

Operations Report – 2017

2017 marked the 120th year of the Society which was founded in 1897 as the Isle of Man S.P.C.A.



Highlights

Animal cruelty: we helped the Isle of Man Constabulary, over an 18-month period, to bring successful prosecutions against two individuals for animal cruelty. The first case involved a West Highland Terrier, below, who was successfully rehomed on the Island; and the second involved several birds and animals, including two Harris Hawks and two small dogs. The hawks were rehomed to a falconry centre in the North West of England, and the dogs were rehomed by the Dogs Trust in the South of England (they had distinctive markings and we were concerned that their previous owner would recognise them if they were rehomed on the Island).



The number of animals needing to be rescued reduced compared to previous years. This is largely due to the support received from other agencies, such as the Wild Bird Aid, and members of the public taking injured wildlife directly to a veterinarian at our request.

	Rescues	Welfare Reports
2017	488	135
2016	629	201
2015	642	222

Some welfare cases, such as the ones described above, can take a long time to resolve, and many cases require several follow-up visits. It is pleasing to see a reduction in reports of cruelty and neglect.

Animal Welfare: we played an active role in the Animal Welfare Act forum, working alongside other agencies such as DEFA, the NFU and the Wildlife Park. The Act will be presented to Tynwald as part of the 2018/19 legislative programme, and it will provide a framework for animal welfare on the Island rather than an exhaustive list of prohibited or prescribed activities relating to animals. It will enable secondary legislation to be drafted, in the form of 'Orders', which will be more specific. For example, one Order is likely to outline the requirements for animal sanctuaries/shelters, and another is likely to place more constraints on the sale of puppies.

The Act will not provide non-Governmental agencies, like us, with more powers to prosecute or enter property, but it will enable us to issue improvement notices that incorporate the requirements of the 'Five Freedoms' (requiring an animal's wellbeing and environment to be considered). Under the current legislation we have to prove that cruelty has actually taken place.

Education: we continue to believe that prevention is better than cure, and giving people advice about animal care and helping them be good owners and carers is better than simply providing a safety net once a problem has developed.

- The staff team continue to undertake professional development/qualifications, so that they can give sound advice to the public.
- The Animal Care in the Community project (funded by the Co-Op) continues to provide an outreach service to members of the public who may struggle to go to a vet for advice.
- Our Educational Specialist, Debbie Dixon, is now funded by the Elizabeth Clucas Trust, and she delivers bespoke weekly sessions to the Island's secondary schools and UCM. These sessions are both therapeutic and educational, and the young people gain a respect for, and an understanding of, the animals they encounter on their visits.
- Ard Jerkyll also welcomed various Scout, Brownie and Girl Guide groups over the year, and staff attended several school assemblies.

Fundraising: we recruited a Fundraising Manager, Kerry Gascoyne, in April 2017. Kerry's priorities have been to develop a calendar of fundraising activities (with new events including 'Dress up as an Animal Day' and 'Paws for Afternoon Tea') and to engage with potential donors/fundraisers, be they individuals or part of the local business community. Kerry has brought a great deal to the role, and we had our most successful Christmas campaign to-date which was boosted by a free advert on Manx Radio; and Kerry makes the most of her monthly ManxSPCA slot on Manx Radio to promote the work of the Society.

Our fundraised income for the year amounted to £120,000 and this was generously pound-matched by the Scheinberg Family.



'Fake versus real' fur campaign: the Society responded to the increased use of real fur in fashion, particularly the use of fur pom-poms on hats and keyrings, by raising awareness of the issue in the local media. Many people simply did not think that a real fur product could be so cheap, and were horrified to think that they had purchased racoon-dog, fox or rabbit fur that had been cruelly farmed in countries like China and Romania.

The Chill-Out Rooms: we had to source additional grants (from the Madenski Trust and Pedigree) to supplement the 'seed' funding from Support Adoption for Pets/Pets at Home, and amend our original plans, and so this new building has taken several years to come to fruition.

The rooms have been in full use since the end of the year, and we have been using corporate volunteers to apply the finishing touches – Manx Telecom painted the inside, PWC painted the outside, and Microgaming painted the fencing!

The Tearooms: the running of the Tearooms was taken in-house in February 2017. Its full-time staff members, Tracey Smith and Carolyn Hurst, are now employed by the Society and they work alongside a small team of 'sessional' staff. The premises were refurbished and the menu refreshed, a loyalty scheme was introduced and dogs permitted into the conservatory, but the road closures at B&Q and in Foxdale took their toll on the year's takings.

The Tearooms now makes a small profit, and it helps to make Ard Jerkyll a 'destination' for visitors.

Our Animals in 2017

Kennels

The number of dogs admitted was less than in the previous two years:

2015	2016	2017
72	79	60

This can be attributed in part to increased support for people who initially wish to rehome their dogs for behavioural reasons, and a number of 'home to home' adoptions. Lyn Renshaw has played a pivotal role in this, having become more 'hands-on' in the Kennels during 2017.



Staffordshire Bull Terriers are no longer in our top five for breeds admitted, with top spot going to Border Collies (15 in 2017) and terriers (11).

Buddy, left, was with us for the whole of 2017, because he had a host of behavioural issues including a phobia of cars and children. His has now been adopted, but his new family have spent the past six months working with us to gain his trust and to build his confidence.

Our other 'long-term-stay' dog, another Collie called JT, is currently in a temporary foster home.

The out-of-hours Dog Warden service provided by the Society ceased in June 2017. We were providing the majority of the service for free, and staff were attending call-outs, alone, at all hours of the night. The Kennels still accommodates dogs brought to it by the DEFA Dog Warden and by members of the public, and it will collect stray dogs during the day at week-ends when there is no DEFA service.

Cattery

The number of cats rescued was higher than in previous years, largely due to the increased amount of Trap, Neuter, Return (TNR) activity undertaken with feral cats (with funding from the Manx Lottery). Feral hot-spots were Patrick (43 cats and kittens), Sulby, Laxey and Jurby.

2015	2016	2017
338	362	433



Little Gwen, pictured, came to us covered in black tar having been found on a building site. It took hours of careful washing to remove the tar, and then several weeks to restore Gwen back to full health ... before she was adopted.

We have revised some of our rehoming policies, and there is more flexibility around rehoming single kittens. We no longer use the term 'Can't be rehomed to Douglas' and will assess each potential adopter on a case-by-case basis.



Small Animals Unit

The number of rabbits and 'small furrries' (and hedgehogs) admitted was less than in previous years. It would be good to attribute this to a better awareness of the commitment needed to look after a rabbit, but we can't be sure.

2015	2016	2017
80	110	78

Aviary

The number of birds admitted was less than in previous years, with other agencies supporting our work and helping to care for the smaller birds.

2015	2016	2017
428	449	344

Cockerels continue to be a problem, as do peacocks. We are seeing more and more of these birds on the loose, often in urban areas, with no apparent owners.

Sheep and Seals

Ard Jerkyll is not really equipped to look after larger mammals, but we do our best. We cared for four sheep, and we continue to monitor the feral flock at Tholt-e-Will.

We received 58 calls about seals from the public, with pups needing to take refuge on rocks and beaches from the stormy weather in October and November. We adopted a 'watch and wait' policy with most of the pups, and brought just four to Ard Jerkyl for veterinary attention. One died almost straight away from a respiratory infection; one (with an injured flipper) was transported to Scotland to a specialist marine sanctuary and she has since been released; and two stayed with us for several weeks and were eventually released on the East coast.



Plans for 2018

We have two main challenges – making the ManxSPCA more financially sustainable, and the positives and negatives associated with social media.

We are still looking for suitable premises in the South of the Island for a third charity shop, but plans are well developed for:

- doubling the amount of dog boarding pens;
- creating an overflow car park so that we can make full use of the Play Barn for our own events, and rent it out to other users;
- providing a microchipping service.

Social media helps us on many levels – we promote our animals through it, we let people know about our events through it, and we receive donations through it. But there is a small group of detractors who use it inappropriately and who seem to forget that, as animal lovers and respecters, we all want the same thing – the best possible outcomes for animals, be they companion, wild, farm or feral. We all need to be tolerant of differing opinions, have mutual respect, and work together to achieve our goals.

Juana Warburton
General Manager
May 2018