



NEWSLETTER

May 2018

www.friendsofbcdh.org



Chairman's Report

Dear *Friends*,

At last, I am able to bring you some good news about the *Myrtle Hurle* Cattery. You will no doubt remember that the *Friends* provided funding for this cattery but that the building work ran into difficulties while construction was underway due to changes in RSPCA requirements. I am pleased to announce that the necessary modifications, all funded by BCDH, have been undertaken and we now have an up-to-date, state-of-the-art cattery fit for the 21st century. This includes individual pods that have been modified so the interior sections are air-conditioned and have under-floor heating while the exterior part of the pods are wire meshed. There are a variety of pod styles to enable us to make maximum use of the cattery including pods for isolation purposes and mother and kitten pods, all supplied with the latest equipment. I am sure that Myrtle would have been proud to have her name associated with the building. On behalf of the *Friends*, I would like to offer grateful thanks to the BCDH fundraising team for securing the necessary funding to undertake these modifications.

Moving forward, the fundraising team met with the *Friends'* Trustees at our March meeting to update us on progress with the new kennel block envisaged for the area currently occupied by A & B block. The revised plans for the kennels have been passed by both the RSPCA and Bath & Northeast Somerset Council so it is, hopefully, full steam ahead with this next building project, partially funded by us, the *Friends*. An update will appear in our November newsletter.

Our Christmas event was a great success and raised about £1000 from the sale of gifts and refreshments etc. Our thanks to everyone who supported us. The presence of the *Friends* at BCDH's motorcycle event, when we fed hungry riders with bacon butties, was much appreciated especially as the weather was extremely wet.

We look forward to seeing you at our events in the coming year (see page 8) and thank you all, once again, for your commitment and continued support.

Robin Eastman

Front cover *Our cover girl is a tabby called Ella. She is fortunate as she has just been adopted but there are many other cats, kittens and dogs still waiting for their forever home.*

C Block – Home to Our Long-Stay Residents

One of the things that makes BCDH stand out as a unique rescue centre is C block. Set up in 2013, it aims to house our long-stay residents while also providing dogs that find kennel life stressful with a relaxed and calm environment.

It has a fence surrounding it so that the dogs in the kennels can't see other dogs walk past, which is one of the main stressful points for dogs when being on site. We also don't allow the public to view the kennels, as many of the residents of C block would find this scary.

The main carer is one of our long-serving staff members, Charlotte Pearce, or 'Char' as she is known. She has extensive experience of working with more vulnerable dogs and ensures they have plenty of enrichment as well as toys, kongs, chews etc. For example, she hides treats in paddling pools filled with woodchips so the dogs can have some absorbing fun. The dogs are also given different walking scenes, play time in the volunteers' paddocks or time in



the Cabin – where we have created a home-style environment.

Because the dogs have special needs, we have to be a little more selective with which dog walkers to engage. However, we are lucky to have a band of long-serving, dedicated dog walkers that have spent time getting to know C block dogs and who take them out for long walks.

C block houses two of our longest stay dogs: Buster (below right) is 15 years old and has been with us for seven years, and nine-year-old Sasha has been with us for eight and a half years. Both have many staff members and walkers who have a soft spot for them – so they are very spoilt!

C block has turned around the behaviour of many dogs that initially found kennel life stressful, as its calming environment lowers anxiety levels – which makes them, in turn, easier to work with and train. Thankfully, C block has a good success rate for re-homing and has given many a dog a happy ending.



Membership Matters

A huge ‘thank you’ to everyone who sent donations over the Christmas period, and for your Christmas cards. Any kind of communication from our members is always welcome; positive comments encourage and support the Trustees and volunteers, and negative ones remind us not to get complacent and that sometimes we have to try harder.

The *Friends* is a small charity – very small by national standards – so we can be more approachable and get to know our members. But there is such a thing as being *too* small. We do need to grow, so that we can continue to give financial support to the Home. The more members we have, the more help we can give.

In 2018 we would like to ask all our members to help us by doing two things:

- Tell people about the *Friends*, or display an event poster in your house or car window, or put something on your Facebook page – in fact do anything that will spread the word about the *Friends*. If one of your friends joins, you will receive a voucher for a free drink and slice of cake!
- If you go to an event at a school or church or garden, keep your eyes open to see if they are using an interesting or novel way of raising money – then tell us! Nick Burgess’ bottle stall has been a great money-raiser for the *Friends*, but it wasn’t his idea. He saw it at a village fete in Doynton and thought ‘I could do that’. There’s no shame in poaching someone else’s idea, and we can always say where it came from.

Renewals. Spring is a very busy time as lots of members who pay annually need to renew in spring. If you pay by cash or cheque rather than standing order please keep an eye out for the reminder letter. Membership is still £12 per year. If you would like to switch to paying by standing order please let me know and I’ll send you a form. Thank you!

Annual General Meeting. I can hear the groans at those words! The AGM is a necessary part of every organisation’s management. But it isn’t just for the people who run the charity – it’s for everyone. The AGM gives you a chance to hear in detail what the charity has been doing over the year, and what it plans to do in the year ahead, and to vote for the people *you* want to be the Trustees for the coming year. The Trustees make the day-to-day decisions, manage the money, plan the fundraising events and decide the future direction of the charity. Please come and make your voice heard. If you have a few hours to spare each month why not stand for election as a Trustee? Information about how to do this is on page 5. Last year, so few members attended the AGM that it nearly had to be postponed. If that happens we have to go to the expense of notifying every single member again, by post or email, of the date of the new meeting, and hope that enough people attend then. If we cannot hold an AGM we cannot legally continue to exist as a charity, so please do come.

Judith Burgess, Membership Secretary

(membership@friendsofbcdh.org)

FRIENDS OF BATH CATS & DOGS HOME

The Avenue, Claverton Down, Bath BA2 7AZ
Registered Charity 284424

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND ELECTION OF TRUSTEES

The *Friends'* Annual General Meeting will be held on **Wednesday 20 June 2018** in the John Hobhouse Room at the Home, at 7pm, with light refreshments served from 6.30pm. All are welcome.

According to the rules of the Constitution, all committee members (the Trustees) must retire from office at the end of the Annual General Meeting, but they may be re-elected or re-appointed.

Any *Friend* who would like to stand for election should notify their interest to the Hon. Secretary *before* the AGM. Please send your details, which should include your contact address, telephone and email, together with a brief CV, to the above address. Alternatively, email **secretary@friendsofbcdh.org** no later than 31 May 2018. On request, we will forward to you a copy of the Constitution, election procedures and details of the responsibilities of a Trustee.

Please note that you must be a fully paid-up *Friend* to stand for election as a Trustee. There are also personal conditions involving not having unspent criminal convictions or being bankrupt, according to the Charities Act 1972. If in doubt please look at these on the Charity Commission website: www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-trustee-whats-involved. If you would like to check your membership status, please contact Judith Burgess, the Membership Secretary, on membership@friendsofbcdh.org.

Sammy Humphries

Hon. Secretary
January 2018

Would You Like to Become a Trustee?

There is space for more Trustees on the Committee that runs the *Friends*. Meetings are held on the second Wednesday evening of every other month, so there are only six meetings per year to attend. The Trustees welcome any *Friend* who wishes to stand for election; new people and new ideas are always valuable. Please consider standing for election. Even if you don't want to be a Trustee please do come to the AGM and hear how your donations and subscriptions are being spent, and meet the people who run your charity.

In Memory of Jean Harley (1934–2017)

On Thursday 3 August 2017 a number of *Friends* attended the funeral of Jean Harley at Canford Crematorium in Bristol to say a fond farewell to a much-loved and respected member of the *Friends* and a stalwart dog walker at BCDH.

Jean was a real animal lover and had been involved, over many years, in the training of dogs and in dog walking. She regularly travelled from her home in Southmead, Bristol to walk the dogs at BCDH in all winds and weathers. It is also remembered that Jean was not adverse to picking up on changes to procedures that, in her view, were not in the interests of the animals in the Home's care.



One thing Jean did was to keep records of her correspondence with the *Friends* and BCDH and to collect photographs of all the dogs with which she had contact while giving them some exercise and human interaction. These photos are in a number of albums at the Home.

Until recent years, Jean regularly attended the *Friends*' AGM and will be sadly missed by us all. We will remember her as a very loyal person who was a true animal lover.



Do you need any files or binders?

We have been digitising our archives in an attempt to become paper free. As a result, we have a number of lever-arch files, D-ring binders and box files going spare. If any *Friend* could make use of these please contact Judith Burgess at membership@friendsofbcdh.org.

Dave and Katy – Kitty Fosterers Extraordinaire!

Over a cup of coffee and a chance conversation at the 2017 Christmas event with Katy Boyce and Dave Fawthrop, it soon became clear that they were a marvellously crazy cat couple. Katy tells their story:

“We could be cat fosterers?!” I said, after stumbling across the application form one evening. Dave and I both grew up with cats so when we saw that our rental contract said we could have a cat we were pleasantly surprised. We weren’t really in a position to take on a cat full-time and having just lost the family dog the idea of taking on an elderly cat just didn’t suit us. Cat fostering seemed like the perfect solution to the pet-shaped hole in our lives. We filled out the forms and had our home visit and here we are now! Over the past ten months we’ve had a grand total of 26 moggies of various ages in our house and we haven’t regretted our

decision for a single second – despite all the mess! The best part is definitely watching the kittens develop their own personalities and seeing them do stupid things as they get to know their growing bodies. The hardest part so far was when we sadly lost one of a batch of seven feral kittens we took in – thankfully the other six were fine, if a little malnourished. It’s always hard to say goodbye to the latest kitten as you do get attached. As any pet owner will tell you, they really are part of the family. BCDH do some truly amazing work and knowing that we’re able to do our little bit to help these kitties find their forever homes is a really great feeling. I’m sure one day we’ll get a permanent cat or two of our own (to tell the truth I’m more of a dog person anyway...) but fostering has been a great middle ground – not to mention incredibly rewarding and good fun too!



Dave has his hands full (left); and Katy and kitty



Dates for Your Diary in 2018

Sunday 10 June 2018 – *Friends'* Summer Garden Party

After last year's successful event, the *Friends* will be hosting another afternoon of cream teas and strawberries as well as a sale of plants and garden paraphernalia including paperback books for summer reading. Please do come and support us and perhaps bake us some cakes or donate some healthy plants or other suitable items.

Wednesday 20 June 2018

The *Friends'* AGM 2018 will be held at BCDH on Wednesday 20 June at 7pm with light refreshments available from 6.30pm. Please see our notice on page 5 for further details.

Monday 27 August 2018

BCDH will be holding its major fundraising event of the year with its

annual Fun Day. The *Friends* will have a stall with some items for purchase. This is the perfect time to renew memberships or to entice friends, family and neighbours to join the *Friends* and help us raise much needed funds. As an extra incentive, if you introduce someone who subsequently joins the *Friends* you will receive a voucher, redeemable at a *Friends* event, for a cup of tea/coffee and a piece of cake!

Christmas Coffee Morning (date to be confirmed)

The *Friends* will hold a Christmas coffee morning with festive food and an opportunity to pick up some Christmas gifts. As usual, there will be a raffle with super prizes and Santa will be on hand to receive your gifts of food for the animals.

Contact Details

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Trustees

Robin Eastman (Chairman)
Nick Burgess (Vice Chairman)
Cary Bush (Treasurer)
Sammy Humphries (Secretary)
Louise Atkins
Claire Crew
Katrina Hurley
Dennis Long
Susanna Mead
Lynda Pearce
Leslyanne Teague
Barbara White

If you have any news items or interesting stories for our newsletter, please contact Barbara White at: newsletter@friendsofbcdh.org