

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2010

Big Archie Fat Cat



Archie is only 4 years old and was frankly not destined for a long life when he was brought in to us. Clearly suffering horribly with a weight problem, Archie weighed in at a staggering 9.35kg on arrival. As the average weight for a cat is nearer 4kg, Archie was morbidly obese. His excess weight was leading to other problems for him. His coat was dull his skin very dandruffy and he was disinclined to move off his bed - which we had to put on the floor for him as getting up onto the shelf was difficult. Three months on and Archie is making real progress. His last weigh in put him at 7.30kg - over 2 bags of sugar less than when he arrived. He has a glossy coat and is now far more mobile, climbing the shelves, playing with toys and running around with other cat friends. His favourite bed is now on the top shelf of his pen and he will sit looking longingly at the door to the great outdoors. All our other rescue cats love him and seem to naturally gravitate towards him for a chat and a chin rub, earning him the affectionate nick name of "Uncle Archie" amongst staff. Although not a natural lap cat, he does enjoy lots of cuddles and loves to follow staff around to ensure that their standard of work meets his approval! Archie has done brilliantly with

us but is very ready now to go to a new home. So far no one has wanted him - let's face it, the poor boy is nothing special to look - but he is a really great cat who deserves a happy ending. Archie is on a strict diet and exercise programme which will need to be continued in his new home. He is good with most other cats and with people, but wary of children. He will need a home that is happy to continue to help him stay slim and happy!

The Future

As you can see from the news in this edition we are experiencing a very busy time. The animal welfare demand is greater than we can meet, and we are working closely with other centres, services and foster homes to manage the situation as best we can for each animal that needs help.

We are having to draw on our reserves to meet rising costs and without your help our situation will become very difficult this year. We know that everyone is experiencing the pressure of the recession and the uncertainties in its wake. But we also know that you care about animal welfare and about Happy Landings and so we want to be honest with you. Please think about the best way you can give us the help we need. Think about who you know, family, friends, colleagues and how you can get their support for us too.

Some ways to help:

- Join Happy Landings own 'lottery', and tell others about it too. Our 200 Club offers the chance to win £50 each month and there is an annual draw with a top prize of £1000. Profits from the 200 Club go towards our vet bills.
- Sponsoring an animal unit costs a few pounds each month and is a great way for a family, group of friends, school or business to support us. Each unit

sponsorship help with the cost of food and other materials and you get updates on 'your' animal until it has a 'happy ending' and is re-homed.

- Organise a fundraising event - we can help you. Invite the people you know to your home, garden, school, office. Have a clear out and a garage sale, a 50:50 clothes sale, cake and coffee morning, open your garden and serve afternoon tea.
- Check out Utilities Warehouse and see how they can help you to save money on your household bills. Sign up with them quoting us as your contact and we get contributions towards our bills in return.
- Support our events - join our online network or keep a check on our website for details.

We also give talks and meet the animals sessions so if you, or someone you know, is looking for a speaker or an attraction at an event please ask for more details. And if you have an idea of your own then tell us! We'll help you to make it happen.

Please take a few minutes to decide what you can do, and do it today so that we can keep on helping the animals that find their way into our care.

Don't forget to let us have your contribution for the next newsletter. Or if you want to talk to us about a sponsored event or to help with fundraising in any way.



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New Faces

We would like to welcome Philippa Forrester, Author, BBC TV & Radio presenter, and Bel Mooney, Broadcaster and Journalist, on board as new patrons. Philippa is well known for her interest in wildlife and animals, Bel for her weekly columns in the Times and Daily Mail. Despite their very busy schedules, they



are eager to support Happy Landings and the work that we do - a huge thank you to you both, it is great to have you on board.

Doggy Tails

We have seen an excessive amount of ex-breeding dogs in recent months. These poor dogs are kept purely as breeding machines, banged up in outdoor kennels and sheds with nothing in life but producing puppies that can be sold for profit. With big bellies, no muscles, boobs to the floor, nails curling, skin and coat struggling badly from the demands being made on their bodies, they are no longer wanted once past their breeding best. They have never been in a home, never been on a lead, have no experience of normal life and are very nervous initially.



These dogs have taken a lot of input, both from staff and their adopters, to begin to get them right, but they are all doing brilliantly. Pictured above, Poppy, ex-breeding girl, now fully adjusted to normal life! Poppy, a sweet natured little Jack



Russell, crawled along the floor on her belly when she arrived. She had spent her life locked in a small wooden kennel, churning out litter after litter of puppies on a 6 monthly programme. Nervous of any interaction with humans, she would persistently lie flat on her back whenever we tried to do anything with her. It took weeks of working with her just to get her comfortable with wearing a harness and lead for a little walk without her constantly submitting in fear. Fortunately it didn't take too long to match Poppy with her perfect new home where Lin and Rob are doing wonderful things with her and send us fabulous regular updates:-
"Poppy is doing brilliantly, you just can not

fault her, she is so willing to learn and so wants to please. She is a very quick learner, she has learnt how to sit and is getting better everyday, she almost stays, but we are getting there. Her confidence is just amazing, growing by the day, and very at ease. Lots of my friends and family have been round to meet her, she is so happy to meet everyone, she loves people, adores her food, and tells me when it's her tea time. Today she has had her first game with a ball, once she grasped what she had to do with it there was no stopping her. She makes me laugh, she almost throws the ball in the air and plays with it, you can see that she is thoroughly enjoying herself. Best of all she is a different dog in the fields, like a spring lamb, it is so lovely to see. I have taken her off the lead now in the fields, and she comes back to me on every call, no trouble at all. We don't hear a thing from her at night, wrap her up in her blanket, kiss her goodnight, and that's where she stays all night. How lucky are we."

Nowzad Dogs Reunion at Happy Landings

Laila and Patch are two of six puppies rescued from the war-torn provinces of Afghanistan by Pen Farthing, ex Royal Marine Sergeant and founder of Nowzad charity. Barely surviving the extremes of temperature with no real shelter or food, their chances of survival were bleak and they were lucky to be rescued by the troops. After their stint in quarantine kennels all went off to their new homes in the UK, but unfortunately Laila's didn't work out so she came to Happy Landings to be re-homed. As Laila's life experience had really only been surviving and kennels, she was fostered by a member of staff to give her some experience of home life. She loved the other dogs and was very comfortable in their company, but was very nervous of people, crouching down and turning her head away, avoiding hand contact if she could. She loved being in a home, but would chew anything that happened to be by her mouth - table corners, chair legs, books,

Latest News...

Anyone who enjoyed reading Pen Farthing's first book about the dogs of Afghanistan will be pleased to hear that his second book is due for release soon. Torbay Bookshop are taking orders for signed copies with a donation towards Happy Landings. Ring or email us to receive an order form for "One Dog at a Time" or the new book "No Place Like Home".

Have you or someone you know, ever wanted to try rock climbing? The AdventureFitness Company is offering supporters of Happy Landings the unique opportunity to experience rock climbing while raising funds to help the animals you care about. The climbs take place on Dartmoor from 10am to 4pm, for one or two people, and at a time and date to suit you. Visit their website for more details www.theadventurefitnesscompany.com/charityclimb.



remote controls, phones, sofa cushions...sofa arms....sofa backs!! She was also great fun to walk, very inexperienced and bouncing around like a puppy, chasing after any leaf or scrap of paper being blown by the wind with her foster mum being pulled along behind her! She learnt to walk sensibly on a lead and harness, how to come back when called (with cheese, obviously!) and that sofas are for lying on rather than eating (thankfully it looks like sofa number 3 will be the last!). When the opportunity to reunite the two dogs occurred we were delighted. Pen and Lisa, who had adopted Patch, brought him to Happy Landings and it wasn't long before he and Laila remembered one another. After an initial greeting and an all over sniff they were quickly playing chase games together in our exercise paddock and even sharing the water bowl, once a commodity so valuable they would fight over it. It was wonderful to see both dogs looking so happy and relaxed together. Laila has now been adopted by foster mum Lyn as both she and Laila realised that they really couldn't bear to re-home Laila to anyone else – we are all thrilled for both of them. We would like to extend a big thank you to Pen and the Nowzad team for their much valued support to Happy Landings. To find out more about their work please visit www.nowzaddogs.co.uk



Events

Come and visit our stand at the following:

- June 12th Collett Park – Shepton Mallet
- June 19th Aldon UK Agility Event - Yeovil
- July 24th Hardington Mandeville Event – Near Yeovil
- Aug 15th Mid Somerset Show – Shepton Mallet
- Aug 22nd Brown Cow Open Day - Pilton
- Sept 11th Ashcott Harvest Fair - Ashcott near Street
- Sept 18th Frome Dog Awareness Day - Victoria Park, Frome

This year we are splitting our extremely popular Fun Dog Show and Open Day into two events. Both will be great days and are a must for your diaries.

Our Open Day & Grand Car Boot will be on Sunday June 13th, at Happy Landings, an ideal opportunity to see what we do in depth, meet some of the staff and animals and have all the fun of a car boot at the same time. Car Boot Pitches £5, please contact us to book. 1pm till 4pm, car boots can set up from 12 midday.

Our Fun Dog Show will be on Sunday September 12th from 12pm with fun dog classes, stalls, displays, dog agility and alpacas. This year we will be holding it at Pylle Village Hall and surrounding fields where there will be more space for parking, which has caused a problem in previous years!

Dumped

Numbers of straying and dumped animals are on the increase as rescue centres struggle to make space for all the animals in need. Sometimes they are left at our gate, sometimes just dumped in the country and left to fend for themselves. Last week's emergency intake was a pregnant cat who had been living rough in Yeovil for some time. She had managed to survive by begging from house to house, and had claimed a quiet garden for her own where she could generally be found either on or under the garden chair, depending on the weather. Although we hadn't really got the space to take her we did – everywhere's full and she could not give birth where she was! She has just had her litter of four, all fit and healthy. This week's emergency was more difficult, acting on a call from a dog walker whose German Shepherd had found a scared dog hiding in a hedge, could we help? Staff left immediately and met with the dog walker who led them to the spot – we would never have found him otherwise, he was so well hidden. Deep in a thick hawthorn hedge, cowering amongst the brambles and nettles, was a growling bundle of matted fur. When we eventually managed to coax the terrified dog out it was evident that this poor boy needed immediate veterinary attention. Weighing practically nothing with clear signs of muscle wastage, his matted coat stank and we could barely see his eyes through the mass of fur. His extremely painful rear end was filthy and infected with blue bottles



laying eggs in the mess. With his head hanging and legs wobbling, he had all but given up hope. The vet that dealt with him was great, very gentle, very kind, very steady – and reduced to tears by his condition. An immediate programme of painkillers, anti-biotics and disinfectant baths was set up, but we were warned that with such a serious infection he may not pull through. Amazingly, rather than being the elderly mongrel he originally appeared to be, he is actually a young pedigree. The microchip we found in him led us to previous owners who had sold him through "Trade It" a few months ago to the first person who turned up with cash in their hand and they can provide no clues as to who is responsible for his appalling condition. We can still be amazed at the thoughtlessness and cruelty of people after all. Muggy-Mugwai, as he has been named, is now a different dog, clean, clipped out



and beginning to enjoy life again. He is learning to trust us and is beginning to bond with specific staff members, despite his ordeal. Although he will need ongoing veterinary care for a little while yet our vets are now hopeful that he will make a full recovery. Staff at the centre are delighted with his progress. He has just been reserved by one of our boarding customers so he will soon be embarking on his new happy and secure life.

Sad Goodbyes

Our heartfelt sympathies to John Gwilliam, who lost his wife Pam to cancer after a long and determined fight. Both Pam and John have been very active supporters of Happy Landings for many years. Pam will be missed by all.



We have sadly lost one of our lovely Pot Bellied Pigs, Boris, to kidney failure. All visitors to the Shelter enjoyed his escapades which usually revolved around food with his partner in crime Primrose. Primrose amazed us all with the gentleness of her goodbye to him. She is doing really well but if anyone has a lonely male looking for a single, only slightly overweight, beauty and would like to re-home Primrose then please get in touch.

Thank You

As always, far too many people to thank everyone individually, so a few highlights. Thank you to...

Lee Parsons & her team for organising the Frome Sponsored Walk; Tom Coton for his sponsored Bath Marathon; Lesley Hill of Frome Fundraising Group; Framptons for their donations of James Well Beloved; all the wonderful people who put food into our food collection boxes around Somerset; to Animal Affairs at Keynsham; to Caroline & Brian, Audrey and Kay for all the goodies they bring up to us; to all of you who have set up a standing order or donated on line; a huge thank you to old hand DIYer Stu for all the years he has given of his expertise, and to new helper Des Arnold for the massive difference he has made. A really special thank you to Mrs Chinn for monies given in memory of her husband and also to Mrs Sands for the same.

New Ferret Dens



Unwanted and straying ferrets are often brought to us. We neuter them all, match them into social groups for company and work with them to teach them not to nip before making them available for re-homing. The thing that was seriously letting us down was lack of proper ferret facilities. Bodgeing and making do where we could, we were finding it increasingly difficult to provide for our ferrets as we would wish which was both frustrating and time consuming. However, all that has now changed. We – and the ferrets – have been very lucky this year - a very kind lady who wishes to remain anonymous donated a chunk of money specifically for building proper ferret facilities. With a second generous donation (and again anonymous – kind people often like to remain quiet about how wonderful they are!) and a little top up from Michael Eavis and hey presto, we have ferret dens. It was a little bit of a nightmare whilst they were being built, admittedly, but well worth all the extra inconvenience as our ferrets now have a whole small block of purpose built ferret

dens. We have loved being able to move our ferrets into their new dens, with varying tubes and different levels to play in, bed areas and a range of toys, the snug, insulated dens are brilliant. They even have additional little holes with doors between each pen so that we can mix different groups as appropriate. Charging around squeaking excitedly as they explore their new homes, it is clear that the ferrets love it too! THANK YOU.

Can You Help Botch?

Botch, 5 year old Staffy, relatives rang us concerned for his welfare. Having not seen him for a month they had been horrified to discover the now malnourished and subdued dog being kept tethered to a kitchen unit all day, no exercise, no stimulation and quite clearly insufficient food. We are full and so give other numbers of bigger centres who may squeeze a space for him. They phone back – no one else can help either...so we spend the weekend working out how we can create an isolation space and move everything around to get him in. The huge harness they bring him in on used to



fit him, although you'd never believe it. His skin is scurfy and scabby with patches of hair loss, and there is a wound on his leg that is refusing to heal. With all his bones showing and a head that is far too big for such a little body, this depressed dog was a very sorry sight. Now Botch is a different dog - with a round, chunky body and glossy coat he is now fit and loves to play. Botch loves going walking with other dogs and knows how to walk politely on a lead. He loves any toy that's new, especially ones he can chew, and a good game of ball. He enjoys being groomed and really really loves to be cuddled. Botch has made a full recovery with us and developed into a smashing interactive dog. The only thing he is lacking now is a home. Is there anyone who would like a lovely canine companion?