

NORTHERN IRELAND STAFFORDSHIRE BULL TERRIER RESCUE (NISBTR)

NIC101909

**25 Rockfield Meadows
Carrowdore
Newtownards
Co Down
BT22 2WW**

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT for year ended 31st March 2023

Trustees

NISBTR has three Trustees. Its Trustees are Ms Julie Jenkins (Coordinator), Ms Jenny Frondigoun (Secretary) and Ms Caz Roberts (Treasurer). The Coordinator of the charity has the power to appoint charity trustees. Trustees meet minimally three times per year which includes an Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Previous trustees who served during the year were Mrs Heather Leckey (Secretary) and Ms Tracy Smart (Treasurer) - now resigned.

A private benefit arises for Ms Julie Jenkins (Coordinator) who is paid for 32 hours work per week at the government living wage of £10.42.

Governing Document

Our Governing Document has remained without any changes since the Trustees Committee Meeting and combined AGM held on 30th March 2019. Any changes to the Governing Document will be discussed and voted on at the charity's 2024 AGM.

Aims of the charity

NISBTR has three main aims:

1. To rescue, rehabilitate and find new and loving homes for abandoned, unwanted, neglected and abused Staffordshire Bull Terriers.
2. To raise awareness of the plight of Staffordshire Bull Terriers, the relentless, unnecessary and irresponsible over-breeding of them, and to redress the balance of negative press toward the breed.
3. To actively encourage responsible dog ownership.

Overview of our work

Established 2012, NISBTR is a breed specific dog rescue for Staffordshire Bull Terriers. It is not a 'physical' sanctuary where members of the public can visit as it does not have a

kennelling / boarding facility through choice. All our dogs are placed in loving foster homes for assessment and until such time as we find them a permanent home. To date (05/01/24) NISBTR has rescued and rehomed 224 Staffordshire Bull Terriers.

The charity's address is 25 Rockfield Meadows, Carrowdore, Newtownards, Co Down BT22 2WW. This is the home address of Julie Jenkins (Founder and Coordinator) and where all the charity's business is conducted from.

The dogs that come into our care come from three main sources:

1. Council Dog Pounds (including welfare cases)
2. Other all breed rescues
3. Surrenders from families under exceptional circumstances

If they are not already, all our dogs are spayed and neutered at the earliest possible time to prevent even more unwanted puppies/dogs in the future. Many of our dogs come to us with behavioural issues, some minor, others more serious. We use our extensive experience of working with rescue dogs to correct these issues before they are rehomed by members of the public. We also have a fully qualified dog behaviourist, Mr Gary Holloway, to offer advice and support even post-adoption.

Our trustees and volunteers take every opportunity to encourage responsible dog ownership by members of the public by talking to them at our fundraising and awareness stalls. We also answer any requests for help and advice regarding dog welfare issues such as training and dietary requirements via email and telephone.

Finances and fundraising

All our money is accrued from public donations, fundraising events and donations made by external organisations. Our main fundraising activities include ballots, online auctions, entertainment evenings, car boot sales, street collections, strategically placed collection tins e.g. shops and businesses, the sale of merchandise and fundraising and awareness stalls.

The number of supporters that donate to us via regular monthly payments to our bank account, via Just Giving and other social media platforms continues to increase year by year.

Our main expenditure is veterinary care, food, transportation / vehicle costs along with general running costs.

Ordinary day-to-day expenditure is agreed upon between the Coordinator and Treasurer. Any extraordinary expenses are put forward at our committee meetings or consent via email so that trustees can agree or disagree on them.

The charity's full income and expenditure can be found in our receipts and payments accounts.

Purposes and public benefit

As a charity we remain focused on our purposes and public benefit requirement. Each year we continue to maintain the purpose of NISBTR by continuing to provide a rehoming service to members of the public that also alleviates the cost of kennelling stray and unwanted dogs by city and borough councils throughout Northern Ireland.

We continue to promote humane behaviour towards animals. In addition, we inform and educate members of the public about their legal requirements as dog owners with reference to Dog Control Orders (DCO) and microchipping. Equally importantly, NISBTR has prevented additional abandonment and mistreatment of dogs that would otherwise be made homeless by offering support and advice to current and prospective owners.

Incidental benefits arise for our chosen veterinary surgery Rathgael Veterinary Centre, Bangor, Co Down that provides most of the veterinary care for our dogs. A variety of other veterinary surgeries throughout Northern Ireland also provide veterinary care for our dogs. These benefits are in the form of veterinary fees.

Our charity considers the possibility of harm that may occur if any of our volunteers are bitten by a dog. However, this risk is far outweighed by the benefit of our work. We have never made a claim, but our charity has extensive Public Liability Insurance (PLI) should it ever be needed.

Year ended March 2023 – an overview

*Figures suggest that since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020 the number of households in the UK with dogs has increased from 23% to 34%.

In our Trustees Annual Report year ended March 2022 we made special mention of the fact that we, along with other animal rescues were bracing ourselves for a huge increase in the number of dogs needing to be rehomed due to many families having taken on the responsibility of a dog during lockdown and then realising that as they were returning to the workplace they could no longer look after them properly.

There was a somewhat delayed response however and it was in January 2022 that our charity saw evidence of a huge increase in people contacting us wanting to surrender their dogs. Indeed, in all the 11 years since we were established, the numbers were unprecedented. Time, or rather lack of it, was the most common reason we were given by such families as to why they could no longer keep their dogs. The ever-increasing number of requests for help in rehoming their Staffords continued right throughout the period year ended March 2023.

Increase in veterinary fees had a severe impact on our expenditure. This has led the trustees to the conclusion that an increase in the amount of money we put aside for senior rescue dogs as part of our Senior Stafford Scheme (SSS) should also be increased. This will be discussed at a future Committee Meeting. Also, the cost of dog food continued to rise substantially during this period; in some cases, it had risen by 30%.

Sadly, the decrease in the number of potential adoptive families contacting the charity was a continuing trend. The trustees recognise the need to increase our profile via social media and word-of-mouth to enable us to find more potential homes for our dogs.

Whilst we saw an increase in revenue during the period of year ending March 2023 (a total of £8,605) compared to the previous 12 months audit the charity also experienced a considerable rise in expenditure (a total of £22,812). This was mainly due to the overall increase in running costs (food, diesel, equipment and veterinary bills) and the increase of paid working hours of the charity's Coordinator from 16 hours to 32 hours per week.

The charity has always managed its finances frugally and with great diligence whilst maintaining the highest level and quality of care for its dogs. No overspends have ever been incurred. The financial support the charity has received over the years has been incredible. We continue to receive an enormous amount of financial support from one sponsor: Notorious Brands Ltd (Belfast). The generosity of their patrons has meant that we have been able to offset our rise in expenditure without compromising the services we offer and ultimately the number of dogs we can help.

During the year ended March 2023 our charity received 11 dogs into its care, one of which was a welfare case that had experienced severe neglect and almost died as a result. NISBTR was able to offer the dog everything it needed; a secure and safe foster home, medical care provided by our chosen veterinary surgery, along with compassion and love to return the dog to good health and stability. Many of the dogs that come into our care have experienced neglect and abuse. Rehabilitation is always a priority when it comes to providing care for our dogs. By dealing with their issues whilst in our care, rehoming them becomes far more likely. It also vastly reduces the number of dogs that are returned to us. Those numbers remain very small indeed.

Part of the charity's purpose is to offer help and advice to members of the public who may be witnessing behavioural issues in their dogs. We are very proud to have been able to support more and more families in dealing with their dog's problems based on our vast experience with the breed. There has been a definite increase over the last 12 months in the number of families we have supported in this way and hope that as a result they have been able to manage their pets better meaning they have remained in their homes.

*Statistica Research Department (UK)

Challenges we face as a breed specific dog rescue

Sadly, the plight of Staffordshire Bull Terriers is not a new phenomenon and is reflected throughout the UK. Rescues have been working tirelessly and beyond crisis levels for many, many years and despite their efforts the problem has only gotten worse, not better. Whilst there are some all-breed rescues that do help Staffordshire Bull Terriers there are many that do not. Prior to the establishment of NISBTR there were no breed specific rescues for Staffordshire Bull Terriers in Northern Ireland, and to date, we remain the only one, making our rescue work even more important and in demand.

Achievements to date

Since August 2012 to date (05/01/24) NISBTR has successfully rescued and rehomed 224 Staffordshire Bull Terriers that were in desperate need of our help, all whose lives have been changed for the better. We are immensely proud to maintain contact with most families that have adopted our dogs in the past and provide regular updates on their progress via our social media.

The implementation and funding of our Senior Stafford Scheme (SSS) in 2015 continues

to prove very successful judging by the number of senior dogs that we have rehomed to date. Senior dogs are typically more difficult to rehome than younger ones. Our SSS provides adoptive families up to £500 to go directly to any unexpected veterinary bills that they may receive after adopting a senior dog.

Plans for the future

Despite the many challenges we face as a charity our vision for the future is very optimistic and with the continued support of those who value our charitable work, we will continue to build on the successes we have achieved over the last eleven years. Despite having so few foster families our charity is committed to helping as many dogs as possible in the future.

**PREPARED BY JULIE JENKINS (COORDINATOR)
ON BEHALF OF AND APPROVED BY ALL TRUSTEES**

5th January 2024

Dated 05/01/24

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J Jenkins', written in a cursive style.