

MID ANTRIM ANIMAL SANCTUARY

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Chair's Foreword:

Mid Antrim Animal Sanctuary has a rich history rooted in our dedication to animal welfare. Formed in 1996, the sanctuary began as a modest initiative by a group of passionate volunteers committed to rescuing and caring for abandoned and mistreated animals. Over the years, it has grown significantly, both in terms of its facilities and its impact on the lives of companion animals across Northern Ireland.

Initially, the sanctuary operated on a small scale but as the need for our services grew, the sanctuary expanded its operations, enhancing its infrastructure to accommodate more animals and provide better care. This included the development of improved kennels, veterinary facilities, and areas for animal enrichment and training.

Throughout our history, we have maintained a strong reputation for our compassionate approach to animal welfare. We have forged valuable connections with other animal welfare organisations, local authorities, and the community, which have been crucial in our efforts to rehome animals and advocate for better animal protection laws.

The sanctuary's commitment to animal welfare extends beyond providing shelter and care. We actively engage in public education campaigns to raise awareness about responsible pet ownership and the importance of animal welfare. Community outreach programs have been instrumental in fostering a culture of compassion and empathy towards animals in the local area.

Staff and Volunteers are the backbone of our Sanctuary. Without their dedication we would not be able to provide the high-quality, potentially lifesaving care and support that we do to so many animals in need.

Today, Mid Antrim Animal Sanctuary stands as a testament to the power of dedication and our ongoing efforts to rescue, rehabilitate, and rehome animals, coupled with our advocacy and educational initiatives, ensure that we remain a vital resource for animals in need and a beacon of hope for animal welfare in Northern Ireland.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019).

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Objectives and Activities

Charitable Objectives

Vision	<p>"To work to enhance the Sanctuary's reputation as an excellent example in it's field.</p> <p>To work to ensure all dogs and cats have the best opportunities to be rehomed in forever homes.</p> <p>To work towards a point where at some time in the future no pet animal is unwanted, mistreated, neglected, homeless or needlessly euthanised."</p>
Mission	<p>"Mid Antrim Animal Sanctuary is fully committed to providing care, shelter and enrichment to, and to alleviate the suffering of unwanted, abandoned or vulnerable dogs and cats and to rehome them if possible or otherwise offer them a caring home for life. We also aim to educate the public on the welfare of companion animals."</p>

Public Benefit Statement

In setting our objectives and planning our activities for the 2023/24 year the Trustees gave careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit. To ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the charity's purposes and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries, all our activities are related to the following charitable objectives:

- For the benefit of the public in Northern Ireland, to relieve the suffering and distress of animals in need of rescue, care and attention and in particular, to provide and maintain a sanctuary or other facilities for the reception, care, treatment and re-homing of such animals and by any other means as the directors shall consider appropriate.
- To advance the education of young people and adults on the promotion of animal welfare and the correct treatment of animals by any means as the directors shall consider appropriate.

Our main objectives include:

- To relieve the suffering and distress of animals in need of rescue, care or attention and provide a safe refuge for them until they find their forever home.
- To provide medical attention, enrichment and socialisation activities for all animals in our care.
- The provision of facilities for the animals in our care and provide a home for life, where necessary.
- To allow for the return of any of our animals should they encounter any difficulties in their new home.
- Encouraging interest and advocating the support of animal welfare throughout Northern Ireland.
- The advancement of education in animal welfare.
- To increase and encourage volunteering opportunities so as to complement and supplement the work of the staff.
- To increase the profile of the organisation and ensuring we have sufficient funds to meet our aims and objectives year on year.
- To extend our membership and supporter networks.

There have been no material changes in the objects of the charity since the previous year. In shaping our activities and objectives, the Trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. These benefits are demonstrated through the number of animals successfully re-homed within the year and the reduction in unwanted, neglected, abused and vulnerable animals. These benefits also include the promotion of animal welfare through education, promotion and volunteering opportunities.

None of these purposes give rise to any harm.

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Our Beneficiaries

Our Animals

During this year our activities resulted in the following rehoming achievements:

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Dogs	238	327	342	151	204	171	227
Cats	150	269	326	249	244	248	221

The Trustees noted a satisfactory level of animal re-homing, with a 33% increase in the number of dogs rehomed from 2022/23. However, there was an 11% decrease in the number of cats finding homes, which is a concern. Despite the positive trend in dog rehoming, the Trustees acknowledge that the re-homing environment continues to be challenging and is anticipated to remain so due to factors such as the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, which has resulted in more people surrendering their pets.

Return and Foster Statistics

In line with our objectives, the Sanctuary provides a commitment that all adopted animals may be returned in the event of difficulties in their new homes. This year saw 21 dogs and 24 cats being returned. Once returned, any influencing factors are thoroughly assessed and addressed before considering future re-homing opportunities. Additionally, 9 dogs and 14 cats were placed in foster care due to medical or behavioural issues that impacted their chances of finding permanent homes.

Behavioural Mentoring Plans (BMPs)

Behavioural Mentoring Plans (BMPs) continue to be a cornerstone of our work. These plans are crucial in addressing behavioural issues within the kennel environment and ensuring effective communication among team members and potential adopters. This structured approach helps to achieve the best possible rehoming outcomes by preparing dogs to transition smoothly into their new homes.

Five Domains of Animal Welfare

The Five Domains of Animal Welfare play a significant role in addressing both the physical and mental well-being of our animals. In response to recent research and benchmarking against other organisations, we revised our policy on routine neutering and spaying. These procedures are now timed according to the dog's age and breed, as evidence has shown that early neutering can contribute to behavioural difficulties.

Long-Term Care

At the end of the 2023/24 reporting year, we had a total of 5 long-term dogs who were unable to find a home for various reasons. These dogs have a lifetime sanctuary at our facility, receiving ongoing care and enrichment to ensure their well-being.

Puppy Plan

The Puppy Plan project has been highly successful, providing a structured training schedule for puppies under six months old while in our care. This plan is designed to prepare them for rehoming by introducing them to external environments. Once rehomed, adopters are encouraged to enrol in formal socialization and training classes to continue their puppies' development.

Kitten Plan

In 2022/23, we introduced the Kitten Plan program, which guides adopters through an eight-week post-adoption socialization and habituation plan to prevent fear-based behaviours. This initiative ensures that kittens receive the best start in life and are well-prepared for their new homes.

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Enrichment and Socialization Projects

Our enrichment and socialization projects remain a priority, with a particular focus on ensuring that long-term dogs benefit from these activities. The Dogs Day Out Programme continues to be an integral part of our efforts, providing varied and stimulating experiences for the dogs in our care.

Behavioural Support for Adopters

To support adopters, we offer a Behavioural Talk and Advice Programme, which saw 26 dogs and their owners attend sessions this year. Our 'April's Wish' initiative, funded through specific donations, provides one-on-one behavioural advice in the home environment, further supporting successful rehoming.

Re-homing Packs and Follow-ups

We continue to update our re-homing packs, which offer comprehensive advice for new adopters and an overview of our work. Post-adoption follow-ups are now a regular feature, allowing us to understand and address any challenges that arise, ensuring the long-term success of each adoption.

Our Staff and Volunteers:

During the 2023/24 reporting year, MAAS staff participated in a range of training sessions aimed at enhancing their skills and knowledge across various important areas. These sessions included training on XL Bully legislation updates provided through the Association of Dogs and Cats Homes (ADCH), as well as information on the evolving science of neutering dogs and cats, with guidance from ADCH and the Cats Protection League/Cat Group. Staff also received essential training in First Aid, Fire, and Manual Handling awareness, along with specialized sessions on First Aid for Mental Health and Emergency First Aid. Additionally, a Safe Place awareness session was conducted to raise awareness about maintaining a safe and supportive environment within the organization.

In March 2024, the Board issued two surveys, one to staff and one to volunteers, with the aim of gauging satisfaction levels among those working in the sanctuary and our stores. The surveys were designed to identify areas for improvement and to help shape our future activities. Response rates varied, with the staff survey receiving a generally low level of participation. Despite this, the results have continued to influence our decision-making and remain a driving force behind our focus on continuous improvement.

"Mid Antrim Animal Sanctuary is committed to maintaining the highest standards of care and service by continually reviewing and monitoring the performance of our officers and volunteers. We conduct regular staff meetings to ensure effective communication, provide feedback, and support our team's development. This approach enables us to identify areas for improvement, celebrate successes, and ensure that we are delivering the best possible outcomes for the animals in our care."

Volunteers play a major part in ensuring the organisation meet its aims and objectives. Volunteer inductions continue with a total of 6 held in the year. Once inducted, our volunteers are encouraged to attend staff training on specific animal welfare subjects to enhance both their knowledge and be an integral part of the team meeting all organisational objectives.

The Trustees thank all our volunteers for their work, support, and commitment, in complementing our staff team throughout the reporting period.

Our Communities:

Partnership with Women's Aid ABCL&N

Our partnership with Women's Aid ABCL&N, which serves Antrim, Ballymena, Carrickfergus, Larne, and Newtownabbey, remains robust. Through this agreement, we offer safe refuge for the dogs and cats of Women's Aid service users during transitional periods. Over the past year, we supported six service users, with no impact on the Sanctuary's capacity or our ability to assist other animals. This service is provided at no cost to Women's Aid or the individuals. We have also achieved Safe Place recognition and are recognised as a Safe Employer concerning domestic violence.

Support for Community Organisations and Foodbanks

We continue to support local community organisations and foodbanks by providing pet food donations to six initiatives. Our aim is to help keep pets in their homes and prevent relinquishment, acknowledging the significant joy and comfort animals bring to their owners.

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Charity Shop Contributions

Our charity shop actively supports other homeless organisations by donating unsold clothing items. We also collaborate with foodbanks through the School Uniform scheme, contributing to their efforts in assisting those in need.

Collaborations and Corporate Partnerships

We maintain ongoing collaborations with animal charities and strive to strengthen our relationships with businesses. Our goal is to align with their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategies, enhancing mutual support and impact.

Commitment to Education in Animal Welfare

Over the past year, we have continued to prioritise educational practices as a key aspect of our work in animal welfare. We believe that education is a crucial first step for alleviating the suffering of companion animals and fostering a more compassionate community.

Our outreach included visits to local primary schools, where we engaged with students to discuss animal welfare and well-being. These interactions aimed to instil a sense of responsibility and empathy towards animals from an early age.

These educational efforts represent the first steps in our ongoing mission to enhance the welfare of companion animals and promote a deeper understanding of their needs within the community.

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Our Key Achievements & Impacts

Launch of Our New Activity and Enrichment Area

In September 2023, we were thrilled to officially launch our newly developed activity and enrichment area at Mid Antrim Animal Sanctuary. This exciting development, six years in the making, was made possible after acquiring additional land behind our existing premises. An opening event was attended by volunteers, with a public opening held which was attended by the Mayor of Antrim and Newtownabbey, local councillors and MLA's, and the wider public.

The new facility features:

- Meet and Greet Building: A dedicated space where prospective families can meet and get to know their potential new family members in a comfortable and welcoming environment.
- Puppy Unit: A specialised area for expectant mothers and their pups, including a socialisation space to give them the best possible start in life.
- Living Room Spaces: Designed to help dogs acclimate to indoor living, these environments allow them to socialise in a setting that may be entirely new for some of our residents.
- Sensory Garden: An enclosed, stimulating environment featuring scented plants, play items, and high shelving, providing our cats with a rich, exploratory experience.
- Puppy Run & Agility Course: These areas are designed to offer both physical and mental challenges, helping to keep our dogs healthy and engaged.
- Exercise Runs: Four expansive outdoor spaces where dogs can enjoy the freedom to run and play.
- Cat Garden: A secure and engaging space that offers our feline residents an opportunity to explore, play, and observe the world around them.

Since the official opening, our animals have greatly benefited from the increased exercise and enrichment opportunities provided by these new facilities. The dogs are thriving with the added physical activity and mental stimulation, while the cats are enjoying the freedom to explore their enhanced environments. Moreover, the dedicated meet and greet area has become a vital space where hopeful new families can comfortably interact with and get to know their potential new pets, fostering stronger bonds and more successful adoptions.

These enhancements have been designed to significantly improve the lives of the animals in our care, providing them with the best possible environment during their stay at the Sanctuary. We are deeply grateful to everyone who has supported us over the years, helping to make this transformative development a reality.

Public Access at the Sanctuary

In March 2024, we began opening the Sanctuary to the public every Wednesday and Saturday from 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm. During these hours, visitors can access our kennel yard to view dogs available for rehoming. This open access provides an opportunity for the public to engage with our staff and volunteers, learn about our ongoing work, and gain insights into the operations of the Sanctuary. Following an initial bedding in period, the opening has proven to be a welcome change.

Our Challenges

Closure of our Larne Shop due to fire damage

On February 1st, 2024, Mid Antrim Animal Sanctuary faced a significant setback when a fire devastated our Larne shop, causing irreparable damage to the shop and its contents. Despite this unexpected crisis, our team acted swiftly, negotiating a move to an adjacent site at no additional cost. Thanks to the overwhelming generosity of the community, who provided an influx of donations, and the transfer of stock from our Antrim store, we successfully reopened the Larne shop in March 2024, just over one month after the fire.

The relocation to a larger space has presented an unexpected opportunity. The increased size of the new store has allowed us to explore the potential for a permanent move to a larger, more strategically positioned location. The Board of Trustees is currently evaluating the long-term viability of this option, considering the benefits it could bring to our fundraising efforts and overall mission.

We are immensely grateful for the support we received during this challenging time, which not only enabled us to quickly re-establish our Larne presence but also opened the door to future growth and expansion.

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Volunteer Retention

The current landscape for recruiting and retaining volunteers across Northern Ireland presents significant challenges. Mid Antrim Animal Sanctuary is continuously promoting the benefits of volunteering and actively seeking to expand its volunteer base.

However, this has proven to be difficult due to a variety of factors. Many individuals face time constraints, particularly those balancing work and family commitments, which limits their ability to commit to volunteer work. Additionally, the cost-of-living crisis has led some potential volunteers to seek paid employment over volunteer roles. There is also increased competition for volunteers, as many charitable organisations in Northern Ireland are facing similar shortages and are striving to engage the same pool of willing individuals. Despite these challenges, the Sanctuary remains dedicated to highlighting the rewarding experience of volunteering and the positive impact it has on both the animals and the community, in the hope of inspiring more people to join their team.

Benchmarking and Best Practice

Collaboration with Battersea Dog & Cats Home

In June and July 2023, representatives from Battersea Dogs & Cats Home visited Mid Antrim Animal Sanctuary to learn more about our operations and the current status of animal welfare in Northern Ireland. This visit was an invaluable opportunity to showcase the Sanctuary's approach to animal care and rehoming. Discussions focused on our ongoing initiatives and the unique challenges we face within the region. Moving forward, plans are being developed for collaborative training opportunities, the establishment of bursaries to support staff development, and joint funding applications to enhance our capabilities and broaden our impact. Such partnerships with esteemed organisations like Battersea are essential for sharing knowledge, adopting best practices, and elevating standards of animal welfare across the sector.

Northern Ireland Animal Welfare Forum

In May 2023, the Mid Antrim Animal Sanctuary participated in the Northern Ireland Animal Welfare Forum, a meeting that brought together various animal charities from across the region. This forum provided a platform for discussing prevalent issues, sharing insights, and exploring collaborative solutions to improve animal welfare. Key topics included strategies for addressing the rising number of animal surrenders, enhancing community engagement, and the implementation of unified welfare standards. The forum also explored avenues for collaborative working and resource sharing to ensure a cohesive approach to animal welfare across Northern Ireland. Such collective efforts are crucial in addressing common challenges and driving forward innovative solutions that benefit animals and communities alike.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, Mid Antrim Animal Sanctuary regularly engages in benchmarking activities with other leading organisations within the animal welfare sector. This includes participating in industry conferences, adopting innovative practices observed in other facilities, and incorporating feedback from external reviews into our operational strategies. These efforts ensure that we remain at the forefront of animal welfare, delivering the highest standard of care and support to the animals we serve.

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Financial Review

The Trustees confirm a surplus of net income over expenditure of £194,224. For the financial year, income was £740,955 (2022/3: £538,492), an increase of £202,463. This increase is in the main attributable to unanticipated legacy income.

Total expenditure for the year was £546,731 (2022/3: £489,570 an increase of £57,161. This increase was due to an increase in sanctuary expenditure, running costs and depreciation charges on the asset additions in the year.

Cash reserves (operating reserve, approximately 9 months of operating costs) of £300,000 were maintained as a minimum baseline in the accounts during the financial year.

Given ongoing uncertainty within global financial markets the Trustees continued with a pragmatic approach to investments during the financial year. Liquidity and maintaining cash reserves were considered of greater importance in times of austerity, The Board approved a decision to place £200,000 in fixed term interest bearing accounts to ensure funds are obtaining a return, and were readily available should they be needed.

The worth of the organisation is £1,954,356 at the end of the financial year.

The main income streams for MAAS during the year were charity shops sales, £184,251; and legacies, £324,815 (the two streams providing £509,066 of the total income). Shop income was down from the previous year by an amount of £28,299. Whilst we anticipated growing the retail income the arson attack on our shop in Larne had a significant impact on plans.

Thankfully legacy income was received, which helped mitigate against the challenges in our retail environment. Higher than anticipated, the large legacy amount was received with thanks by MAAS. Legacy income, although unable to fully plan for, is used to supplement the organisation's reserve account which in turn funds the development project and allows for cash reserves. The legacy strategy continues with effective, but compassionate, promotional information, engagement within memory donations and connection to local solicitors. Membership of the Will to Give group continues with a committee position held within the organisation to further promote gifts in wills.

General donations are seeing a continued decrease in returns, when compared to previous years. The context of the cost-of-living crisis, inflationary increases, and a lack of confidence in surplus personal cash are factors contributing to this in the financial year. This trend affects almost all charities and may continue. The Trustees will continue to monitor and find ways to mitigate and diversify income generation and find opportunities within current challenges; as outlined in our new strategic plan.

The Trustees humbly highlight their gratitude to our supporters whose generosity ensures we meet our organisational aims and objectives and public benefit. Our supporters allow us to be an organisation that can progress, plan for the future, and financially thrive.

Elements of expenditure, such as staffing costs, vet bills, property maintenance, all increased in the financial year and is reflective of trends in the external environment.

External economic factors necessitated an uplift in salaries, however investment in staff as the organisation's best asset is recognised by the Trustees. The main building at MAAS is over ten years old and due to this will require regular maintenance moving forwards.

While general running costs increased to some degree it was the continued uplift in gas and electric process that had the most impact both at the Sanctuary and the charity shops. A total of £32,701 was incurred which is accepted as a reflection of the global market at the time, however cost saving measures were implemented in other operational areas to reduce overall expenditures.

During the financial year £372,625 was incurred on the new build development – which was fully funded through prior years donations. Depreciation to the value of £62,039 was allowed for in the reporting period. The Maureen Boal Charitable Trust provided £50,727 which will be used to finalise the completion of the building development, provide protective covering for our rain harvester and surfacing the dog run areas in the next financial year. We are grateful for this generous donation.

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The organisation registered for VAT effective from 1 April 2022, comparative figures for the previous years are inclusive of VAT. Irrecoverable VAT is included in the cost of the items reported in the financial statements.

MAAS has weathered the covid pandemic and a period of national austerity over the past few years. However, based on UK Government communications financial uncertainty will continue with another 'difficult period' expected beyond the financial reporting year. The Trustees are mindful of the challenges presented by these developments in the economic environment. The Trustees will adopt a robust and sustainable management plan ensuring alignment with financial forecasts while meeting organisational aims and objectives.

We anticipate the need for our rehoming services and care for animals, as well as more challenging animals coming into our care, will not decrease and will continue to increase. This will result in ongoing assessments to ensure income generation meets these growing needs. It is acknowledged that we are continuing into another difficult and challenging environment and the need for financial management and, longer-term strategic development, will be at the forefront of the Trustees focus.

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Risk Management

The Trustees have responsibility for oversight of risk control within the organisation. Along with management they review risks on a regular basis. Risks were addressed during each Board meeting, and actions taken to mitigate or control these.

During this reporting period, the following sub committees were in place to address specific organisational matters and risk:

- The Finance and Audit Committee continued to have oversight of the accounting, financial management planning, and the internal and external audit arrangements, as well as associated risks.
- The Governance Group reviewed the Governing Document with necessary amendments ratified by the membership at the December 2023 Annual General Meeting.
- The Trustee Recruitment Group was established to promote, recruit and provide induction training for new Trustees.
- A Field Development Committee managed and reviewed the build and budgetary elements within the project, to its completion and opening.

Examples of risks in this reporting period:

- The risk of insufficient, and uncertain funding. The organisation has mitigated this risk by making provision under the reserves policy. Nine months' worth of overall operating costs are maintained as an absolute minimum baseline level of reserves. In addition over the past few years we have accumulated cash at hand reserves, which are readily available, in order to be able to weather any potential financial situations that would impact our operational viability over a longer-term period.
- An over reliance in charity shop income is also recognised - with a need to build on other income generation streams and diversify where appropriate. This is a strategic initiative to progress from 2024, as highlighted in our new strategic plan.
- An increase in general costs beyond MAAS control. This impacts on expenditure management -creating the potential for an increase in service requirements against a reduction in general donation income. Retained surplus from prior years and unanticipated legacy income will continue to assist in mitigating this risk.
- The Board of Directors decided to have an Organisational Review in the FY23/24. Trustees, Staff and Volunteers took part in this Review to assess if the MAAS Company would benefit from a re-organisation, a preliminary report was produced in Oct 23. This work is ongoing at end Mar 24.
- An increase in demand to take in animals from the general public. The organisation is now operating to a full capacity model which means longer stays for some animals, as well as associated care costs. It is likely this will not see a decrease.
- We have been successfully able to manage and weather the storm of covid and subsequent cost of living increases and a period of austerity in prior years. However, the new UK Government has indicated a further 'difficult period' will be encountered in the coming years. The Board maintains that ensuring cash reserves are built, and management of resources controlled and monitored, is key to addressing this unknown.

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Plans for Future Periods

Increased Capacity for Dogs:

During the 2023/24 reporting year, the Board and its members agreed to transition our kennel facilities to full capacity to address increasing industry-wide pressures on sanctuaries and rehoming centres. This decision, which is being implemented throughout the 2024/25 year, aims to maximize our ability to care for unwanted and vulnerable animals within the limitations of our existing infrastructure.

Following an initial bedding-in period, the transition to full capacity has proven beneficial, allowing the Sanctuary to assist a greater number of animals in need. This strategic approach ensures that our kennel and cattery spaces are utilized effectively, and we can provide shelter to as many animals as possible. Moreover, it enables us to support other sanctuaries by accepting dogs and cats when space permits, and by facilitating emergency rehoming placements when needed. This increased capacity not only enhances our impact within the community but also reinforces our commitment to providing a safe haven for animals who require urgent care and support.

Strategic Plan:

The Board of MAAS will introduce the Mid Antrim Animal Sanctuary Strategic Plan for 2024-2028 to our membership, staff, volunteers, and supporters. This comprehensive plan outlines our vision for creating a world where all companion animals feel loved and cared for, and reaffirms our commitment to providing shelter, care, and enrichment to vulnerable animals.

Over the past decade, the landscape of animal rehoming in Northern Ireland has seen significant changes. There has been an overall trend of fluctuating rehoming rates, influenced by various socio-economic factors.

The COVID-19 pandemic increased the demand for pets, as many sought companionships during lockdowns. However, post-pandemic, there has been a noticeable decline in rehoming rates, exacerbated further by the rising cost of living, which has made it harder for many to afford pet care.

This Strategic Plan will be our roadmap for the coming years, and guided by our core values of wellbeing, empathy, leadership, fulfilment, advocacy, respect, and education, we aim to enhance the welfare of the animals in our care, support our staff and volunteers, and inspire public awareness of animal welfare issues.

Our strategic priorities focus on several key areas to ensure we achieve our mission. In animal welfare, we will implement a holistic wellbeing model, integrating advanced veterinary care, behavioural enrichment, and customised training. Our advocacy efforts will strive to influence progressive animal welfare legislation through public campaigns and coalition building. By enhancing public education and community outreach, we aim to foster responsible pet ownership and increase community engagement through educational programs and volunteer opportunities.

To strengthen our organisational governance, we will enhance Board engagement, ensure transparency, and regularly review our policies. Financial sustainability will be achieved by diversifying revenue streams, strengthening supporter relationships, and implementing cost control measures. Finally, we will focus on operational excellence by optimising resources, adopting best practices, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

We are confident that this strategic plan will guide us in achieving our mission and vision, ensuring a brighter future for all companion animals.

Strategic priorities:

1. Animal Wellbeing (welfare)
2. Influencing Change
3. Public Education and Community Outreach
4. Organisational Governance
5. Financial Sustainability and Growth
6. Operational Excellence and Efficiency

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1. Animal Welfare:

Our Aim: To fully implement a holistic wellbeing model rooted in the five domains of animal welfare, integrating advanced veterinary care, behavioural enrichment, and customised training to ensure each cat and dog receives the essential care and training needed for a smooth transition to their forever homes.

2. Influencing Change:

Our Aim: To actively engage in advocacy efforts to promote and secure the enactment of progressive animal welfare legislation and best practice. This involves coordinating with other animal welfare organisations, and mobilising public support to influence policy changes at all levels.

3. Public Education and Community Outreach:

Our Aim: To enhance our public education and community outreach efforts by developing and delivering educational programs and campaigns that inform the public about animal welfare issues and responsible pet ownership. We will increase community engagement through various outreach activities, including providing volunteering opportunities and offering community support to foster stronger relationships and promote active participation.

4. Organisational Governance:

Our Aim: To implement systems and practices that not only enhance Board engagement and transparency in operations and decision-making but also ensure regular reviews and updates of organisational policies to meet evolving standards and needs.

5. Financial Sustainability and Growth:

Our Aim: To ensure financial stability through the development and expansion of a diverse range of revenue streams. We will strengthen our supporter relationships through effective communication, boosting both engagement and contributions. Additionally, we will regularly review and implement cost control measures to identify cost-saving opportunities, ensuring that these efficiencies do not compromise the quality of care and services provided.

6. Operational Excellence and Efficiency:

Our Aim: To strengthen the charity's operational capabilities and financial sustainability through strategic planning, resource optimisation, and fostering a culture of innovation. This involves investing in our staff and volunteers, utilising technology for better efficiency and fostering a culture of continuous improvement across the organisation.

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Structure, governance and management

Charity Overview:

Mid Antrim Animal Sanctuary was incorporated in April 2017 as a company limited by guarantee under the Companies Act 2006. It is a registered charity with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (Registration Number: NIC106779) and is recognised as a charity by HMRC (Charity Reference: NI01705). The principal office is located at Hurtletoot House, 60 Greystone Road, Antrim, BT41 2QN.

Governing Document:

As a Company Limited by Guarantee (Company Number: NI645182), Mid Antrim Animal Sanctuary is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association, which empower the charity to take any actions that further its charitable objectives or are conducive to achieving them.

Charity's Structure:

In accordance with charity law, the charity is governed by Trustees also serve, in a voluntary capacity, as the company's directors. The Board of Trustees consists of a minimum of three and a maximum of ten members, elected for a four-year term with a maximum service period of eight years.

The Board of Trustees of Mid Antrim Animal Sanctuary consists of dedicated individuals who oversee the organisation's governance and strategic direction. Elected by the Sanctuary's Members, their primary role is to ensure the sanctuary operates within its mission and complies with legal and regulatory requirements while providing financial oversight to build long-term stability.

The Trustees provide strategic leadership, ensuring the Sanctuary's continued growth and sustainability. Day-to-day operations are delegated to the Centre Manager and staff, who are supported by a dedicated team of volunteers. Trustees serve on a voluntary basis, with no remuneration received during the year. Staff salaries are reviewed annually, taking into account various factors.

As a company limited by guarantee, the organisation does not have share capital. Members' liability is limited to a maximum of £1 each, covering any contributions required to address the company's net assets or liabilities upon winding up. The organisation is a voluntary subscriber to the Fundraising Regulator.

Patricia Ball	Appointed 24 November 2021, Resigned 11 November 2024
Ian Dodds	Appointed 24 November 2021, Resigned 8 December 2024
Stephen Kennedy	Appointed 24 October 2018
Nicola Graham	Appointed 20 January 2021, Resigned 15 April 2023
Freda Waite	Appointed 23 October 2019
Robin Bates	Appointed 20 December 2022, Resigned 19 November 2024
Danielle Hollinger	Appointed 20 December 2022
Bill Atkinson	Appointed 1 May 2023, Resigned 11 November 2024
Helen Kerr	Appointed 9 June 2023
Gillian Stirling	Appointed 10 July 2023, Resigned 5 December 2024
Emma Cassidy	Appointed 10 July 2021, Resigned 9 January 2024
Andrew Godden	Appointed 24 April 2024

MID ANTRIM ANIMAL SANCTUARY

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

There were 12 meetings of the Trustees in the reporting period all meetings with a hybrid format.

Appointment of Trustees:

The Chairperson and Trustees are responsible for the recruitment and selection of new Trustees as needed. Trustees are chosen based on the relevance of their professional skills and their ability to contribute meaningfully to the governance of the charity.

As part of the recruitment process, new Trustees are fully briefed on their legal obligations under charity and company law, the contents of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Board's decision-making processes, the charity's financial performance, and other key policies and relevant information.

Memberships:

Northern Ireland Companion Animal Welfare Group

As founding members of the Northern Ireland Companion Animal Welfare Group (NICAWG), Mid Antrim Animal Sanctuary continues to collaborate with other animal welfare charities to amplify the voice of animal welfare across Northern Ireland. Our ongoing work involves engaging with elected representatives and statutory agencies to influence and improve legislation, regulation, licensing laws, enforcement, and the standardisation of animal welfare practices.

In February 2024, representatives from the Sanctuary played a significant role in the development and launch of NICAWG's priorities at Stormont. This event marked a crucial step forward in advocating for stronger animal welfare policies and engaging directly with key stakeholders.

Association of Dogs and Cats Home

Mid Antrim Animal Sanctuary is pleased to report that our membership with the Association of Dogs & Cats Homes (ADCH) remains active and beneficial. The Trustees are proud that our staff, their work, and our facilities not only meet but exceed the high operational standards set by ADCH. This membership provides us with valuable access to training resources, advice, and guidelines that enhance the Sanctuary's operations and support our staff.

ADCH is the leading representative charity for dog and cat rescue and rehoming organisations across eight jurisdictions, including Northern Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales, the Republic of Ireland, Isle of Man, Jersey, and Guernsey. It promotes best practices in animal welfare and fosters collaboration among its members, which now exceed 160 organisations of varying sizes.

Being part of ADCH also connects us to a wider network through events such as the UK's largest animal welfare Annual Conference, which draws over 500 participants daily, including international attendees. These events, alongside ADCH's open meetings and training sessions, offer valuable opportunities for engagement, learning, and collaboration within the rescue and rehoming sector.

Our continued membership with ADCH underscores our commitment to maintaining the highest standards in animal welfare and allows us to stay at the forefront of best practices in the sector.

MID ANTRIM ANIMAL SANCTUARY

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

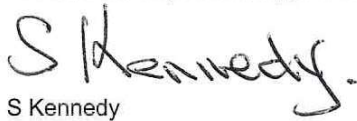
Auditor

In accordance with the company's articles, a resolution proposing that Corrigan CA Limited be reappointed as auditor of the company will be put at a General Meeting.

Disclosure of information to auditor

Each of the trustees has confirmed that there is no information of which they are aware which is relevant to the audit, but of which the auditor is unaware. They have further confirmed that they have taken appropriate steps to identify such relevant information and to establish that the auditor is aware of such information.

The trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.



S Kennedy
Trustee

23 December 2024

MID ANTRIM ANIMAL SANCTUARY

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The trustees, who are also the directors of Mid Antrim Animal Sanctuary for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company Law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.