who attended, so thank you to everyone who helped create such a great team-building experience.

Fundraising Team contin:

Mobile Lottery

Exciting news! This week sees the launch of our new mobile lottery, a quick and easy way for people to support Raystede.

For just £2 a week, there's a chance to win up to £10,000!

There's no need for cash or cards as this is a mobile lottery which means the donation is taken with a mobile phone bill, or you can set up a standing order using your phone. Just visit the site <https://lottery.donr.com/raystede> enter your name and phone number and you're ready to play!

There's no commitment, you can take a break from playing or cancel at any point.

Raystede volunteers and staff are very welcome to play if you'd like to do so.

Draws take place every Saturday and winners are notified by text message. The lottery will be promoted on Raystede's social media platforms, and there is a series of Facebook adverts running during October so keep an eye out for them. We anticipate that the lottery will be a good additional source of income and reach and raise awareness of Raystede for a new and difference audience. Our existing lottery will continue to run alongside the new mobile lottery. If you have any questions, please do get in touch with Marianne in the Fundraising Team.

Christmas

We are launching a fundraising Holiday Help Out recruitment campaign. This is to help us find much-needed volunteers to support fundraising activities in the community. Holiday Help Out is a simple way to get involved, giving just a couple of hours of your time to help raise much-needed funds and raise awareness.

We are now booking Christmas activities, so please let us know if there are any new events in your local community that we might attend or if you have some time to spare over the holiday to volunteer with us and tell people about our amazing cause.

Christmas Jumper Day is Friday 8 December 2023, and we are launching this to local businesses, groups and schools. Do join in with all the fun and dig out your Christmas jumper for the big day!



Marketing: Janet Parsons

Farewell to Rachel

As you all know, Rachel Simm, our lovely Marketing, PR & Communications Manager, sadly left Raystede on 20 October after nearly eight years. She has had a great career at Raystede from fostering quite a few of our dogs to organising the amazing Animal Rescue Live TV programme in 2019, and made such a huge difference. Along the way, she has produced the Raystede magazine, fundraising appeals, done countless radio and TV interviews, told the stories of the many animals we care for and raised much-needed awareness and funds for Raystede. She will be very much missed.

Here's what Rachel had to say before she left:

"Having worked at Raystede for 7 years and 9 months, it's safe to say it's been a huge part of my life! When I started working here there was no Marketing, PR, Comms or Digital Team at all but there is now a fab team in place and I'm excited to see what they do next! Seeing so many animals find new homes and fostering several dogs myself have made this job truly special. I adopted Star in 2018 and I'll forever be a proud Raystede adopter! My next job is with the Communications & Media Team at the Sussex NHS Foundation Trust – a big change but I'm looking forward to it. Thank you for all your help with tours, press interviews and case studies over the years. You are all amazing!"

We are recruiting for Rachel's role (big shoes to fill) and will let you know more soon.



Rachel & Star



Ben & Goose

Welcome Ben

As Rachel leaves us, we welcome Ben Langford-Biss to the role of Digital Communications Manager. Ben started in August and is responsible for our website, social media, e-marketing and generally all things digital! Here's a short introduction from Ben:

"I got my start in marketing during my time in the music industry, being the main member in our band responsible for our marketing concepts and social media. In 2020 when the pandemic hit and touring was off the cards, I started working as a marketing manager for a sustainable oral care brand. However, it became clear that product-led marketing was not my passion. I had always done a lot of work alongside charities in my band, working with mental health, LGBTQ+ and bullying charities and utilising our platform for good, so I've been wanting to make a move into the charity sector for a few years.

I am so excited to be a part of the Raystede team, as a long-time vegan, animal welfare has always been a cause close to my heart. I live in Brighton with my partner and our handsome greyhound / saluki cross Goose. Everyone has been so welcoming and helpful during my first couple of months here. I'm thrilled to be part of the team, spreading the word about the wonderful work we do at Raystede!"

Marketing contin.

Raystede on the radio

We welcomed the team from BBC Radio Sussex to Raystede on Saturday 7 October when presenter, Mark Carter, broadcast his entire early morning show from our car park. We had special appearances from some of our animals – Sally the horse, Pumpkin the dog and Ollie, our Umbrella Cockatoo.

Mark and fellow reporter, Krys O'Brien, interviewed Rachel, Alice, Val, Maisie, Miriam and Janet about how we care for the animals and get them ready for the day ahead, rehoming and the terrapin project.

It was definitely worth the early 5am start to get four hours of continual coverage from 6am to 10am and the BBC team absolutely loved their visit to Raystede. Huge thanks to everyone involved!



Alice, Mark & Sally



Maisie's interview in the Cattery

Commercial & Visitor Operations: Kerry Darwin

The end of September marked the half way point in our financial year and Commercial results are strong. Income, net of VAT, across all areas is £709k which is £181k ahead of budget, and profit contribution into Welfare is £204k, which is £57k ahead of budget.

Our high street shops are trading well as is Peaceways and eBay, and with footfall on site so far this year on target, the café, shop and pet goods are trading well too.

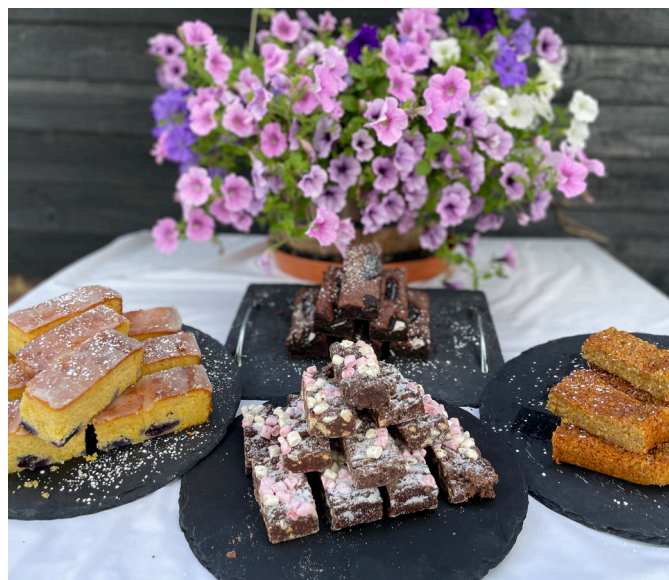
A few fun facts from the café...

in 6 months Gemma and the team have served:

Over 6,000 ice creams,
7,000 slices of cake,
2,000 sandwiches,
16,000 cooked meals,
18,000 hot drinks
13,000 cold drinks
9,000 snacks and pastries

And on top of that, 5,500 staff and volunteer sandwiches.

Certainly a busy 6 months!



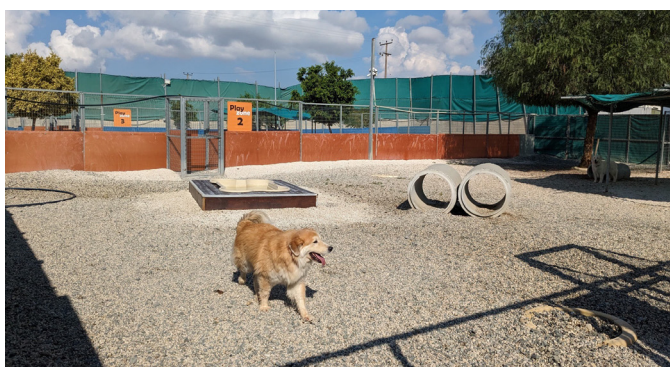
ICAWC Conference: Matt Gough & Miriam Dowding

Matt

The International Companion Animal Welfare Conference (ICAWC) is one of the largest global animal welfare conferences which this year was held in Nicosia, Cyprus. Raystede was fortunate to be offered a place at the conference sponsored by Purina, so it was decided to use that offer and send an additional person for us to benefit as much as possible from the experience. I used the sponsored place and, as the conference has a purely animal welfare focus, the opportunity was opened up to the animal care teams for a second attendee which resulted in Miriam Dowding, Rehoming Manager, accompanying me.

The conference was attended by hundreds of people from dozens of animal welfare organisations working all across the globe. There were sessions and workshops scheduled throughout each day, with networking events hosted in the evenings. It was not only inspiring to hear about the amazing work being done by some of the organisations attending, but it was incredibly useful to look outside of the UK when considering what more Raystede can do to improve the lives of animals. It was also fascinating to hear that the struggles faced by UK rescues over the last few years with higher surrender numbers and fewer homes being available, are replicated in rescues in most countries affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis in a very similar way.

One of the things I would really like to bring back to Raystede from the conference is to make sure we don't lose focus on just how positive our mission is, and how much joy there can be in the work that we do to achieve it. That focus on the positive, and enabling people to enjoy their part in the animal welfare journey was a common thread that linked so many of the sessions at ICAWC together and I think it is timely in a sector that has faced tough times in recent years. So to start that I would like to highlight that even compared to the rest of the world, we do extraordinary things at Raystede. I am excited to be part of doing more of that in the future, and hopefully we can enjoy the journey to achieving Raystede's ambitions in the months to come.



2nd Chance



ICAWC

Miriam

At the start of October, I attended the 23rd annual International Companion Animal Welfare Conference in Cyprus with Matt Gough. On our first day we visited a local dog rescue, 2nd Chance. They have very little in the way of staff and resources, but their facilities were really impressive and it was great to see the dogs (and staff) so happy!

The talks were given by organisations from around the world, all working towards improving animal welfare standards. Topics included mass rabies vaccination programmes, controlling invasive species in the Galápagos, and managing stress in a kennel environment – they were very inspirational. So many countries have few or no animal welfare laws with little public or government interest in animal welfare and must contend with many more challenges, such as stray dog populations with rabies or working in areas of human conflict.

It struck me how privileged we are in the UK, and that although we are in the middle of an animal welfare crisis, things could be much worse. This has made me feel more hopeful about overcoming the challenges we're currently facing. Also, seeing what incredible things people have done with so little has made me feel very positive about what we can achieve together as an organisation.