

# HAPPY LANDINGS ANIMAL SHELTER

BOARDING KENNELS & CATTERY, PYE HILL, PYLLE, SHEPTON MALLET, SOMERSET. BA4 6TG 01749  
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## NEWSLETTER – AUTUMN 2007

This summer has been perhaps our hardest time. When every call is a desperate case, everyone's story a tragic one and all of them involve animals in need of help, it becomes incredibly difficult to know what to do for the best, how to help everyone and everything. And so you try harder and harder, making extra space no matter how full because you know that poor kitten...or dog...or rabbit...or whatever it is this time, needs your help. Staff become increasingly exhausted and demoralised, unable to cope with the workload or the pressure of so many needy souls all wanting their attention, constantly aware of the never-ending waiting list of more desperate animals knocking on our door.

So this is the time when we stick our hand up and say "Ok, we got it wrong". Not through lack of trying, rather through trying too much – and the pressures involved have pushed many staff to breaking point and beyond until they really just could not do it any more, physically or emotionally, and they had to leave. Sadly this included the centre's manager, Aimée Settle, who finally folded this summer, and had to take sick leave. With the manager gone and staff falling under the additional stress, everything looked very worrying. We were lucky to have Linda White, a relatively new member of staff, and Kaz Hill, one of our longest standing supervisors, to step in as Acting and Deputy Managers to hold the strain. It has been unbelievably difficult for them but they have managed to keep going and hold Happy Landings together. We are all extremely grateful to them.

We are now looking to the future and planning furiously. Aimée has been able to return to help, although only in a part time capacity initially, and is working alongside Linda and Kaz to re-structure Happy Landings so that we can continue to help animals, but not at the cost of the carers – our staff. We dare not overstretch ourselves as we have been doing but we do still aim to be the best at what we do for our animals. We do not have the resources or funds of the bigger organisations, but what we do have is a close team of extremely dedicated staff who care, who desperately want to do the best for their rescue animals.

We are by no means out of the woods yet and to achieve a future for our animals we need your help. Happy Landings cannot survive without its supporters and we need that support now more than ever. We do not receive any aid or funding, we are entirely reliant upon our own efforts and the generosity of our supporters. Having been without a formal fundraiser for the last 18 months the ongoing support of individuals and groups has been crucial. We would like to sincerely thank all those who have continued to support us.

### **Special Fundraising Thank Yous:**

Eleven year old Eliza Massey  
Wells Market Traders Cheryl Carter and Janet Jackson  
Framptons at Shepton Mallet  
Doreen, Robert and staff at The Spar Shop, Markesbury  
Lesley Walker, Maureen Clarkson, Stuart and Mary Luxford  
Pam Higgs, Lesley Hill and the Frome Ladies

### **Thanks also to.....**

Philip Phelps and his wonderfully useful tractor and trailer. Katrina Foote for computing our accounts. Tom Bishop for transporting our ex-battery hens. Rose Bailey for continuing to co-ordinate all of our follow up home checks (we are desperate for extra home checkers in the Glastonbury/Street area, please contact us if you feel you could help). Brian Clarkson for sticking labels and stamps and stuffing newsletters into the 4500 envelopes, and all of you who make blankets, bring newspapers, dog walk, cat cuddle, donate food, homecheck, foster, hold collection tins and support us in so many ways – we could not manage without you.

Supporters who live locally will know that the Somerfield store in Shepton Mallet closed in October. Volunteers Maureen Clarkson and Sallie Patten have for many years collected and transported the donated animal food from the Happy Landings Box which the store had kindly allowed to be placed near the till. Our thanks to all of you who have given so very generously over the years and, of course, our thanks to Somerfields – we will miss you. If there are any other shops who would like to have a box for us, please get in touch with us.

### **Sponsored Walk – Brean Beach, Spring 2007:**

The weather was kind to us and both two and four legged enjoyed the exercise. £754 was raised thanks to all those who joined us on the day – news of the next walk in the Spring Newsletter.

### **A Dog's Letter to Santa:**

Our dogs have a special Christmas request - they would be really, really grateful for new coats, especially in medium and large sizes. They're not proud, they won't mind if the coats have been used, they are quite happy to have second hand coats

to help keep them warm in the winter chills – especially when outside in runs or the exercise paddock.

#### **Staff Letter to Santa:**

It is really wonderful of all our supporters who give chocolates and biscuits for the staff at Christmas time, all of which are very much appreciated. However, all the staff agree that it would be just as good to receive any of the following which are used on a daily basis:- tea, coffee, sugar, toilet rolls, and even washing powder and bin liners.

#### **Christmas Raffle:**

Please do not be offended if we have sent you raffle tickets and you do not wish to purchase them, just recycle them with the rest of your waste paper. However, if you require more tickets then do please contact us.

#### **We Will Miss...**

Tess Bailey, valued volunteer, who has been working in the office and been completely responsible for all aspects of wages and PAYE – an unenviable job! She has moved out of our area - we thank her for all her hard work over the years.

We were all very sorry to learn of the very sad death of three of our long standing supporters this year; Alan Overton, Jim Hicks and Irene Crane.

#### **Dog Show:**

We thought it would be third time lucky with the Dog Show this year but, unfortunately, after months of organisation, the Foot and Mouth outbreak occurred and it was decided to cancel the event. Better luck next year.

#### **Fundraising Event Next May – A Date for Your Diary:**

On the weekend of the 10th and 11th of May there will be a grand plant sale held at Society House Farm, Shepton Mallet. In addition to plants and gardening items there will be other stalls and refreshments available. Lets hope that the weather is fine...

#### **Progress:**

It is good to be able to let everyone know that the new Small Animal Unit is now basically completed. Whilst the donated units have cost quite a lot to have them erected we do think that the end result has been well worth it. The unit will house rabbits, guinea pigs, ferrets and un-vaccinated cats. It also has a kitchen, health check area and public toilet.

#### **Success Stories:**

It is always so hard to pick out which of our many animals to share with everyone, each has its own success story attached. After much umming and ahing here are a couple of our highlights...

**Gemma**, a middle aged collie with trust issues, was brought in to us when her owners felt they could no longer cope with her. Arriving with a reputation for being snappy, for disliking other dogs, cats, and kids, as well as new people, Gemma was difficult to home and got “stuck” in kennels. Fortunately we were able to work with her and build her self confidence and trust, teaching how to meet dogs and to ignore people and children, but this has taken a long time. We had despaired of ever finding her a home but she has been extremely lucky to find an experienced owner who loves her to bits, and is prepared to continue working with her. Gemma is now happily living with a new canine friend and cats in her new home and is a very lucky girl.

**Bug** kitten was brought to us in a cardboard box during the summer with two other kittens, saved from a farm where they were about to be drowned. All three had kitten flu quite badly, having to go onto anti-biotics and to be kept completely isolated from all other cats whilst they were treated. Vets felt that Bug was unlikely to survive as she was so small, only 2 or 3 weeks old, and her flu was so bad they initially thought she had lost an eye. We are extremely grateful to Trish Harrison who kindly agreed to foster Bug for us - her only real chance of survival. Trish did a wonderful job, getting up through the night to bottle feed her as she could not take solids, nursing her mothering her, persuading to eat and to fight for life. She was nick-named Pebbles “because she were all washed out”. Against all the odds Bug made it. She will always be prone to the cold and needs to be predominantly a house cat, but she is full of beans, utterly fearless and as playful as they come.

**Limpy** was one of three dogs dumped over our gate in the summer. All of them terrified to come to staff they initially had to be herded into a secure stable for safety where, with time and patience, staff managed to gain their trust and handle them..not quite what they had planned for the day, but never mind!. Limpy was the youngest, a roughly 8 month Rottweiler X puppy with an untreated broken leg. Veterinary attention revealed that it was an old break that, whilst it had healed at an odd angle, was best left alone. However, she also had a broken a toe on the same leg. After more x-rays, a cast, bandaging and a head bucket (you do not want to experience an accident-prone Rotti pup with a head bucket!) she came back to the centre and was fostered by staff member Kaz, in a desperate attempt to keep the leg as still and as dry as possible. Limpy has a lovely temperament, but is very clumsy and was a real handful to control, testing Kaz's patience - and sanity - to the limit. Vets feared that she may have to lose the leg and we waited with baited breath when the last set of x-rays were finally done. All was fine, thank goodness, and the added bonus was that one of the vet nurses fell in love with her and is now her foster mum – congratulations Lyn...and good luck!

STAFF WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO WISH YOU ALL, AND YOUR ANIMALS, A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

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We would really appreciate any donation, however big or small, you feel that you would like to give this year to enable Happy Landings continue helping animals in need.