

Wicklow SPCA



ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020



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Sharpeshill Animal Sanctuary
Ballygannon Mór
Rathdrum
Co. Wicklow

Charity Number CHY11863
CRA No 2003352

WICKLOW SPCA

The Wicklow Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was founded in 1910 and from that date has worked to help animals in County Wicklow. Wicklow SPCA bought and built the premises as a result of a large bequest from Mr. Reginald Sharpe to the Wicklow SPCA in 1990. Mr. Sharpe donated the money to the Wicklow Society because of a stray three-legged Airedale terrier who wandered into Reginald's home in Greystones. Mr. Sharpe received such joy and affection from his three-legged friend, named Scamp, that he bequeathed his entire estate to the welfare and protection of animals in Wicklow. As a reminder of his generosity and of his three-legged dog, a weathervane in the image of his terrier resides over the administration building.

Mission statement
Prevent cruelty and
Promote kindness to all animals



CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Our AGM normally provides us with a welcome opportunity to meet together. Unfortunately in the last 2 years the Coronavirus has prevented us all from gathering.

I took over as Chairperson in 2019 when Caroline Jesper retired after 9 years in the Chair. She hands over a very modern and well-run organization and we thank her for her excellent stewardship and wish her a happy retirement.

2019 was another busy year with over 400 dogs re-homed along with 160 cats.

In 2020, when the Coronavirus affected us all, it is very pleasing to report that here in the Wicklow SPCA we have completed and commissioned our new Kennels. A sincere thanks to our Project Manager, Ken McAvoy, and our builder, John Gray, for this outstanding addition to our facilities. This would not have been possible without a Leader Grant of €200,000 from Wicklow County Council, which we acknowledge with gratitude.

Subject to funding we would hope to further improve our facilities at Sharpeshill with a new Car Park, to refurbish the Main Office building and Isolation Unit and to redevelop the Carousel for alternative use.

Further to our Corporate Governance we have applied to the Charities Regulatory Authority to become a Company Limited by Guarantee, with many thanks to Sue Jesper for all her assistance and expertise.

The Accounts for 2020 show the Wicklow SPCA in a healthy position. We acknowledge with thanks an increase in the ex gratia Funding from the Department of Agriculture from €50,000 to €60,000.

Both 2019 and 2020 Accounts show healthy surpluses in difficult years and our reserves have now increased to €947,301.

It is a very big Thank You to Anne and her Staff for getting us through the ups and downs of these past two years.

I write this at a time when we appear to be over the worst of the Pandemic restrictions, having faced new and unprecedented challenges. As we slowly get back to normality I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to all the Staff, Volunteers, Committee Members, and our Supporters for getting us through.

I feel that we can face the future of the Wicklow SPCA and the Animals we care for with confidence.

Don Comiskey
Chairperson



Manager's Report

As we slowly move away from the world pandemic of Covid we can look back on the last 2 years as a time of struggle and determination. Everywhere and everyone went into lockdown and our shelter closed to the public. Decisions had to be made as to how best to continue. We applied for Government support for staff wages and all our fundraising went digital. The big opening of our new kennels was put on hold.

As people's lives changed and homes became workplaces, the demand for family pet's increased. Exorbitant prices were asked for and paid for puppies. The authorities were now aware of unregistered back street dog breeders out to make the most of an opportunity. Welfare Inspectors called on these premises and many of these dogs came into our care. Staff left no stone unturned to help these dogs adjust. The public rowed in behind our efforts with food, blankets and funding, even purchasing radios to help the dog relax. Over a period of time all the dogs went on to find suitable homes.

Slowly but surely the mill of dark, over crowded, filthy puppy farms will be no more. The enforcement of animal welfare laws are in the hands of authorised officers from the ISPCA, Department of Agriculture officials and members of An Garda Siochana and we continue to support them in their duties when called upon. A case of animal neglect which came before us in 2019 is due for court hearing in Nov 2021. We are very grateful to our local Garda for their work on this case.

Our facilities have grown and with the help of a project manager Mr. Ken McAvoy we now have a state-of-the-art new kennels, dog runs. The basic fundamentals of waste management, drainage and water supply were upgraded.



Prudent management of our day-to-day finance by Alexis, Clodagh and Deirdre has put us in a good position and our Trustees have drafted a 5-year development plan. Some proposed projects include the upgrade of dog isolation and cattery, the revamping of the old carousel into a multi-functional building and improvements to the administration and staff buildings.



During 2019 we assisted the ISPCA with rehoming of dogs and cats which came into our shelter from the ISPCA hub. These dogs were originally seized by their Inspectors following reports of animal neglect throughout the country. We continue to work with both Wicklow and Wexford dog wardens on the rehoming of stray dogs.

Some highlights include

Chosen by a film crew as the site location for the making of a small film titled "The dog who lost its bark". The weather was in our favour and the animals on their best behaviour and we are all looking forward to putting on the glad rags and heading to its premier in the near future.



Bella, one of the many puppy farm dogs that shivered with nervousness and sat forlorn in the back of the kennel. Bella is now living a happy indoor life with Barbara. An update from Barbara - Bella has settled in very well but it has taken a long time and a lot of patience. She is still nervous but bit by bit we are overcoming that. We are now one... she never leaves my side! I know she trusts me and she is beginning to show affection and play. She has no idea what to do with a ball or soft toy...very sad. She has a great appetite and will not eat if I watch her...! My God she must have been terrified in her former home. Time and patience is what is needed and I feel she has come on leaps and bounds since I got her in May. Every day things improve. It has been a very interesting and worthwhile journey and seeing her grow and settle every day is rewarding. She is a wonderful pal and I wouldn't be without her.



Little Piper is one of the many cats left into our care. She was found with a very bad injury to her front leg and unfortunately it was so severe that her leg had to be amputated, many thanks to Avondale Veterinary for all their care.



With the assistance of County Wicklow PPN we hosted some zoom information sessions "Looking after your pet through Covid 19". We were delighted to have as our guest speakers Ms. Emmaline Duffy Fallon from Citizen Canine and Dr. Tim Kirby from Petbond. It was a full house and such a success that we hope to continue with additional session in 2022.

Great to see the return of dog classes in Pamela's dog park and many new dog owners making best use of this beautiful facility.



The rehoming figures for 2019 exceed all our expectations and is possibly an acknowledgement that people are turning to rescue centres for their pets.

Rehoming figures

2019 Dogs ----445 Cats 160

2020 Dogs ----280 Cats 56

The importance of good governance and transparency to our supporters is a principal factor as we continue to expand. To this end we are in the final stages of signing up to the Governance code and becoming a public limited company.



I look forward to 2022 with confidence that it will be a very successful year and that Wicklow SPCA will continue to make a contribution to improvements in animal welfare. Much has been achieved but there is still more to be done. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all staff, TUS, CE participants and volunteers for their continued hard work, dedication and commitment to the cause of animal welfare. I'd also like to thank our donors and supporters, without whom the Wicklow SPCA could not help the hundreds of animals that come into our care every year.

Finally, I'd like to thank Wicklow SPCA's Board of Directors under the leadership of our Chairperson Mr. Don Commiskey for their support throughout a very challenging 2 years.

Anne Fitzpatrick
Manager

Governance

The Board of the Wicklow SPCA is committed to the principles of good governance and believes in openness, transparency and accountability. We have signed up to the Governance Code and are on the "adoption journey". The Wicklow SPCA fully complies with the Charity Regulatory Authority. The Society is recognised as a Charitable Organisation by the Revenue Commissioners, CHY 11863, and is registered with the Charities Regulatory Authority, Registered Charity Number 2003352.

Sale and supply of pets registered no ZPT 200001C

Officers

Don Commiskey
Sheila Commiskey
Gillian Beare
Alexis Grant
Sue Jesper
Ken McAvoy
Albert Kerr
Daragh McEvoy
David Pierce
Doris Szentkovics
Clodagh O'Reilly

