

Newsletter

ROCHDALE ANIMAL CENTRE



NEW COLLAR
ON TRIAL



AGM in close up
CHRISTMAS APPROACHES...
GUINEA PIG CARE
SPECIAL FEATURE



ROCHDALE ANIMAL CENTRE

Welcome

The RSPCA faces a daunting task in trying to combat cruelty and to help animals. Recent floods saw teams of inspectors rescuing hundreds of farm animals from the floodwater. Many people saw reports in the press and on television of the dreadful incident where a horse was drowned at the Appleby Horse Fair. The RSPCA worked tirelessly in partnership with the police and a man has now been arrested and charged with an offence under the Animals Act. These and many other actions show just how hard the RSPCA works to protect vulnerable animals.

As we approach Christmas I can reflect upon the progress we have made to help so many animals who need our compassion and care. Animals are so innocent and trusting it is difficult to understand how humans can hurt and abuse them. I feel very honoured to know so many good people who join with us to fight cruelty wherever it occurs. Our staff in the Animal Centre and our shops, our volunteers and supporters, the inspectors and animal collection officers and my



friends in the national society. All such wonderful people who are determined to help animals in any way that they can. On behalf of all the animals we have helped this year I would like to say thank you. I know we can count on you in 2008.

David Canavan
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

Thank you

Our last newsletter carried an appeal for membership of the Rochdale Animal Centre. If you responded to our appeal and became a Friend of the Centre, thank you so very much. For those of you who didn't - take another look at our leaflet (see below) and please consider joining.



We are often asked about the difference between the RSPCA national society and the local branches. Doesn't money collected by the RSPCA go to the branches? The answer is no. The RSPCA nationally performs a vital role in canvassing political support, and taking legal and other actions on a national and international level to support animal welfare. It also trains and provides both inspectors and animal collection officers to be the front line for cruelty cases covering the whole country but the Rochdale and district Branch, like all other Branches, has to find its own finance.

If you call in at the Centre you will usually be greeted by one of our staff. They are all dedicated and hardworking - and paid, not by RSPCA headquarters, but from local Centre funds. Worth their weight in gold, our staff are all fully trained and put in long hours, (sometimes working through the night), they often deal with harrowing cruelty cases, ensure the animals in residence are as happy as possible (and on top of all that they have to deal with abuse from some of the public - but that's another story). As well as the staff working in our five shops and the Animal Centre, a lot of work is done by volunteers, trustees and other supporters. As a Friend of the Centre, you play a crucial role in helping this whole team to function.

TO BECOME A FRIEND OF THE CENTRE please pick up a leaflet from one of our shops or from the Centre. You can also leave a message - tel 01706 861897 or receive a pdf version of the leaflet by emailing rspcarochdale@btconnect.com

RSPCA trials new cat collar



We all want to see more wild birds around the district. The sing-song melodies of our smaller birds are a true delight. There are encouraging signs that some species are coming back after many years of decline but there is one big problem... and yes you've guessed it - our favourite friend - the cat.

Alert animal lovers everywhere know they should have a collar with a bell attached but - well, it's got its own problems. To illustrate the point, the picture on the right shows a cat brought into the Centre only a few days ago with severe damage to her body caused by a fixed collar. The cat got her leg up through the collar but got it trapped (its owners just turned a blind eye). Some collars spring loose (coming off by accident) and are often quite expensive to replace.

A new solution to the problem has been developed and the RSPCA are trialling it now.



A special post-surgery collar had to be put on Tilley Flop

The collar is inexpensive and, if it receives approval, it will be great news for our bird population. It is estimated cats kill a staggering 50 million small birds every year so we will follow this trial closely and, if successful, we will be urging every cat owner to get one.



Do you remember Oscar from our June Newsletter?

He's a big lad and still with us but unfortunately his close friend Bella has just passed away. Bella came to us as a cruelty case and we put her with Oscar where they became inseparable friends. Wherever Oscar was, Bella was lying with him. Poor Bella had a miserable life but she finally found contentment and reassurance at big Oscar's side during her last months. Note: We never got chance to photograph Bella - she was always snuggled into Oscar. Oscar will be feeling a bit lonely but he is already making eyes at the lonely hearts club across the other side of his room. If you would like to give him a home, please ring us. Oscar is a very large rabbit, a real handful but a great character.

We also urge owners to keep their pets inside at night and early in the morning when many birds are feeding. It's safer for the cats too as there are many predators around at those times. Also many cats are killed during the night and at dawn, as cars, taxis and other traffic tend to speed along empty roads.



Braveheart

We have just found ourselves with a new resident! Two of our staff were returning to the Centre when they saw a man near the door with what looked like a towel in his hands. When he saw our staff he hurled the towel into the road, jumped into a blue car and sped off. A terrified cat ran out of the towel and shot under a parked car. Our staff managed to coax him out and found the most fabulous tabby cat. Having being so meanly treated by his former owner he is astonished by all the attention he is now getting!



With celebrations approaching...



We don't want to spoil your New Year celebrations (I'm sure we won't) but if you are thinking of getting fireworks please remember to leave the ones that bang well alone.

OK we're preaching to the converted and we know lots of you will be keeping your pets close to you, perhaps close to the TV with the sound up, but

there are going to be animals – pets, farm animals, wild creatures and birds – terrified out of their wits on New Year Eve. If we get the chance to bring the subject up with our neighbours we always do – they know what we are going to say before we say it. We hope you will do the same – the more people that know, the better!

Snakes alive!

Over the last few months we have dealt with many different creatures but none that we dare hardly feed!

Only joking – Chantal, our Deputy Manager is an expert with exotic animals and is keeping a close eye on our latest resident.



We have named her

s...s...s...Selina. She is a young Californian King snake who was found in the road. Although we are not set up for exotics we have carefully provided the correct environment for her and as she has just shed her skin, we think she is happily settling down. We have already got a new owner ready for her so she will be re-homed s...s...soon.

WANTED Volunteers (hours – completely up to you) for:

RETAIL – Internet sales administration: a very interesting activity for those with some computer knowledge.

ELECTRICAL – Checking electrical items coming in to our shops (PAT testing). Would suit someone with a qualification in electrics.

FUNDRAISING activities in the community – various, interesting.

Please ring **07702 620 585** between 9.00–500pm.

AGM in close up

As we reported in our last newsletter, at this year's Annual General Meeting we were pleased to welcome the Mayor, Councillor Peter Evans, and Mayoress, Helen Evans. The event was planned as a social event. AGM formalities were kept to a minimum and there were opportunities to look around the Centre, see some of the animals and then enjoy a buffet supper.

Until last year we had to use other venues for the AGM, but with our rebuilt Animal Centre there is now a room big enough for the meeting. We had planned the AGM as an event and we were delighted that so many of you – over 70 people, came along.

The Mayor gave a very interesting talk about his life-long love of animals. His contact, as a former policeman, with those who abused animals was always a difficult and challenging issue for him to deal with. More recently his own family had to deal with a cruel attack on one of their pets and he expressed great empathy for the aims and ideals of the RSPCA.

Financially the Centre is short of money, as always. The year has been a difficult one as costs continue to rise on all sides. Also the Centre was out of action during the summer with the Calici cat virus.

However, there is considerable optimism for the year ahead. The

facilities for distressed animals at the Centre are excellent and our rehoming operations are working extremely well.

The Centre deals with all kinds of animals in distress, from snakes, ferrets, hens, birds, dogs, cats to much larger animals. We have made an agreement with a well established

animal sanctuary in Cheshire who will take the larger animals, (those unsuitable for our town centre premises) to their sanctuary. This means they can be outdoors in rolling fields in the company of other large animals and still be available for rehoming if they are suitable. This is good news for us and we hope to strengthen our relationship with the sanctuary during 2008.

Our fundraising operations are going well, with many new members – both private and business joining us. We still have a long way to go but the year has seen the start of many new initiatives.



The Mayor, Councillor Peter Evans and Centre Manager Jean Spencer



Chantal Taylor



The Mayor with Trustees Peter Chappel and Denise Broadbent



Julia Bache



Hannah Hunter



Neil Outram



Jackie Brooks



Linda King



Margaret Darling



Richard Leech



Clare Hughes



Neil Kay



Lyndsey Wroe



Shirley Marchant

There were lots of happy faces at our awards ceremony on AGM night.

Latest sponsor

We are pleased to report that Zen Internet have recently joined us as sponsors. Zen, with headquarters in Rochdale, provides internet access for public and business users and is one of the best Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in the country, regularly scooping prestigious industry awards.

- Some of this years awards -
- 'UK's Best Broadband' - *Sunday Times*.
- 'Best Small ISP' - *PC Advisor*,
- 'Best Mac-friendly ISP' - *MacWorld*.
- 'Most Reliable ISP' - *PC Advisor*, 'Best Business Email' - *ISPA Awards*.

Zen have a reputation for reliability and quality and have strong links with the local community. They have chosen to invest in the local community further, planning brand new and bigger headquarters in Rochdale. Their support for the Rochdale RSPCA is extremely welcome.



"Unsurpassed Service and Reliability" (Sunday Times)



For more information about Zen Internet's award winning range of services go to www.zen.co.uk

Richard Tang, Managing Director and Founder of Zen Internet receives a membership plaque from Chairman of the Board of Trustees, David Canavan.

How to look after your guinea pigs



What do guinea pigs need?

- Companionship – to be with other guinea pigs (not rabbits).
- Feeding twice a day, with a mixture of meadow hay, green stuff, pellets, washed fruit and vegetables.
- A constant supply of fresh, clean drinking water in a drip feed bottle with a metal spout.
- A large weatherproof home kept off the ground, out of direct sunlight and strong winds. It should be moved to an indoor area or porch in cold weather.

- A separate sleeping area for each animal inside the home.
- A clean layer of wood chippings on the floor of their home and plenty of soft hay for bedding and burrowing.
- Daily exercise in a grassy area safe from predators and an indoor run in cold weather.
- Their home to be cleaned every day and bedding changed weekly.
- A gnawing block to wear down long teeth.
- To be brushed every day if they have a long or rough-haired coat.
- Some quiet time alone or with other guinea pigs every day.
- To be taken to a vet if they are ill or injured.
- To be looked after when you are on holiday.

Behaviour

In the wild, guinea pigs live in close family groups, and it is unkind to keep one guinea pig. Companionship is essential, but two adult guinea pigs that don't know each other may fight, so choose two young littermates of the same sex, a father and son, or mother and daughter. Guinea pigs have a basic need to graze and should have regular access to a grassy area.

Guinea pigs also need to have their own sleeping area. Guinea pigs live for up to seven years.

Handling

Approach the guinea pig from the front and on its level. Pick it up using both hands, one around the hindquarters, the other around its shoulders (for a young guinea pig) or around its chest (for an adult). Guinea pigs may become upset by too much handling.

Health

Guinea pigs should be checked regularly for overgrown claws and teeth. Both can be trimmed by a vet. Too much scratching results from skin problems and is often caused by mites or lice. Your vet can provide suitable treatment for these.

Long-haired guinea pigs in particular may suffer from the potentially fatal disease flystrike, caused by flies laying eggs in soiled fur. Make sure the guinea pigs' home is cleaned every day and bedding changed regularly. If a guinea pig develops bald patches on its face, this could indicate the fungal disease ringworm. Seek veterinary advice straight away.

Guinea pigs can suffer from vitamin C deficiency, which causes weight loss, weakness and swollen joints. Ask your vet for advice on how to provide your guinea pigs with an adequate supply of this vitamin. If you have any concerns about your guinea pigs' health, ask your vet for advice.

We need your old phone

We receive £3 for every mobile phone recycled through us.

They don't need to be working. Please hand yours in to the Animal Centre on Redcross Street or one of the following RSPCA Charity shops:

Rochdale: 97 Yorkshire Street

Ashton-under-Lyne: 21 Market Avenue

Heywood: 36 Market Street

Littleborough: 23 Harehill Road

Middleton: 1 Middleton Gardens



www.foneaid.org.uk

What to do if you find a stray dog...



Many healthy dogs from caring homes become separated from their owners for a wide variety of reasons and become part of the stray dogs statistics.

Between the Council and the Police there are clear procedures for dealing with stray dogs. They are not actually the responsibility of the RSPCA and we are not licenced to handle them. Here is what you should do:

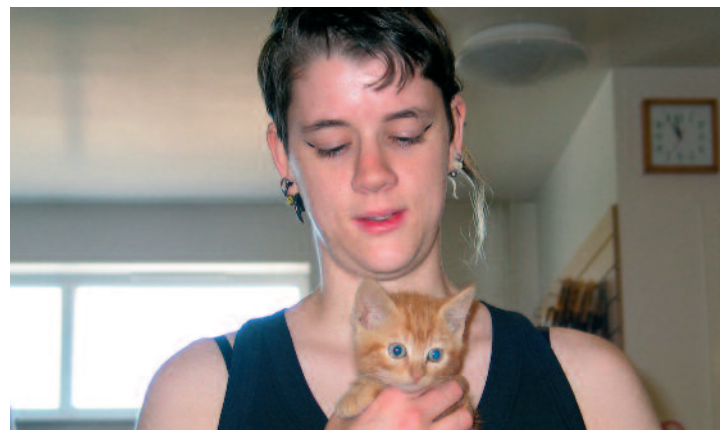
Contact your local Dog Warden. The Council takes responsibility (during working hours) and they will come and collect the animal. Outside working hours, take the dog to your Police Station. The Police have a duty to accept strays but they don't go out to collect them.

Although owners are legally required to ensure their dogs wear a collar and tag, we recommend microchipping as a more permanent and better form of identification. In 2005 microchips helped reunite 24% of strays with their owners. We will microchip your pet at the Rochdale Animal Centre anytime during our open hours.

To report an animal in distress: contact 0300 1234 999

CALLS TO OUR CRUELTY AND ADVICE LINE ON THE NEW 0300 NUMBER WILL COST JUST THE SAME AS A NATIONAL NUMBER

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the editor or the RSPCA



Enjoy working with animals? Become a volunteer

Have you thought about it? How it would make you feel? We think you would find it totally engrossing! Your time would be appreciated by every animal you come in to contact with. This is what one volunteer had to say:

“There is always plenty to do at the Animal Centre. Lots of animals are coming and going and it's great when you see them respond to the care we give them”

Heather: volunteer

You will find it a richly rewarding experience and even if you think you can only spare a small amount of time, please ring us to discuss it further.
Ring Jean Spencer 01706 861897 between 9.00–500pm.



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