

# Volunteers Newsletter

Summer 2024

Dear Everyone,

It's good to see that there is lots of positive and uplifting news in this edition of the newsletter and, despite the ongoing challenges, that you are all working so hard caring for the animals and finding wonderful forever homes for them.

I love being onsite and seeing your care in action and all the innovations and improvements you are making for our animals. The site itself is looking great, particularly at this time of the year with all the planting and abundance of nature and wildlife. The hard work of everyone involved in The Big Help Out to 'Refresh Raystede' and the Estates Team really made a difference. The incredible number of volunteers who came along and all the hard work and enthusiasm that went into the day is very much appreciated. And I just love the terrapin sanctuary - so much hard work went into achieving this project and it gives me such joy to see the terrapins basking and swimming about.

I just wanted to mention the sadness we have experienced at the loss of some of our beloved sanctuary animals and birds, like Purdie, Churchill, Charlie, Peter and Pinky. I know the loss of any animal deeply affects the staff and volunteers caring for them, and indeed all of us, but I hope you take comfort from knowing that you have given them the best life at Raystede. Thank you.

As always, I am in awe of your knowledge, dedication, passion and hard work for the benefit of the animals in our care. Whether you are at Raystede, Peaceways, our Lewes, Uckfield and Hailsham shops or spreading the word out in the community, everything you do makes a huge difference – thank you!

I hope this informal newsletter helps us all to keep in touch. Please look after yourselves, your family and friends.

*Stephanie*  
Raystede CEO

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# Animal Welfare: Matt Gough

It is amazing to think we're in the summer already as it seems only last week we were battling the incredible wet weather experienced over the winter. In some ways the wet weather has really helped though as the plants around the lakes and ponds have been allowed to thrive rather than entering the drought cycles we experienced over the last few years.

In turn, that has given Project Terrapin a really strong start as the plants produce lots of natural food that the terrapins can enjoy. Finally opening Project Terrapin has been a real highlight and I am pleased to say that so far, the project is bedding in well. As a team we tried very hard to anticipate any snags before they happened so that we could mitigate against them and currently that approach is paying dividends with a smooth start to the project. New terrapins will continue to be added to the project slowly to ensure we don't push too far too fast as that could risk upsetting the balance we are working towards in the facility.

Elsewhere, each animal section has faced challenges with high demand for intake and fewer homes available for those animals in our care. This is a picture that is being seen across animal rehoming organisations nationally which, although reassuring, does not mean the drive to find homes is any less difficult to manage. Individual animal care teams have put a fantastic amount of work into finding their animals homes and the support that we have had from the Marketing and Education teams in this regard has been invaluable. Working together is going to be key to navigating this tricky period and, comparing what Raystede has achieved to the sector norms, we do look to be performing well despite it being a tricky time.

We currently have three large animal welfare projects in the pipeline which are refurbishment of the Kennels and Cattery area, creation of a new rabbit and small animals facility, and development of an equine track husbandry system. None of these projects is confirmed yet as they are in the costing stage so that it can be decided what we might be able to afford. The costing stage is progressing well and I hope to be able to complete presentation of costs to the trustees later this year. If any of the projects receive approval then it will open up a very exciting time ahead, and really bolster our ability to help even more animals in need.

As ever, I am very grateful for all each of you does to support Raystede's work. If you do have any queries about what is happening, including on the projects, feel free to ask me any questions you might have.



Terrapins basking!

# Rehoming

We have had a change in Rehoming, as Amelia and Abi have joined the Rehoming Team!

We have been busy as ever taking surrender requests, the numbers are still high with between 300 and 400 animal surrender requests each month. Since April, we, and the Small Animals Team, have welcomed 51 terrapins into Project Terrapin!

Adoptions have been flowing nicely, too. Many lucky animals have gone to their forever homes, with a total of 154 animals rehomed between 1 April and 30 June.

Unfortunately, Break Away has been quieter than usual, but we do still have a few lovely animals on the scheme that are doing well in their foster homes. One Break Away dog we have is the sweetest mini-dachshund, Slinky Dog, who, after a vet visit with us, many of you stopped for a cuddle!

We have had a few more foster carer applications come in, and we're hoping for more to come after our Ashdown Radio slot! We are always looking for more foster carers for dogs, cats and small animals, so please let us know if you're interested or spread the word to people who might be.



Amelia and Slinky Dog

# Surgery

In the surgery we have been busy with Chelonia in the last few months.

The arrival of the first 30 terrapins for the terrapin project found us having a busy day microchipping them all for identification, and then watching them being released to explore their new home. Over the past few weeks, we have seen one or two of them for treatment of minor ailments, but they all seem to be doing well.

The tortoises did not want to be forgotten around this time and Megan came into surgery for help with laying her eggs soon after the terrapins arrival. She was treated successfully and laid 12 eggs after a morning with us.

Of course, we continue to see Boiesie every few days for his treatments. It is lovely to go into the Aviaries and meet all the birds. They are so inquisitive and intelligent. It is also the only place a vet can go where their patients might say "hello"!

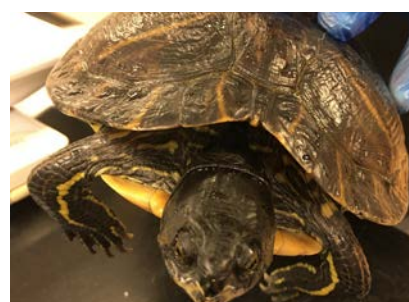
The dogs and cats have also kept us occupied and Gizmo the cat who has been on treatment for his skin allergies for a long time deserves to be mentioned for being such a lovely patient. He is at last doing well with his skin problems being much better controlled.



Megan



Megan's eggs!



Terrapin at the vets

# Small Animals

It's been a mixed bag on the CFS team with lots of successful rehoming and, sadly, plenty of animals being returned. We have had a positive few months with rehoming some of the species we typically struggle to find homes for such as the ducks, cockerels, geese and chinchillas.

Daisy and Rolo, the chinchillas, went home after 466 days with us, and some of our Indian runner ducks had been with us over 1,000 days before finally finding their new home!

In contrast, we have sadly had a lot of returned animals due to changes of circumstance and children losing interest, such as Bagel and Bloomer the rabbits, who have been returned to us twice now. We have several other ex-Raystede rabbits looking to return to us, however, with adoptions being very low we are struggling to find the space to house them.



Bagel and Bloomer



Jolly gerbils!

On a more positive note, the team have had the pleasure of helping a female gerbil and her young litter of five pups. Unsurprisingly, she shortly graced us with another litter of six pups!

At the time of writing, they all still have their eyes closed but are starting to move around a little more. In a few weeks' time we will need to figure out their sexes and separate them from mum – who is due a well-earned rest!

We currently have 55 terrapins in the new ponds, 4 in the induction area (Polycrub) and 6 in the old small pond, a total of 65 terrapins on site! Most of the terrapins have been thriving in the ponds, however, a few have needed some extra care shortly after arrival to ensure that they will also thrive.

On arrival at Raystede, the new terrapins are health-checked, micro-chipped and ID photos are taken before being released into the ponds or kept in isolation pools in the Polycrub. This can be quite a laborious task when the terrapins aren't cooperating for the microchips!

As many of you are already aware, we sadly lost Churchill our 106-year-old tortoise in May. There's a big Churchill-shaped hole left in the tortoises without her and no one else has quite mastered the art of climbing into the kitchen to chase staff down for some extra food like she did. We are in the process of creating a little something in her memory which we hope everyone will be able to appreciate.



Beloved Churchill

# Aviaries

Everyone far and wide has been rooting for Boysie, our dear 34-year-old Red-lored Amazon parrot, who has been fighting amongst other things aspergillosis, an enlarged liver, dehydration and a bacterial infection. The Fundraising Team worked hard to raise the money to cover the costs of his CT scan and other tests and supporters were incredibly generous and sent lovely messages which were heart-warming. Great thanks go to all concerned with this, we are truly very thankful and for allowing us to throw everything available at this to help Boysie recover. He hasn't given up and neither have we.

His story was also included in a recent addition of the Parrot Magazine, which goes out nationally and abroad as it is now sent out digitally, although we did get a hard copy.

The treatment is long term, lots of handling which he hates; even with those he loves he is very suspicious. The restriction of movement was also frustrating for him as he was used to a massive aviary. He has been moved from a cage into a 6x3 flight in the rehab room, which has pepped him up significantly and he is much more his old self, being quite spicy with some of his old adversaries (some of the team!). He can be more active and playful and is busy most of the day. His most recent tests have shown him stabilise but not yet improve, which is very sad as he is such a fighter.



## Boysie in the Parrot Magazine!

He continues his daily nebulising treatment and medications, but we are looking to change the medications he is given and possibly how we administer them, to try to reduce the handling and quantity of fluid as he must hate the taste. He is very savvy and knows all too well if we try to disguise his medication in food items. It would be lovely if he would take them in a fruit juice or a mash, but he is not fooled and he is his own worst enemy with this. He will be reassessed when our exotics vet visits again at the end of August and in September. We hope with a change of meds and continued stimulation in his flight we will start to finally see some improvement.

Sadly, we lost two ring necked parakeet boys, old Charlie had, we believe, possibly a heart-related issue as he passed away suddenly but his postmortem told us very little. Peter had a large swelling behind his stifle joint that was very nasty and suspicious and had cut his circulation into his leg and foot. After being seen by an exotics vet and prescribed a course of treatment and deliberating the next course of action for him, he sadly died a few days later; perhaps it was all too much for such a wild bird.

Asha, his pretty Alexandrine parakeet mate, was suddenly alone, as she had not long been in an emergency herself, when she was eggbound and needed to have the egg reduced and extracted by the exotics vet. She would never have been able to pass it and would have been fighting for her life within a few hours. Alex, our charismatic Alexandrine hybrid is with her again now, although he is feeling a little shy due to a heavy feather moult, she is very pleased to see him again. Being a wild bird, she gains a lot of confidence with him there and follows him from one place to another and to the food bowl, sharing everything together. They are now in aviary 1, so the first greeting visitors get on arrival is from him. A perfect spot for him to have exclusive attention, lots of 'come on then' and 'what ya doing'!

# Aviaries continued

Tasha and Onion, two cockatiels who had been stuck in our rehab room for a long time, went out to a lovely aviary home as summer started, where they will get 1 to 1 attention living within a smaller group of cockatiels. Onion has some age-related health issues and would not have fared well again, back in the large and tall aviary on site, where he would have fallen and hurt himself significantly. The feedback is they are both doing well.



Onion and Tasha

# Equine

For those of you who may not remember, Buddy was our two-year-old miniature Shetland who was rehomed with us due to behavioural issues that his previous owners could not manage. When Alice and Megan first visited him, it quickly became apparent that he was not in the right environment for such a young horse. Our entire Equine Team worked diligently to transform Buddy's behaviour and prepare him for his forever home.

Additionally, Buddy had some stifle issues related to his growth, and our team collaborated closely with both a veterinarian and a physiotherapist to ensure he became sound and comfortable. We were thrilled to receive an application for our Loan to Rehome scheme from someone who was interested in Buddy. The match couldn't have been more perfect: a loving, quiet home with a companion of similar age and size for Buddy to play with.

The Loaner is also a physiotherapist, enabling her to continue the strengthening work that had helped Buddy to progress so well at Raystede. We are delighted to inform you that Buddy is settling in beautifully, and they are both very happy. Buddy's three-month home check is due the end of August, and it will be wonderful for some of our team members to visit and see how well he is doing.



Buddy and his new companion

# Equine continued

Sally, our 12-year-old New Forest pony, is currently out on our Loan to Rehome scheme. During her stay with us, we dedicated substantial effort to her rehabilitation, ultimately reaching a point where her physical condition was stable, we could reduce her workload to focus on maintaining her health and managing her weight, rather than continued rehabilitation.

Recently, our physiotherapist, Laura from Goodlife Physiotherapy, was in need of a new companion for her horse, and we knew this would be an ideal fit for Sally. Given Laura's familiarity with Sally's medical history and her role at Raystede, any minor changes in Sally's condition can be promptly identified and addressed to our high standards.

We are pleased to report that Sally has settled in wonderfully with Laura and is thriving alongside her new companion. Sally's six-month home check is scheduled in the coming weeks, providing our team an excellent opportunity to visit and assess her progress.



Sally (left) and her new companion

Some of you may notice that our sheep herd has recently got quite a bit smaller, unfortunately, over the last few months we have had to put to sleep some of our elderly sheep who were no longer coping. With a special mention for our old girl Pinky who made it to the grand age of 19 ½. She lived a long happy life with the past 8 years being at Raystede.

We have got 2 sheep on the list ready to come in called Spring and Summer so look out for their introduction coming soon...



Pinky



Trudy



Spot

# Cattery



Willow and the Cheese Babies



Nellie and Nacho

We've certainly been busy in our lovely Cattery, so I'll start with the kittens as they keep us the busiest! In May we welcomed two mummies and their kittens; first to arrive was Willow and her three babies, Brie, Leicester and Cheddar (the Cheese babies), followed by Nellie and her baby, Nacho, a few weeks after. These mums and babies were the first to use our enrichment room, which has been converted into our maternity unit/rooms.

It's safe to say that everyone enjoyed having the extra space to zoom around and play, and the mums enjoyed being able to have a bigger space to be able to take themselves off for some quiet time. I'm pleased to report that all mums and babies have gone to their forever homes; we've already had some lovely updates from everyone, and they're all doing great!

We are currently full to the brim in Cattery and, sadly, we still have lots of long stays in our care; these are mostly our seniors, pairs and black cats. Unfortunately, we are still looking for homes for Monty and Tigger who have been in our care for six and five months respectively. Monty is currently living it up in foster and is a totally different cat out of the cattery environment; it's been lovely to see his true character in a home environment, but obviously we would love to get him into his forever home.



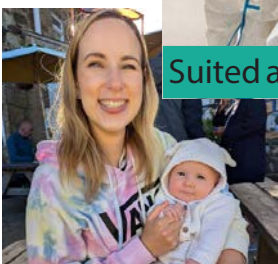
Monty and Tigger

Tigger remains quite happy in his unit in the Cattery. He recently had to have emergency surgery with Sam to remove an infected tooth and, after being starved of his biscuits for a week, he has made a full recovery. His diet is also going well and he has managed to lose a kilo, bringing him back down to a more ideal weight; we just need to find him his forever home.

We also wanted to say thank you to the Marketing Team for helping us to get a push on helping these two chaps find their forever homes and we hope to have a positive update soon!



Suited and booted!



Amber and Jasper

We do have some good news on one of our long stays. Lots of you may know Ziggy, a very confident older boy who was very helpful to the Education Team when they brought tours into the Cattery. After 120 days in our care, he won the heart of one of our volunteers, Tash, who took him home. He has settled very well and even has a girlfriend!

A few months ago we did have a small scare with ringworm, fortunately it was just a scare, and the cats were all fine, but it did mean that we had to get out our fancy white suits again.

In family news you may have heard at the staff forums that Amber gave birth to her baby boy, Jasper, at the beginning of April. She visited us in the Cattery in May, everybody is doing well, and Amber is enjoying being a mum. We hope to have another visit soon.



# Kennels

The new play run 'sails' have been installed to provide shade and shelter and we're very impressed with them. They've provided a cool exercising area on the sunny days and keep us dry when it's raining. The dogs have accepted them without problem, and they've already proven to have a positive impact on activities. They're the big blue coverings if you've not seen them!

We've had a new volunteer join our team, providing Reiki for the dogs and adding to our holistic consideration for supporting the dogs in our care. Particularly engaged has been STAR dog Koda, not surprisingly, as he also enjoys his essential oils treatment and physio.

It was lovely to welcome some of Raystede's volunteers for a tour of our facilities, their interest in the section and enthusiasm for the work we do and for the animals was wonderful.



Koda



Elder is a superstar!

Elder, one of our first STAR dogs, recently visited to tell us how great he was at the Goodwoof event. We always knew the comical delinquent would turn into a super star and are so proud of him and his family.



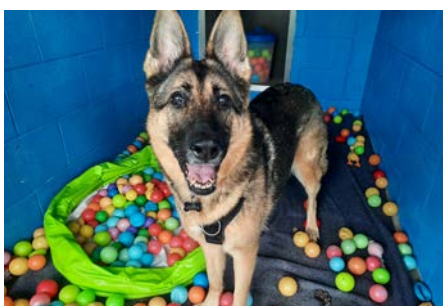
Ruby has been adopted!

For anyone who's not heard, Ruby the beautiful Lurcher, has been adopted by her fosterers and she is one very happy dog.

Whilst surrender request numbers and types continue to be depressing, happy adoptions also continue. Milly the German Shepherd was with us awhile and received a lot of veterinary and physio care due to mobility issues. She has happily settled into a new home and has a Husky for a brother, updates show how much she approves of her new family.

Goofy the large labradoodle, who required vet care for bladder problems, was a character to care for and has also quickly integrated with his new family.

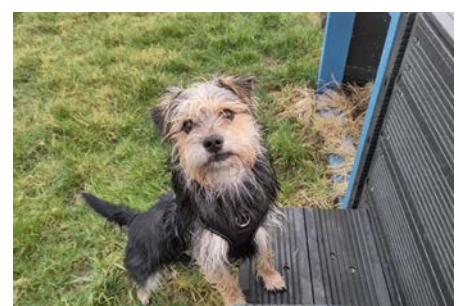
Rufus the terrier spent several weeks receiving extra behavioural support, he has now been adopted and settled well with another previous kennel resident, it's always nice when previous adopters apply to add another dog to their family.



Milly



Goofy



Rufus

# Animal Welfare: Miriam Dowding

We recently held a low-cost cat neutering week for owners on benefits. Whilst we had a few no-shows, Surgery were able to neuter 10 cats across the week which is a great outcome. The event proved very popular, and we had lots of enquiries for this so are planning on putting on another neuter event soon.

I have been working with Cattery to make some small welfare improvements for the cats in our care. They now have more privacy in the form of some new vinyls, both on the inside and outside of their units. These allow the cats to feel safer and less stressed whilst staying with us. Thank you to Estates for their work on these.



New Cattery vinyls in place!

By the time this goes out, the Cattery maternity unit will hopefully be up and running. This is where the old Enrichment Room was. We are required to have separate facilities for litters of kittens, so this building allows us to care for queens and their kittens safely if they can't go into foster. The building required a bit of a refurb before it was suitable for use. We have a Helping Hands group in at the start of August to help with this.

Jon and I recently visited RSPCA Mount Noddy and the Cat & Rabbit Rescue Centre in Chichester for inspiration for the new rabbit and small animal facility that is being planned. These visits were beneficial and gave us lots of ideas for things to incorporate into our design.

The new Rehoming Team have settled in well, thank you to all for being so welcoming to them. They are busy with lots of surrender requests and are desperately trying to recruit more foster carers to help with our Break Away scheme.

Equine and Aviaries have recently taken on more volunteers who are proving to be invaluable, helping with day-to-day tasks, allowing the staff more time to spend with the animals.

# HR & Volunteering

We have had a really busy few months with a focus mainly on volunteers and had Volunteers Week and the Big Help Out Day in June.

For our current volunteers, we put together a programme of tours and events solely for them. Many of them were 'behind the scenes' tours, so that they could get a unique insight into the work that Raystede does as a thank you for supporting us.

On Wednesday 5 June, we had tea and cakes available all day for our volunteers to drop in and join us for some refreshments and a chance to meet other fellow volunteers. Fifty one volunteers came in and this included nine residents from Bernhard Baron Care Home who knit blankets for us, which we either use in the Cattery or sell in the shop.



Volunteers Day

For the Big Help Out Day we were hoping to get 50 new volunteers to come in and help out in various areas. Much to our surprise and absolute amazement, we had over 160 people sign up. We had 53 people turn up to help us on the day and all the teams did brilliantly and made a visible difference to the site and helped the staff tremendously by 'refreshing' a number of areas of Raystede.

A number of those volunteers are now helping us regularly in a variety of roles. Team Picnic can't wait to get back and finish off the playground.

We now have 300 volunteers across all our sites, which is amazing. They have so many different skills and experiences that we are so fortunate that they want to use to help us.

We are still recruiting more and are currently seeking two volunteers per day to help in Aviaries and this is going really well with lots of interest. We are also looking to have a group in from a local company to help with deep cleaning some of the Aviaries.

If you know of anyone who would like to volunteer, then please let us know.

Many thanks,  
*Heidi and Linda*



Big Help Out - 7 June 2024

# REST Green Committee

Raystede's Environmental and Sustainability Team (REST) consists of staff who have volunteered to be part of this group to look at making Raystede a more environmentally friendly and sustainable charity.

The team is going to aim to:

- Inspire Raystede to minimise its environmental impact as much as possible
- Improve communication around environmental impact and sustainability
- Influence others to think creatively about sustainability using the three concepts of:
  - o Reuse: Using a product for its original purpose in a new place or way.
  - o Recycle: Converting existing items into new products.
  - o Repurpose: Finding a new purpose for an already existing material

We are currently looking at various quick wins across Raystede, such as turning off electrical devices when they aren't being used, being clearer about what can be recycled, and looking at some baseline data around where we are using most of our electricity.

The team meets quarterly throughout the year and if you'd like to get involved and join us then please pop in and see me, or drop me an email.

Heidi

## Welcome and Goodbye

### Welcome

Louise Hobden	Fundraising Team Coordinator
Christopher Shepherd	Estates Assistant
Amelia Thomas	Rehoming Manager
Gemma Burnham-Parkes	Challenge Events Coordinator
Oscar Hardman	Animal Care Assistant - MSACA
Shelly Noir	Retail Assistant
Marie Wright	Driver - Retail (and Aviaries!)
Abigail Barker-Moore	Rehoming Assistant
Charlotte Harman	Animal Care Assistant - MSACA
Tanya Vince	Face to Face Fundraiser
Jamie Laffar	Animal Care Assistant - CFS
Chloe Reed	Animal Care Assistant - Equine
Bethany Lamb	Animal Care Assistant - Equine
Sophie Ball	PA to CEO
Ashvi Sandhu	Finance Officer

### Goodbye

Jason Conrad	Finance Officer
Alex Harman	Events and Community Fundraising Manager
Darcey Brett	Animal Care Assistant - Equine

# Education

When is a yurt not a yurt?

When it becomes a rabbit room, a doggy den or a training tent of course! During recent education events we have converted our yurt into a specialist animal area, enabling us to teach visitors about caring for those animals in a relaxed environment.

At Easter, after completing a trail following the steps on Oliver the rabbit's journey from rescue to rehoming, our Family Learning Day visitors popped into the rabbit room to see examples of good rabbit set ups, practise a healthcheck on a (toy) rabbit and sort good food from bad. May half term saw a dog themed trail, with a doggy den set-up in the yurt to match.

Coming up in the summer is our Animal Olympic trail, where the 'training tent' will be full of mystery objects such as car tyres and paddling pools which our visitors will need to match to animals.

Look out in October half term for a cat cave...



Rabbit room!



Animal Olympics

## Pet Advice in the Community Events (PACE)

Our community team, led by Cat, has been travelling far and wide across Sussex to provide free advice about pet care, adoption and acquisition. With two dog behaviourists and three veterinary nurses now on the team, they are also able to offer expert advice on any dog behaviour issues, as well as performing basic health checks on visiting dogs. They have set up in busy town centres and at popular dog walking spots; they have also attended a range of events such as Paws in the Park and the South of England Show.



Pace event in action



New van

## Posh new pad

We are very happily settling into our shiny new portacabin, and trying our best to keep it looking tidy! Whether it's Cat gliding up the ramp with her gazebo, Gemma gazing out at the terrapin sanctuary for inspiration or Teja enjoying finally having storage space for all her posters and chalk boards, we are very happy bunnies!

The garden is gradually turning back from brown to green and hopefully the old portacabin will soon be providing bonding space for lots more happy bunnies.



The posh new pad!

# Fundraising Team

Meet our new fundraisers!

We are excited to introduce three new team members who have already had a positive impact on fundraising.

Hi, my name is Louise Hobden, and I joined the Fundraising Team on 8 April as the Fundraising Team Coordinator. Previously to this I was a volunteer in the Uckfield charity shop for seven months, working with a fantastic group of people.

As the Fundraising Team Coordinator, my role is to ensure smooth operations and effective communication within the team and with our supporters. I am available onsite from Monday to Friday to assist with any fundraising queries you may have.



Louise

Hi, my name is Gemma, and I joined the Fundraising Team on 15 April as the Challenge Events Coordinator.

Before Raystede, I worked at St Catherine's Hospice in Crawley where I managed challenge and community events, including Christmas Tree Recycling, Christmas Wrapping and an abseil at the Spinnaker Tower.

I've really enjoyed my first few months at Raystede and in that time have managed two abseils and the 50 Miles in May challenge. If you'd like to find out more about events (whether you decide to take part or would like to volunteer!) you can find me in the Fundraising Portacabin.



Gemma

You might have noticed our new Face to Face Fundraiser, Tanya, who also joined us this year. Tanya previously worked for CF Fundraising, so she has a lot of experience both in signing up regular supporters and of Raystede.

Tanya will usually be onsite for one or two days a week but is also working alongside our Community Fundraising Team at community events and at Pets at Home stores in Eastbourne and Newhaven.



Tanya

## Fundraising news

Great news! Individual giving is on the rise with over 1,600 Friends of Raystede and 3,300 animal sponsors, contributing over £37,000 monthly – and it's still growing! We're gearing up to push for even more Friends of Raystede in our next magazine and online campaigns, so stay tuned.

## A Huge Thank You

A massive shoutout to our excellent animal care teams who make our Friends Days and Sponsor tours possible. These unique events are a big reason our supporters stick with us and continue to donate.

## 50 Miles in May

Our supporters raised an astounding £7,741. We're looking forward to running the challenge again next summer.

# Fundraising continued

## Gifts in Wills Success

We've had a fantastic start to this financial year with £248,000 already received since 1 April 2024. Plus, over £1 million is confirmed to come to Raystede once estates are finalised. Last year was record-breaking, with £1.8 million received, and we're hoping for another great year!

## Wills Campaign Recruitment

Our June social media campaign to promote free Wills services was a hit, with over 140 people inquiring about writing their Wills for free using the National Free Wills Network. Since our last two campaigns, 44 people have confirmed a gift in their Will to Raystede, totalling over £250,000!

## Learn More About Gifts in Wills

Emily, our Gifts in Wills and In-memory Fundraiser, was recently featured on the Legacy Fundraising Chat podcast, where she discussed the importance of Gifts in Wills and our successes with the National Free Wills Network. Check it out if you'd like to learn more!

## Free Wills Service

Interested in writing or updating your Will for free? Visit [www.raystede.org/free-wills](http://www.raystede.org/free-wills), contact Emily directly, email [legacy@raystede.org](mailto:legacy@raystede.org), or call 01825 627086.

## Fundraising and Volunteer Opportunities

We are gearing up for Christmas!

So far, we have Eastbourne and Newhaven Pets at Home stores for the Santa Paws appeal, and we are lucky enough to have been chosen to host at the Royal Victoria Place shopping centre in Tunbridge Wells every weekend in December. We'll engage the public with fun animal-themed costumes and their giant 12ft tall Christmas bear. Visitors can donate and take pictures with the bear using our props.

We need your help to make this a success! If you'd like to volunteer for our bear collection, fetes and fairs, or Santa Paws appeal, please email [fundraising@raystede.org](mailto:fundraising@raystede.org).



We would like to say a big thank you to Pam Thompson! Pam is a volunteer who has helped out on many occasions with various community fundraising events.

Pam's particular volunteer interest is in talks and tours and she has shadowed with for some time now. Pam led her first tour on 22 June for 1<sup>st</sup> Hellingly Brownies and was fantastic! Pam really engaged with the Brownies and gave them lots of interesting facts about Raystede along the tour. Pam did her first solo talk on 12 July for Framfield and Blackboys WI. Pam will be brilliant as she is passionate about Raystede and is a natural with people.

If there are any other volunteers who would like to do talks and tours, please contact Sue Suckling.



Coming up soon!

## Digital Appeal for Mags

Keep your eyes peeled for our digital appeal for Mags, one of our new horses, which will go out at the end of August. We're aiming to raise funds for his immediate and ongoing care.

## August i360 Abseil

There are still places available. If you can't make it, we'll run another abseil next May.

## September Wing Walk

A few spots are left. Sign up before mid-August to join in!

## Brighton Marathon and London

Landmarks Half-Marathon  
These events will take place in April 2025.

# Commercial & Visitor Operations

Happy birthday to our shops!

We recently celebrated the first birthdays of our Uckfield and Hailsham charity shops.

## Uckfield shop

On Thursday 2 May, we were joined for the celebrations by the Deputy Mayor of Uckfield, Councillor Donna French, along with our Vice President, Jonathan Vine-Hall, Trustee Helen Paxton, other guests from the local community, shoppers and Raystede staff and volunteers.

During its first year, the shop has welcomed 35,000 customers and raised £155,000, enough to pay for 3 ½ weeks of all Raystede's animal care and education services.

Our shop volunteers have collectively given 3,632 of their hours to help sort, steam and display all the donated goods at the Uckfield shop.

Some of the unusual items donated have included a digeridoo from Australia, a pair of circus clown stilts complete with matching stilt pants for the clown as well as a trio of rare Delft pottery cottages which were sold through our eBay shop.

Our Uckfield shop is dog friendly and on a regular basis welcomes an array of dogs who come for their doggie treats. The doggies all know where they are kept, and they appear at the end of the counter waiting for their treats!

We are delighted to be part of the Uckfield community and have been made very welcome.



Uckfield birthday celebrations

## Hailsham shop

Hailsham's first birthday celebrations took place on Wednesday 12 June and we welcomed our Honorary President, Morgan Williams, the Mayor of Hailsham, Cllr Paul Holbrook, and other special guests from the local community along with customers and Raystede staff and volunteers.

Since opening, the shop has welcomed 30,000 shoppers and raised £134,000, enough to pay for three weeks of all Raystede's animal care and education services.

The shop's success wouldn't have been possible without an incredible amount of hard work from the Hailsham staff and our 17 volunteers who are invaluable in everything they do from sorting stock and making the shop look so inviting to providing a warm and friendly welcome to all our customers. Between them, they have gifted 3,078 hours of their time to our Hailsham shop – thank you!

All our charity shops are dog-friendly, and our Hailsham shop is now providing some stocks of pet goods, treats, toys, etc. so please pop in and have a look.



Hailsham birthday celebrations



# eBay and Café Raystede

We're delighted to have so many happy customers and 1.3k followers to our Raystede eBay shop.

We've launched two new campaigns this year – vintage clothing, bags and shoes and across the summer, we've added our collection of wedding and formal wear. Sales are going well.

Recently, some of our best sellers have been a set of solid silver coins depicting the ancient counties of England, which sold for just under £900, the limited edition of 3 BOLS KLM Delft houses, which sold for just under £800, and a selection of scrap jewellery which raised a further £700.

Here is some of the lovely feedback we have received:

*"This was one of the best transactions I have ever purchased. Excellent communication, items exactly as described, fast dispatch. A big thank you for the person who packaged my dragons. Each individual item, had been wrapped with so much care and attention, they all arrived in perfect condition. Which is often very rare when ordering job lots of this number. Would highly recommend this seller, and would definitely buy from again, especially as the money is going to such a good cause."*

*"Wonderfully & securely packed for its journey and so so pleased with the friendly & reliable service. I am proud to support this Charity & credit to all those involved - keep up the good work!! :)"*

*"Super speedy delivery and great communications as always. Book was very well protected which is greatly appreciated. Will buy from again and highly recommend this great seller and am happy to support such a worthy cause."*

*"Lovely items, as described. Really good communication from seller, items safely and securely packaged in recycled box with shredded paper. Brilliant!"*



The Raystede Café kitchen has had a refit, we are over the moon with the outcome. Whilst we have been closed, we have added some new sandwiches, salads and scooping ice cream. We are so pleased to be back!



New-look kitchen!

# Marketing

The Marketing Team has had a busy few months working with pretty much all the Raystede teams, including our mini rehoming campaigns – Wheel Wednesday, Saturday-Saturday and Jolly Gerbils in July! We worked closely with Smalls and Education on Rabbit Awareness Week and Project Terrapin, as well as helping Fundraising to market 50 Miles in May and their challenge events. It was great to be involved in the first birthday celebrations for the Uckfield and Hailsham shops.

Plus, we have been doing lots of PR and raising awareness of our work through the local media, highlights being the Goodwoof coverage and live radio broadcast at Raystede below.

## Elder is a STAR at Goodwoof

Raystede was approached by the Mars Petcare initiative, The Adoption Mission, for one of our rescue dogs to be involved in the opening parade of Goodwoof Festival on Saturday 18 May 2024. They had seen our video of former STAR dog, Elder, we approached his adopters and they agreed to take part and be a Raystede ambassador. Co-ordination, briefing and on the day support was provided by Simon from the Marketing Team.

For participating in the event, Mars Petcare also donated £5,000 to Raystede. With input from Rehoming and Kennels, we decided that this would be used to cover the fees for any STAR dogs that were successfully adopted.

Elder was an absolute STAR on the day. Along with his adopters, he had the honor of leading the opening parade. He took all the media attention in his stride, promoting rescue centre adoption and had lots of cuddles with everyone he met, including TV presenter, Clare Balding.



Elder leading the opening parade!



Simon and Elder

## Raystede on the radio

We were delighted to host a live broadcast by Ashdown Radio at Raystede on Wednesday 17 July. A huge thank you to everyone that spoke on the show, you were all brilliant and it hopefully gave listeners a great overview of the real variety of work that goes on at Raystede. Thanks to Amelia, Meg, Val, Matt, Gemma P, Mia plus volunteers, Marguerite and Sam, and also Zara along with one of our young fundraisers, 10-year-old Arthur.

Thank you also to everyone that put their song selections forward, some clever suggestions and I'm sure we could have filled the whole show!

If you weren't able to listen live then you can enjoy all three hours of the show via this link:

<https://www.ashdownradio.com/player/on-demand/east-sussex-today-interviews/>

## New vid on the block

Lucy has put together a new Raystede video, detailing the huge variety of animals we care for, the numerous services we provide, a little about our history, Peaceways and how people can get involved.

It is available on our YouTube channel - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ce6\\_b36Qtw&t=6s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ce6_b36Qtw&t=6s) and in the Photo and Video Library on the P Drive - P:\Marketing-Fundraising\Videos\Who we are video 2024.

Please feel free to use this video. If you need any edited versions, please contact Lucy at [laust@raystede.org](mailto:laust@raystede.org).

# Chief Constable visits Raystede

We were delighted to welcome the Chief Constable of Sussex Police, Jo Shiner, to Raystede recently where she learnt more about our work helping both animals and pet owners right across Sussex.

During a tour of the Kennels, the Chief Constable met two-year-old Husky, Aria, currently looking for her forever home. The tour also took in the new terrapin sanctuary and the Aviaries and we also told her about our Break Away scheme.

Commenting on her visit, the Chief Constable said, "I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to Raystede. It really was time very well spent and as an animal lover and someone with a keen interest in animal welfare, I was in my element. The dedication of the staff and volunteers and the fantastic care provided to animals of all kinds is truly inspiring. Initiatives like the Break Away scheme really are essential for community support, ensuring that animals and their owners receive the care they need during difficult times!"



# Mayor's reception for animal welfare champions

Some of the Raystede team attended a reception on Tuesday 23 April hosted by the Mayor of Brighton and Hove and celebrity vet, Dr Marc Abraham OBE, that celebrated the work of animal welfare champions in Sussex.

The event highlighted many of the common challenges facing the sector but was also a good opportunity to discuss the great work being done across all areas including advocacy, campaigning, veterinary, wildlife rehabilitation and rescue.



# 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