

Greyhound Rescue Wales

Annual Report of Activities



Registered Charity: 1152650 Company Number: 8411721

June 2013 to May 2014

For presentation to Greyhound Rescue Wales Annual General Meeting 08.06.14.

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Greyhound Rescue Wales

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The Aims of Greyhound Rescue Wales (Extract from GRW Articles of Association)

4. Objects:

4 (1) For the benefit of the public, principally but not exclusively in Wales and its environs (hereinafter called the area of benefit), to promote the welfare and relieve the suffering of greyhounds and greyhound cross breeds (lurchers) in need of care and attention, and in particular to provide and maintain rescue homes or other facilities for the reception, care and treatment of such animals.

4 (2) To promote humane behaviour towards animals by providing appropriate care, protection, treatment and security for greyhounds and greyhound cross breeds which are retired, unwanted, or in need of care and attention by reason of sickness, poor circumstances or ill usage, and to educate the public in matters pertaining to animal welfare in general and the prevention of cruelty and suffering among animals.

Foreword

This report describes the work carried out by Greyhound Rescue Wales (GRW) to meet its objects between June 2013 and June 2014. The report is a co-operative effort in that each section has been written by the individuals with responsibility for that particular area of work. The process of production therefore closely reflects the way in which GRW carries out its work.

Greyhound Rescue Wales has continued to increase the scale and scope of its activities through 2013-2014. An important step was the purchase of our own Sanctuary in August 2013, and the appointment of paid staff for the first time shortly afterwards. The level of voluntary activity has also increased over the period with more events, greater numbers of volunteers and even better organisation. All this has resulted in an impressive number of dogs being homed – currently about 200 per year - the highest ever figure in the history of GRW.

This report marks the beginning of a new phase for GRW. The strategy for the last two years has been directed by the recommendations of the Legacy Working Group which was set up to ensure the best use of the legacy of the late Lee Frank. These recommendations have now been implemented. The current position now needs to be consolidated, and once that has happened GRW will be able to begin to look forward once more, and develop new initiatives using the platform of its new expanded role and resources.

The last two years have seen a huge amount of hard work from many different people. It is this team effort that has allowed GRW to develop as it has and I want to thank everyone who has contributed in any way.

Alain Thomas

Chairperson

1.0. Rescue Operations

1.1 - Dogs Rescued and Re-homed

Rescue Team

Rescue figures are collated monthly and an up to date review of the statistics below is instantly available for any defined period through the use of our online database.

2013

During the calendar year January 1st to December 31st 2013 GRW rescued 210 dogs and re-homed 193. Of these, 117 were greyhounds and 76 were lurchers. There were 113 homings to private homes and 80 dogs were homed via other rescue organisations GRW works with.

2014

During the calendar year January 1st to May 10th 2014 GRW rescued 96 dogs and re-homed 100. Of these, 44 were greyhounds and 56 were lurchers. There were 46 homings to private homes and 60 dogs were homed via other rescue organisations GRW works with.

Dogs in our care (as of 10th May 2014)

At this date, we have 28 dogs in our care, fairly representative of our normal numbers at any time. 12 are housed at Hillcrest, 10 at Swiss Valley, 2 at Balas and 4 are in foster homes.

1.2 The Rescue Team.

Rescue Team

The Rescue Team was formed in November 2011 and still comprises of the four original members: Angie Webb, Sandra Wynne, Brad and Paula Evans. The team is supported by Andy Jackson notably with I.T. and information resources. We bring a range of skills and each have our own roles within the team, though there is plenty of debate and overlap. Requests for us to take dogs from trainers or potential adopters generally come to us via our 0300 number or the website. The contact forms are emailed to the Rescue Team and Brad makes the initial contact with the owner or

potential adopter. In the case of a dog needing to come into our care he will speak to the owner, gauge the urgency, and add the dog to our list. With potential adopters Brad will answer their questions and arrange a home visit if appropriate.

Sandra's main role is to care for the dogs at Hillcrest. Sandra hosts potential adopters and offers advice on their choice of dog based on her assessment of the dog's character. Sandra also takes on the aftercare of dogs once placed in the home. Offering advice and support with any teething problems the new owner encounters.

Angie's role includes coordinating neutering, vaccinations and any other vet treatment necessary for our dogs. Angie also liaises with other rescues based in Ireland, Wales and England. We have no shortage of black males with a high prey drive on our waiting list. However, we also have a waiting list of homes wanting cat friendly greyhounds or lurchers which is why help the Irish rescues when possible.

Our main strength is that there is almost always, at least one member of the team available to deal with an issue.

The majority of communication is via email, this makes for an efficient use of our time.

We've been in daily contact since day 1, we know each other very well and though we disagree from time to time our motivation is the dogs welfare, it's what binds us.

1.3 Working in Partnership.

Rescue team

We work in partnership with organisations including 4 branches of Dogs Trust and GRWE, particularly the Devon and Cornwall branches. We also list dogs available with Hope Rescue and Four Paws. Occasionally we transport dogs to ARC near Portsmouth if we have too many lurchers.

These rescues choose to work with us because we give them dogs that they're able to home and they trust our assessment. For the Dogs Trust this generally means young failed racers or lurchers with a low prey drive.

Devon and Cornwall GRWE use a small number of boarding kennels for their dogs. They may have a home offer for example for an old, housetrained greyhound and not have a suitable dog. If we have one in our care, rather than leave the dog in kennels, we meet a volunteer from GRWE and the dog goes straight into a home. This is great for the dog and creates space for another one.

Again most communication takes place via email and the Rescue Team manage the logistics.

1.4 Kennelling arrangements (other than Hillcrest).

Rescue Team

The majority of greyhounds available for homing are kennelled at Hillcrest.

Dogs coming into our care generally come to Angie at Swiss Valley. Logistically it's easier for them to access our vet for neutering and vaccinations. As we take dogs from pounds we often get dogs with kennel cough. By bringing them to Swiss Valley we stop the virus spreading to dogs that are ready for homing. The lurchers also stay at Swiss Valley as they tend to bark more than greyhounds and the few neighbours are tolerant.

We keep one space at Balas Cottage kennels in Pyle. It's a useful drop off point for dog owners and as we're regularly taking dogs down the motorway to other rescues we can stop off on the return journey and collect the dog. Logistically it works well. It also allows us the flexibility to use temporary kennel space in emergencies when the kennels at Swiss Valley are full.

1.5. Foster homes.

Rescue Team

Some of our dogs are cared for by foster carers. During the last year GRW has had an average of about six foster homes active at any one time. Typically a foster carer will look after one, or a sequence of dogs, and will then decide to take a well-earned break. Foster homes perform an invaluable role to complement Hillcrest, Swiss Valley and commercial boarding. Dogs may be placed in a foster home for a variety of reasons: they may need special care for an injury, or they may have behavioural issues that need to be addressed. It takes a special kind of experienced foster carer to look after dogs like these. However, some dogs who have no special needs but have been in kennels a long time are also placed in foster homes as are others who are almost ready for homing and just need the experience of living in a home for a short while.

All foster carers are entitled to a basic allowance to pay for the dog's food and they receive support from experienced GRW volunteers and staff. Foster Carers are also involved in assessing a dog's behaviour and temperament using the purpose designed GRW "scorecard". This is a great help in matching a dog to the right home.

1.6 Valleys Stadium Initiative.

Rescue Team

For some time the Rescue Team have wanted to do more for the dogs at the Valleys Track which is the only greyhound track in Wales. We were hampered by our long waiting list of dogs and our existing work load which means we just don't have the time to attend race nights and promote the work of GRW. However, when a known and respected retired trainer asked for help in rehoming his own dogs we saw an opportunity. This trainer knows the dogs, owners and trainers at the track. Like us, he has a genuine desire to help the greyhounds that are at risk of destruction. With his knowledge we can more accurately gauge which dogs need our help the most. More than this he has offered to pick up any unwanted dogs on race night and hold the dog until we can arrange for it to come into our kennels. He has become a trusted intermediary between GRW and the track. We have also established good relationships with Summerhill Veterinary Practice in Newport and St James Veterinary Practice in Swansea who have been extremely supportive of this welfare initiative and to whom we are very grateful. These relationships have also allowed us to offer a safety net for dogs that are injured on race night. At the time of writing we have one track dog with our vet after sustaining multiple fractures to his hock. Our aim is to strengthen and develop our links with the track so that every retired and injured dog gets the chance of life in a home.

1.7. North Wales

Beth Richardson /Alain Thomas

New volunteers with a specific interest in rescue work have become active in north Wales over the past 12 months. These, along with the north Wales Regional Fundraising Co-ordinator are currently preparing a strategy to develop rescue operations and increase the number of dogs homed in the region. Once finalised, the strategy will be implemented through a phased process.

1.8. Behavioural advice and support.

Rachel Phillip

Rachel, who is a qualified dog behaviourist is able to help with advice about behaviour when necessary.

Assessments are structured by a Score Card which is in place and is used with every dog. A review of current assessment procedures is underway with a view to developing and implementing a more 'in-depth' score card and assessment for more difficult dogs. The new assessment for more difficult dogs will mean assessment from two people. An initial assessment and a separate assessment from an external person (such as Rachel) after 2-4 weeks. This will provide extra information for potential adopters, and for ourselves.

At the time of writing, there are two dogs with special behavioural issues in Hillcrest and these will require special homes. The new in-depth assessment was piloted on these during May.

There have not been many requests for behavioural support from adopters during the past year, just a few email queries which have been dealt with, generally successfully. Most people will seek advice via the Facebook page and also consult other Greyhound owners. Other owners are proving to be an additional form of plentiful advice based upon experience.

Fun agility classes will start at Hillcrest during the summer. These should provide a bit of fun for our Greys and owners, as well as the opportunity to tackle any training issues/problems if they arise.

1.9. Development of procedures

Andy Jackson

The establishing of our sanctuary at Hillcrest, the employment of full and part time staff, a greater use of volunteers and the success of our web site and social media has meant we have an imperative to ensure that there is greater transparency in our processes and procedures. To this end, GRW has begun a review of our rescue procedures, the outline to this was presented and agreed by the Trustees in January 2014 and this review is now underway. It is anticipated that this will be available for internal consultation during summer 2014 and for implementation soon thereafter.

2.0. Hillcrest Sanctuary

2.1. Purchase and adaptations

Alain Thomas

Hillcrest Cottage, Garnant, previously a smallholding was purchased for use as a Sanctuary in August 2013. Adaptations were made to the property to make it suitable for use as a Sanctuary. These included installing purpose built kennels and runs, a new kennel kitchen area, and securely fenced areas to exercise the dogs.

A planning application has been submitted to consolidate the use of Hillcrest as a Sanctuary and enable further developments which will include more extensive exercise areas and a sensory garden for the dogs.

2.2. Hillcrest Staffing

Lindsay Jackson

We have acquired some excellent staff this year and are pleased to say that all our employees are doing sterling work in moving the organisation forwards.

We have appointed our Sanctuary Manager, Sandra Wynne, who has set up systems and processes at Hillcrest for the intake, assessment and rehoming of the dogs in our care, alongside meeting their day to day needs. She is also managing a team of volunteers to help maintain the grounds and gardens at Hillcrest.

Sandra is very ably supported on two days a week by Becky Jones. This is so that Sandra can have some quality 'down' time as well as working on site.

2.3. Accommodation

Sandra Wynne

Our kennels are purpose built and sit inside the existing stables, so are private and unobtrusive.

Each kennel is spacious and houses two dogs. They each have a single bed with a heat lamp situated directly above the bed. All the kennels are well lit both inside and out. A hatch leads out in to a run. Each run has two day beds. The runs open on to a fully enclosed paddock where the dogs can run and sniff to their hearts content. There is also a fully enclosed ménage with soft sand for the dogs to run on

Hillcrest has a large house with plenty of room for people to stay. There are two spare bedrooms, one en-suite. There is a large homely kitchen with a spacious conservatory attached.

This also leads on to a large decking, which is safely enclosed from the rest of the garden. There is a spacious lounge with a gorgeous log fire, nice and cosy on chilly evenings. Members and volunteers are always welcome to share the Sanctuary experience.

2.4. Operations

Sandra Wynne

Our rescued hounds now have a sanctuary experience rather than a kennel experience. Assessment and rehabilitation begin from the day of admission in to our care. No more raised hands or voices. Only praise and reassurance awaits every dog. Hillcrest plans to live up to our philosophy "To give them the life they deserve", from day one. Our ethos of "kennels to cuddles" encompasses an individual assessment and rehabilitation programme that is ongoing from admission to adoption and beyond. Our dogs have luxury accommodation, a calm peaceful

atmosphere, a regular routine of feeding, exercise, grooming, socialising and individual "play" time.

Hillcrest oozes a feeling of calm and peacefulness for everyone who visits. Our dogs are able to move on to their forever home well adjusted, relaxed and ready to enjoy the rest of their lives.

Some of our hounds have special needs and do not thrive well in kennels. These dogs will then come in to the house for more intense assessment and a more specific rehabilitation programme to suit their needs. Our Behaviourist, Rachel Phillips, may be involved with a specialist behaviour programme Buzz Lightyear and Lottie Lou with their fear aggression benefitted greatly from their time at Hillcrest and have both moved on to lovely Forever Homes . Georgie Girl, with her separation anxiety and "brave" Bravo have both improved vastly since coming in to the house.

All the hounds at Hillcrest come in to the house for assessment, to get them used to the sights and sounds that they may encounter in their forever home. Most of them hope they won't have to encounter a bossy Bethan (resident lurcher) in their forever home.

2.5 Volunteer Involvement

Sandra Wynne

Our sanctuary has a small team of dedicated volunteers, some local and some who travel regularly to get their Greyhound "fix". With the help of the volunteers our hounds regularly go to the park to socialise with other dogs and their owners. Our dogs are regularly seen at Street Collections and other fund raising events, wearing their trendy red "I need a home" vests.

This would not be possible without the help of our volunteers.

Foothold volunteers, led by Felicity Wilkins came to Hillcrest last autumn to do some maintenance work in the garden. The Probation service regularly provide a community service team to help with work in the grounds.

3.0. Regional Operations

3.1. Mid Wales

Andy and Lindsay Jackson

Activity this year continues to be centred around raising awareness of GRW in the Mid Wales area, fundraising and supporting north Wales activities. This has been through two street collections in Welshpool, one in Newtown two show stands at Guilsfield and Montgomery Shows We have managed to foster a number of dogs and assist in the rehoming of dogs in Mid and North Wales. There continues to be an upturn in interest and visibility in the Mid Wales Region where we have managed to re-home a limited number of dogs. For 2014 we have a similar programme of street collections already in place. Our major difficulty continues to be the highly rural nature of the region and the large distances involved in covering the region.

3.2. North Wales

Sharon Lewis

With more people coming forward to volunteer and become involved I am proud to say that the North region is going from strength to strength.

Having worked closely with Pets at Home stores in the region GRW have been fortunate enough to be awarded substantial donations from the companies "Support Adoption for Pets" fundraising drive with the promise of more donations later in the year. We also have a great relationship with various other companies in the region.

With more volunteers on board we have also been able to plan lots of street collections for the North with collections being held in many towns across the region. These events are always extremely popular and are always well supported by the general public.

2013 hosted the second "Great Greyhound Sunday" event in Llandudno. The event was a huge success and £1,000 was raised. The Mayor of Llandudno Town Council attended the event and formally invited us to attend the Mayors Parlour to collect a £200.00 cheque from his charitable funds. Adam Lewis came along and was the star of the night.

We have also supported the PDSA at their annual Fun Dog Show. This was a great success and we plan to the same again this year; this is great publicity for GRW and also great for building relationships with other charities.

We held a charity Night Bash on 11th April to raise funds for GRW. This event was unfortunately not well attended but we still raised £130.00 and we intend to hold another of these events either later this year or early next year. The hall was

provided free of charge and the bands performed free of charge so absolutely no expenses were incurred.

We are hosting a Fun Dog Show on 21st June. We also have lots of well-known animal charities attending the event. Vitalin Pet Food has agreed to sponsor the event and have supplied all the prizes for first, second and third in each of the 10 classes. This event will also host the 2014 GRW Grand Raffle. There are some fantastic prizes up for grabs including holidays and hotel breaks plus lots of family days out. Ticket sales are going really well. Local companies are advertising in the brochure and they are being charged a fee to do this, this will then cover the cost of printing the brochure. So again absolutely no overheads involved.

Those of you who know me will know that I work extremely hard to ensure that we have no overheads when planning events, raffles or any other event for the charity. This is down to the great relationship I have built up with businesses and organisations over the past few years and a lot of hard work and persistence.

The North is taking part in the Great British Greyhound Walk. Jenni and Graham Street have taken on the role of organising a walk at Pensarn with Sabina Dunkling organising a walk on Anglesey, both walks look set to be a great success. Jenni has also planned lots of other events within her area including "Afternoon Tea with Mr Darcy" and Sabina is willing to organise more fundraising events on Anglesey.

Calon FM radio station contacted me to invite me to the radio station to chat live on air about GRW and the work that we do, this took place on Monday 12th May. The programme is a local community show. Guests are invited to attend the studio and chat and spread the word about their work and community events.

2014 Great Greyhound Sunday event which will take place on 28th September at Llandudno and we have managed to secure sponsorship from Burgess Dog Food for this. Once again the Mayor of Llandudno will be invited.

We have a great relationship with the local newspapers and Yattar Yattar magazine and all of them are very supportive of our work and are always willing to support us with free editorial of events wherever possible. We also have regular advertising with Yattar Yattar.

Given that GRW was almost non-existent in the North 5 years ago I feel extremely proud that we are a well-established charity in this region now and seem to be going from strength to strength and I know that the whole of my team are looking forward to what the future holds in our region.

3.3. South East Wales

Jonathan Baker

The 2013/ 2014 fundraising season has been a very busy time in South East Wales.

A total of £12, 183 was raised between March and the end of December 2013, with almost £2500 having been raised so far in 2014.

Again the focus has been mainly on street collections, plus attendance at the Llanthony Show, Talgarth Festival, and the Abergavenny Carnival, along with the Great British Greyhound Walk in Cardiff, and the presence of our volunteers at the "1000 Sighthounds" event in Devon in September. Volunteer numbers have grown throughout the year, and we now have a fantastic team of regular volunteers who are out braving the Welsh weather most weekends. The new merchandise has been selling well at our events, and support and genuine interest in the work we do is growing all the time.

Personally, I have been involved with a few other projects, including organising the Open Day at the sanctuary, and the Last Hope Walk, along with the "Photographing Hounds" event at Hillcrest.

The highlight of my year was the Open Day back in October. The Welsh weather threw everything it had at us beforehand, but on the day we were lucky. The skies were dry (although the ground was wet!) and people turned up....and more people...and more people! Approximately 150 people and around 100 hounds came along to see us officially open the sanctuary, and to celebrate our 25th Birthday. A very emotional day for everyone involved and I was very proud to stand with my fellow volunteers and all of our supporters and feel an enormous sense of achievement.

For the year ahead, we have even more street collections planned, and we now have a handful of volunteers in the Vale of Glamorgan and Pontypridd areas organising their own events and fundraising. We have the Llanthony Show and Talgarth Festival to look forward to again, and not forgetting the Great Summer Fayre in July!

It looks like 2014 will be busier than ever in South East Wales!

3.4. South west Wales

Jonathan and Claire Price

The focus in the SW area this past year has been to consolidate the great progress made during early 2013 which were our first few months as co-ordinators.

Between June 2013 and 2014 we have held 7 street collections and attended 8 shows/events. The geographical spread of these ranges from Neath in the East to Pembroke in the West and most places in-between.

The monies raised also varies greatly from just over £60 at a Xmas craft fair with one dog (Tilly!) through to the Swansea November street collection at £1150 with lots of dogs.

Our volunteer numbers have steadily increased and this we feel is down to a number of key reasons. Firstly as we have Hillcrest in our patch it has given people a focus for GRW and allowed us to benefit from that increased involvement. Secondly the two Volunteer gatherings we have held at Hillcrest have allowed us to recruit new help by allowing people to really see how those hours spent holding a collection bucket pay off.

Luckily over the past month we have been partnered with Support Adoption for Pets (a charity offshoot of Pets at Home) through the Fforestfach store in Swansea. This has entailed 3 meet and greet collection events at the store where we have had great volunteer help and the eventual proceeds of a month long raffle ticket campaign. We are on course for somewhere over £700, fingers crossed! We have had great support from the staff at the store and will be hoping this becomes a regular (annual) partnership.

The highlight for us this past year has been the sheer generosity of the Welsh public at all the events we have held, and in particular the amazing amount raised at the November street collection in Swansea. We really did feel we were going to be counting all night!

There are a handful of issues we want to develop over the coming year in the SW area;

To develop our media presence and engagement in order to raise our local profile given we have a large number of events planned for the remainder of the year. Maybe media 'templates' would help?

To hold more Volunteer gatherings and walks to broaden our volunteer base.

To develop the event booking system for the SW area to allow and encourage local volunteers to hold/attend shows etc. in their local patch.

3.5. Last Hope Walk and Last Hope Fund

Jonathan Baker

Our sponsored walk in 2013 saw us raise almost £1300 for the Last Hope fund. As this fund is used to treat dogs that would otherwise be put to sleep, this was a hugely successful result. Our chairman, Alain Thomas, was also interviewed on BBC Radio Wales to talk about the event, and about the work of GRW in its 20th year. The walk was well attended, with around 80 people and approximately 50 dogs! Our Last Hope raffle, a new feature, was also very popular, raising around £200 even though there were only three collars as prizes!

The event was re-organised for 2014, and yet again our supporters did us proud! With many faces old and new turning up on the day. This year we had a raffle again, but with 22 prizes this time, and again raising almost £200. There was also a short “parade” of dogs looking for homes, and we pushed the boat out and used the GRW marquee instead of the usual gazebo! We even had a second stall this year in the shape of Crafty Dog Designs Cymru and Chris and Armelle Dignam, who, along with Penny the greyhound, were there selling their preserves and glasswares, and promoting Chris’ new book “The Largest Rabbit”!

Thanks to sponsorship, donations and raffle ticket sales, in 2014 our Last Hope Sponsored Walk raised over £1400! This is significant as we move forward into the next year, where we will be working closely with trainers from Valley Stadium, working to help racing dogs who have come off the track and would normally be euthanized due to injuries sustained during racing. The Last Hope Fund will be used to treat and care for these animals in desperate need, and by working in partnership with Summerhill Vets in Newport, and St James’ Vets in Swansea, Greyhound Rescue Wales will be able to make even more of a difference by helping dogs from the last remaining Welsh track.

4.0. Retail Operations

4.1. Staffing

Lindsay Jackson

The existing GRW charity shop in Llandysul is volunteer run and managed by Liz Haines. Retail Development Managers have been appointed for North and South Wales in order to research locations, identify suitable premises and negotiate leases for a chain of Charity Shops in Greyhound Rescue Wales’ name. Michelle Durrant is the incumbent in the North of Wales and her first shop is open in Ruthin. Gerwyn Davies is responsible for South Wales and the opening of a shop in Abertillery is planned.

The Ruthin shop is managed by Lisa Durrant (no relation!) and she is supported by a team of volunteers.

Plans are in place to increase the number of shops across Wales and we hope to have four more in operation in the next year. This will require the appointment of more shop managers as new shops are opened.

4.2. Llandysul

Liz Haines

The success of the shop is entirely due to Liz Haines, the volunteer manager, and a small team of three dedicated and reliable volunteers.

Liz reports that the extremely wet weather and local flooding depressed trading over the winter months. However April was a good month and takings for May were promising at the time of writing.

The shop receives a steady supply of goods from local residents, while a core of regular shoppers generate much of the income.

While it is difficult to predict takings from one month to the next, over the course of a whole year the shop has continued to provide a substantial and regular income stream to support GRW activities. Liz and the team hope the shop will continue to generate a steady income over the coming year.

4.3. North Wales

Michelle Durrant

Having taken up appointment in September last year and tasked with the job of opening GRW charity shops in the north Wales region, there have been major challenges in locating suitable premises at affordable rent levels in towns that still have recognisable town centres – and that have some footfall. A “town” in the region of north Wales that I live may only have 4000 permanent residents and already support 7 charity shops, including a local dog rescue charity. Shop rents in such small towns are also often around the 12 thousand per annum level: a challenge indeed!

Given that GRW is not overly well known as a charity in the north Wales region and also that the bulk of the rehoming had been done in the north east Wales region, I decided to also search in this area for property. It is also rather more populous for 12 months of the year. Acquiring the current premises in Ruthin took rather longer than anticipated, but it opened on May 22nd. I'm already pleased with the way the town and other traders are welcoming us to the area. One of the other criteria for

choosing a locality for shop number one, was to engage with the local community, as without their support no shop will succeed.

Volunteer recruitment is going slowly but steadily and the shop manager has been in place for a couple of months. As a lurcher owner herself, she is extremely committed to raising both funds and the profile of GRW. Prior to getting the lease signed she was tirelessly driving around the area flyering people, talking to anybody who'd listen about what GRW was planning to do, making links and collecting donations.

I've also made links and met with the north Wales GRW team to discuss how we can work together to raise both funds and the profile of GRW in the region.

As GRW has only raised limited income through retail before and as systems, processes and procedures don't always exist – such things have to be set up up/written or designed for the first time – which can make many a small job rather larger than first thought! This will continue to be a challenge for the next 12 – 18 months as we continue to expand the retail operation and have to either design new systems or revisit existing draft procedures. Many larger charities have whole departments of full time staff to do such tasks, so it is to GRW's credit that so much progress has been made so far (you know who you are – thank you!)

As well as setting up “physical” charity shops, I've been keen to set up an eBay store to allow us to sell more specialist items or items that will not sell in the shops. The systems for this are now in place and this too will be being developed over time.

Raising income through retail development is definitely not a short term project and requires careful planning to ensure that each shop/ trading project has the potential to make a profit for the organisation: A piece of work that will be keeping quite a few of us busy for some time to come. The main aim is always helping to raise enough money to enable the charity to continue to rescue and rehome the dogs.

4.4. South Wales

Gerwyn Davies

The first part of the year was to look at trading opportunities within south Wales where a realistic business model could be rolled out.

The business model was to be on a property where there was low exposure in terms of terms whilst testing the geography and market support. In addition the first site would have to be within a small radius area to allow ease of travel for emergencies and cover.

The market opportunities in south Wales have been more challenging than first thought – e cigarette shops operating on rolling month contracts and more desirable properties attracting higher rentals. Those properties that fit some criteria have had

poor facilities or basements /upper rooms for sorting –which is not ideal for a volunteer workforce. A shop was identified in Abertillery and a lease document supplied but this has some insurance issues and is currently on hold.

Renewed focus on a wider catchment area together with new instructions to lettings agents is the priority to secure a premises and trade. Back of house templates and operational procedures are in place ready for the site. There are a number of new properties on the market and negotiation will be key to start our first presence in south Wales.

4.4. Merchandise

Sharon Lewis

Having taken on board everyone's comments regarding the merchandise it was agreed that I was to source items that were more doggie related for the 2014 stock. All of the items have come within the pre agreed budget.

I have worked hard to comply with the criteria and feel extremely proud of the items we have in stock. All items are available in the web shop.

We have a local gentleman who has kindly offered to make jewellery for GRW to sell. He does not charge us for any of these items therefore all money raised is profit.

The best sellers by far have been the martingale collars that are all handmade plus the GRW hoodies.

The web shop is working extremely well and seems very popular with our members. I have also noticed that some orders are coming in from areas outside of Wales.

The majority of orders are dispatched within 24 hours with the exception to clothing these items have to be ordered.

GRW will be selling Christmas cards this year. The Design a Christmas Card Competition has been launched and children are invited to create a picture suitable for the Christmas cards. We are looking for 2 top designs to be made into the cards.

5.0. Income Generation

5.1. Sponsor a Dog and Sponsor a Kennel

Andy Jackson.

The Sponsor a Dog (SAD) scheme is designed to help GRW look after those dogs that cannot be re-homed because of their awful past experiences and who have become “long-term residents”. These hounds are cared for permanently by foster carers.

The Sponsor a Kennel (SAK) scheme works in the following way: we have several kennels which we use for sponsorship. As a dog gets re-homed another homeless hound takes its place in the kennel. Sponsors are not just sponsoring one dog, who could be homed quite quickly, but are sponsoring a kennel in which many dogs will come and go throughout the year. Currently we have 18 sponsorships for SAK.

SAD and SAK has grown throughout 2013-14 and has been assisted by the very real presence of Hillcrest where most of our dogs are to be found. The need for regular revenue means that we are always in need of sponsorship of these two schemes. Currently we have 8 sponsorships for SAD.

SAD and SAK donations can be made at: <http://greyhoundrescuewales.co.uk/how-to-donate/>

5.2. Monthly lottery / Monthly dog show

Andy Jackson

The monthly lottery is a prize draw through a monthly £1 contribution which buys one entry into the draw. Instead of a number members register the names of their current or past dogs. The names of three dogs are drawn each month and they share just under 50% of the total takings for the month in prize money. The balance contributes to GRW funds.

The number of members' entries has grown steadily from a figure of 103 in January 2012 to 172 at the end of May 2014. The monthly dog show is always looking for new entries and this can be done via our web site at:

<http://greyhoundrescuewales.co.uk/promote/>

6.0. Communications

6.1. Website

Andy Jackson

A major success in 2013 has been the re-launch of the GRW web site. This has transformed the way in which we operate and must in part be a major contributor to the increased number of hounds re-homed.

All of our current processes can be accessed via the new site, including all forms of contacting us, requesting to home or re-home a hound, sponsorships, documents, news, what's on and our web shop. The site has received 270,000 page views between April 2013 and April 2014 and has directly raised over £4,000 via the available PayPal features.

In 2014-15 we will continue to hone our operation and development of the web site to enhance our 'reach' out to our members and supporters.

6.2. Social Media

Jonathan Baker

GRW have two Facebook pages – Our “Main” Facebook page, where we post our news and updates, and our “Become a supporter” group page, where YOU post your stories. Our main page now has almost 1400 “likes” and our group page has almost 1600 members.

These pages have proved an essential, popular and exciting place for us and our supporters to share stories, photographs and news, and also for people to seek advice and guidance, and of course to report on the loss of any beloved hounds that have passed away.

There is a real “community” feel to these pages, and although things CAN get a little heated sometimes, most of the time it is wonderful to see so many people getting on with each other and sharing their common interest – Hounds!

All regional coordinators have used Facebook extensively to promote events, recruit volunteers and report their successes. It has been a great place to hold “online” events, such as the “Photographing Hounds Exhibition” and the “Greyhound Selfies” event!

Facebook has also given us the chance to raise funds through direct appeals to our supporters. We raised money to buy the agility equipment for the sanctuary. We used it to start our appeal for the Last Hope Fund, and it has proved to be a very successful way of appealing for this type of help.

Facebook has proven invaluable to us as a tool to help find homes for dogs – particularly “special” cases who need a special home or foster home. Numerous

dogs have been helped in this way through each appeal being shared far & wide by our supporters.

2014 will see the introduction of Twitter into the GRW social media circus! This could also prove to be a useful tool for us to promote our news and events – now we just need to figure out how it works!

We'd like to say a special "Thank You" to everyone who has helped make our social media presence successful, engaging and exciting!

6.3. National Telephone Line 0300 0123 999 Andy and Lindsay Jackson.

The 0300 national call line is a key route into GRW and has a key role to play in the co-ordinated collection and dissemination of information. All calls to the 0300 number are logged on our web site and this feature is currently being used internally within the Rescue Team to create a shared events log to help us with the business process to demonstrate the outcomes of all enquiries to GRW. The 0300 web logging is also available for 'self-referral' by those who might have alternately used the landline number.

In the period April 2013-March 2014, 583 calls were made to the 0300 number with 21 hours spent in answering these calls. Our service providers also email any voice mail left directly to GRW so no call is missed. We will continue to operate the 0300 service through 2014-15.

6.4. Greyhound Chat Andy Jackson

Greyhound chat is our (now) twice yearly electronic newsletter that is emailed to all supporters for whom we have an email address. The format and delivery of Greyhound Chat has been changed and now uses the 'MailChimp' delivery system. This provides a fresh, corporate and professional look to what originally was our 'e-newsletter' and is a function of our web site. The electronic Greyhound Chat is a visual headlining email sheet that leads to greater in depth pages that are hosted on the GRW web site. The system provides us with easy to use updating features and with very detailed analysis of our 'reach' to our subscribers. We will continue to enhance Greyhound Chat during the coming year.

6.5. Greyhound Express

Amanda Rees

Greyhound Express: The charity newsletter, which is posted to all its members, has continued to be produced twice a year. 1000 are printed every March and September. The aim is to raise awareness of the charity and its work and to keep members informed, e.g. rescue work, rehoming figures and promotional events. It is also used as a tool to help recruit volunteers and when necessary to assist in public relations, promoting networking with supporting organisations. It is a full colour, A4, 12-page publication. Its most recent change in March 2014 was to bring its corporate identity in line with recent developments, in accordance to the GRW branding guidelines.

6.6. Information and Publicity Amanda Rees and Andy Jackson

Work is being undertaken to develop charity information leaflets to GRW's branding guidelines. The general leaflet is currently being worked on. Leaflets were created previously and now need to reflect the corporate identity of the charity, in line with guidelines and other communication platforms, such as the website and other publications. New leaflets are created as the needs of the charity change, or dictate.

A new "welcome and adoption pack" for adopters of a dog from GRW, bringing together all the information previously contained in a number of separate leaflets has been produced and is now sent to all new adopters of GRW hounds. It is also available to view or download at <http://greyhoundrescuewales.co.uk/grw-documents/>.

6.7. Media Work

Kerry Baker

To celebrate GRW's 20th anniversary we were very pleased that our Chairman Alain Thomas was invited to be interviewed on BBC Radio Wales to talk about what we do and the foundations of the Charity. Gaining media interest in our work is sometimes quite difficult, so this was a big success.

We continue to work on other avenues via mainstream newspapers, including promotion of events and individual appeals of special hounds looking for homes. Contacts for our stories are building up covering the whole of Wales. 'Adam Lewis' a very special greyhound in North Wales has been featured in the local newspapers several times and has even met the Mayor of Llandudno. So, it's onwards and upwards towards the next year as we build upon our media successes from this year.

6.8. Advertising

Alain Thomas

Paid-for advertising has been maintained in selected publications. These are: Yellow pages, Yell.com, Your Dog magazine, and Animal Rescue magazine.

Advertisements have also been placed in Yattar Yattar magazine to raise GRW's profile in north Wales and these have led to additional free editorial coverage. The post of Advertising Officer is currently vacant and an early task of a new appointee will be to review current advertising.

6.9. Public Affairs and campaigns

Alain Thomas and Jon Trew

GRW has continued to support the development of the Greyhound Rescue Association of Ireland (GRAI) through participating in planning meetings and attending the annual Walk for Greyhounds through Dublin City Centre. GRW has helped GRAI successfully make the transition to an independent organisation with all its key officers now in post and living in Ireland. GRAI's main aim for the coming year is to promote the message that "Greyhounds make wonderful Pets" throughout Ireland. This is a key building block for the future as greyhounds are not yet seen as good pets in many parts of Ireland. GRW will continue to support GRAI in its work.

GRW is a member of the UK Greyhound Forum which meets, usually twice a year, and brings together senior representatives of the racing industry and of welfare organisations. The Forum seeks to address welfare issues around greyhound racing in the UK.

GRW took part in the first International Greyhound Welfare Audio Conference .organised by Four Paws UK on 24 April 2014. GRW represented Wales. Organisations from Wales, England, Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain and the USA took part with email updates covering Australia, Belgium, New Zealand and Asia. Participants shared information about welfare issues in their respective countries. Quarterly calls have been agreed with a view to creating a community world-wide to support each other, exchange information and to work together as a strong lobbying group to improve greyhound welfare globally.

7.0. Co-ordination

7.1. Aims, objectives and strategy

Alain Thomas

In recent years GRW's objectives and strategy have been directed towards making the best possible use of the legacy of the late Lee Frank. Most recently the focus has been on implementing the findings of the Legacy Working Party which was set up to recommend as to the best use of this legacy. The two main recommendations of this group were to purchase a property for use as a Sanctuary and to develop a chain of charity shops. Both have now been implemented; the sanctuary is operational and the process of developing the charity shops is underway.

A sustained level of effort will be required to consolidate and develop the sanctuary and to support the development of a chain of charity shops. GRW must therefore ensure it retains the capacity to do this.

However, a time will soon come when GRW will need to devise new objectives and a fresh strategy which reflects the current context in terms of welfare issues and the new and greater capacity which GRW has to respond to these issues.

The AGM of 2014 will begin this process by consulting members in attendance about the future priorities of GRW and the new Executive Committee will have the task of taking the process forward after the AGM. .

7.2. Structure and management arrangements

Alain Thomas

A new management structure for GRW has been approved by the GRW Executive Committee.

Activities are now organised under seven "Directorates": Finance, Organisation, Personnel, Strategy, Communications, Regional Operations, and Rescue Operations. A voluntary Director will be in charge of each area of activity.

These changes are intended to make the voluntary management arrangements of GRW more effective and sustainable by identifying roles more clearly and sharing responsibilities among a greater number of office holders.

7.3. Personnel Management

Lindsay Jackson

Work is ongoing for the development of systems and processes for the management of Personnel employed by Greyhound Rescue Wales. We have had to move significantly as an organisation now we have these new responsibilities as employers and it has been a steep learning curve for all of us. We are very fortunate that our employees are very effective and have been patient as we learn together!

We have clear systems now for the appointment of fixed term and permanent employees, for induction and the ongoing professional development of our staff, as well as for the management of grievances and complaints. We have taken professional advice about contracts of employment and have a developing Staff Handbook.

We will need to continue to work in this area as the number of people we employ increases and we face the opportunities and challenges that this presents to a mainly volunteer organisation.

7.4. Membership

Andy Jackson.

During 2013 the whole membership database was checked and updated and, as part of our technical developments, turned into an online system. Currently this system is only available to executive members or members who have a reason and need to access information. The new database contains all supplied information about members, their form of membership, dogs, adoptions, fosters, renewals and provides a report of homings and, dogs in our care for any period. All dogs are logged into this system as they are taken in and updated when adopted, linking the membership record to the dogs record. We can now check at an instant any dog that has been found - this has already proved to be invaluable with lost hounds. We are also able to create lists for our regional co-ordinators of members in their area, build accurate mailing labels for Greyhound News. Most importantly, the information is no longer at risk of being compromised by changing personnel and is available to all those with access at any time.

We still however have some gaps in our historical information and we continue to try to harvest this through mail out letters accompanying Greyhound Express distribution. In 2014 we aim to try to update our 'lost' information on dogs.

As of February 2014 we had 926 registered individual members of varying categories. We continue in 2014-15 to make our 'Stand up for Greyhounds and Lurchers' appeal which aims at increasing our membership base.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Trustees as at 22.05.14.

Lynda Anthony (co-opted)
Jon Baker
Kerry Baker
Sian Edwards
Andy Jackson
Lindsay Jackson
Sarah Marsh
Gaynor Morgan (co-opted)
Rachel Phillip
Alain Thomas
Roger Thomas
Jon Trew
Angie Webb

Resigned During Year

Andrew Burn
Sue Morrison

Appendix 2: Dates of Meetings of Trustees 2013-14.

Meetings were held on a Sunday between 11am and 4pm at Hillcrest Sanctuary unless otherwise stated.

8th July 2013 (Held in Builth Wells)
18th September 2013
17th November 2013
26th January 2014
16th March 2014
27th April 2014