

107

Spring 2021

Price £2 (free to members)



# animalwatch

PUTTING ANIMALS ON THE AGENDA OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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AND COMPANION ANIMALS

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## DORIS' DIARY

Hello! My name is Doris, and I am a Border Leicester ewe with very large ears! I was rescued by ASWA secretary Sam Chandler, as I had outlived my usefulness as a breeding ewe.

Below are some great events we may enjoy!

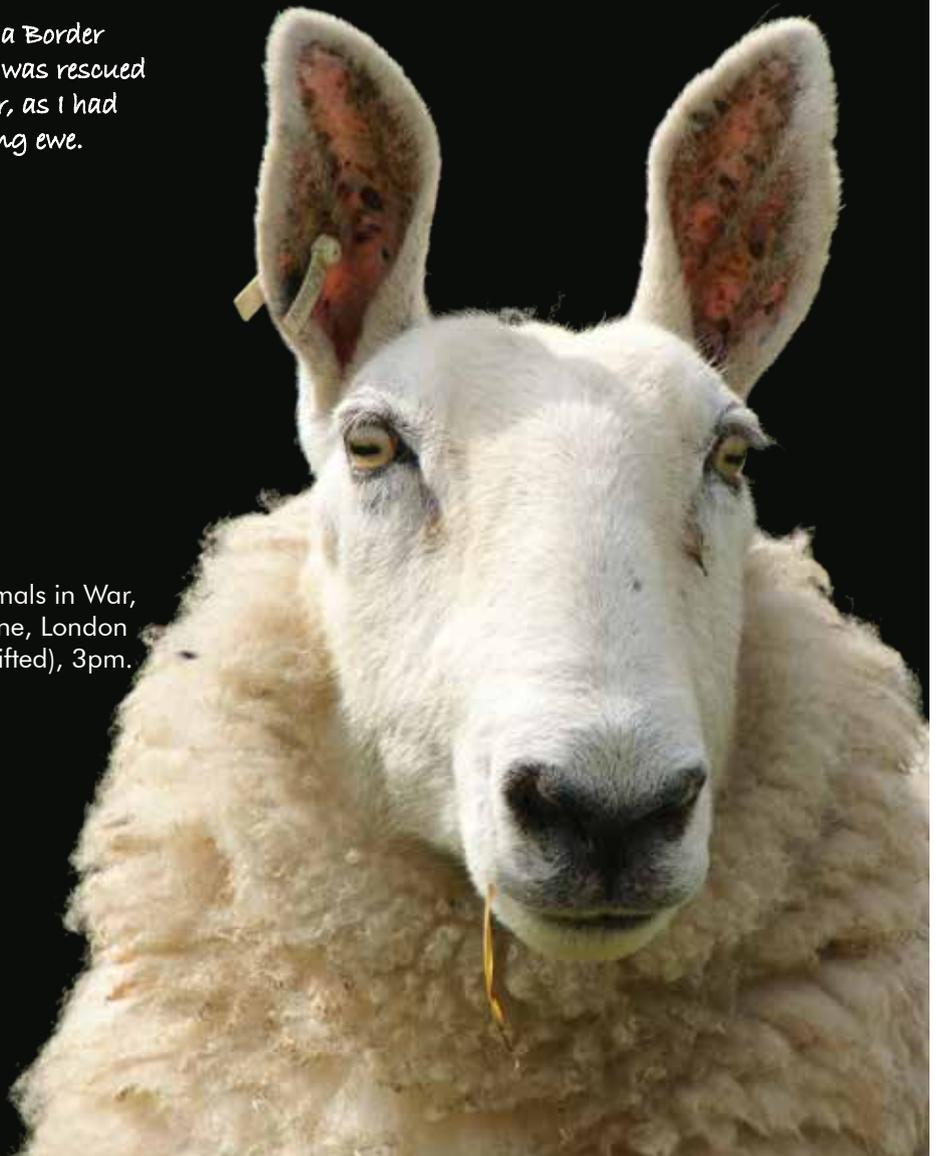
**Wednesday 5 May**  
ASWA AGM, online, 6pm.

**Sunday 3 October**  
Animal Welfare Sunday.

ASWA Annual Service, details tbc.

**Sunday 14 November**  
ASWA Remembrance Service for Animals in War, The Animals' War Memorial, Park Lane, London (subject to COVID restrictions being lifted), 3pm.

For further details of events, please visit the website: [www.aswa.org.uk](http://www.aswa.org.uk)



# HELLO AND WELCOME TO ANIMALWATCH

Welcome to *Animalwatch*. In this issue, we focus on companion animals and how important they can be in people's lives. We also provide information about the upcoming elections for ASWA committee members and reports on the creative ways in which churches celebrated Animal Welfare Sunday during the pandemic.

We hope that you enjoy keeping up-to-date with news and information on our website. Do check regularly for resources and information about upcoming events. Please do make a note of the dates in Doris' Diary and see the information in this issue about the upcoming AGM.

Please send any items for consideration for *Animalwatch* to Revd Jennifer Brown, Editor, PO Box 7193, Hook, Hampshire, RG27 8GT. Email is even better – [animalwatch@jenbrown.org.uk](mailto:animalwatch@jenbrown.org.uk). Please note that, owing to space restrictions, it may not be possible to print all contributions. Please refer to the information about contributions to *Animalwatch* for further details and restrictions on submissions.

**Jennifer Brown, Editor**

The deadline for the Summer magazine is **Monday 7th June 2021**.

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## ASWA SPEAKERS AVAILABLE

If you have a group or service that would welcome an ASWA speaker, we would love to hear from you! We often travel a fair distance so please call to discuss it. We usually bring a stall and literature and always liaise with our hosts to ensure the talk is appropriate for their particular audience. While COVID restrictions continue, our speakers can join a service or meeting using Zoom or another online meeting platform. Keep the invitations rolling in!

## A WARM WELCOME

**to our new members. We look forward to hearing from you.**

We are pleased to welcome ten new members who have joined since the publication of the Autumn issue.

To all our new members we extend a warm welcome and we would ask that you, along with our existing members, encourage others who share your concern for animal welfare to join. Introductory leaflets are available from the Secretary.

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## CONTRIBUTIONS TO ANIMALWATCH

We very much welcome contributions to *Animalwatch* from our readers. We are interested to hear about the positive things being done for animals in your churches and communities. We also welcome informed pieces on specific areas of animal welfare, such as items relating to animal welfare law, the history of animal welfare, and theology. Articles should be submitted to the

Editor either as typed manuscript by post or by email as Word documents, with any accompanying photos sent as high-resolution jpg files. Items submitted as pdf files or email text cannot be accepted. Submissions must be the contributor's (sender's) own original work, and (unless otherwise agreed) not published elsewhere. Items may be edited for length, readability, and

appropriateness of content. Publication of submitted items is at the Editor's discretion. In submitting an article, the contributor assigns copyright for the piece to ASWA. For items submitted by email, please assume your item has been received unless you get a delivery failure notice. The Editor is unable to acknowledge receipt of individual submissions.

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## ASWA MERCHANDISE

**Available from the ASWA web site**

**ASWA literature:** a range of literature on a variety of animal welfare subjects available.

**Egg Cards:** egg shaped cards with a prayer printed on one side. £0.20 each.

**ASWA bags:** handy cotton shopping bag with the ASWA logo. £4 each.

**ASWA badges:** show your support for ASWA by wearing a lapel badge with the ASWA logo. £1.50 each.

**Sticker sheets & books:** Activity sheet with stickers (ravens or bees), £2.00 each.



# GOOD NEWS

## Southwark Cathedral provides home for a cat in need

The community of Southwark Cathedral were deeply saddened by the death of their cathedral Cat, Doorkins Magnificat, in September 2020. One of the things that Doorkins achieved in her time at Southwark was to establish a connection between the cathedral and Catcuddles Sanctuary. And so it was that the cathedral team were able to open their doors to Hodge, who had been rescued by Catcuddles when in need of serious veterinary care. Hodge now has a secure, loving home in the cathedral. This isn't just good news for Hodge, it's also good news for the cathedral. As well as acting as a rodent deterrent, Hodge will also bring joy and delight, not only to the cathedral staff, but to members of the congregation and visitors. Hodge can be followed on social media, @HodgeTheCat (Twitter) and hodge\_thecat (Instagram).



Photo courtesy of Southwark Cathedral

# NEWS & NOTICES

## Don't forget, you can follow ASWA on Twitter – aswanews

You can also keep up with what's new via our website – [www.aswa.org.uk](http://www.aswa.org.uk).

Check the web site for the latest resources, including materials for children & youth.



## Animal-friendly Church award

Is your church animal friendly? ASWA sponsors the Animal-friendly Church award to recognise those churches that take animal welfare seriously as part of their ministry and mission. Churches can apply at any time and those meeting the necessary criteria will be awarded animal-friendly church status. Information is available on the website or from the Secretary.



## ASWA AGM

This year's annual general meeting will once again be held on-line. The AGM will take place on Wednesday 5th May, 6.00pm. Please contact the Secretary to receive the link to attend.

## Protecting Pigeons

ASWA member Sylvia Browning has started an online petition in favour of a law to protect pigeons from human aggression and abuse. It is distressing to see pigeon's being harassed and even injured, often by children, in public places, and the law that Sylvia would like to see enacted would protect pigeons from such cruelty. If you would like to support this effort, you can sign the petition by going to <http://chnng.it/SZjDqPJzDx>.

# ASWA NEWS

## Openings on ASWA Committee

The ASWA Committee are a group of ASWA members who volunteer to manage the day-to-day running of ASWA. Because ASWA is a charity, committee members are trustees with legal obligations. As with any organisation, the ASWA Committee benefits when it has a diverse membership and enough 'hands-on-deck' to manage the workload. We are currently looking for members interested in standing for election to the committee. If you think this might be for you, please contact the Secretary for an initial conversation.

# TALKING POINT

## Dogs in lockdown

We've all heard about the increase in the number of people wanting a dog as lockdowns in different countries have forced people to stay at home. A dog can provide healthy companionship for someone who is at home, particularly if that someone lives alone. Dogs also encourage us to get out and do some exercise, as they need to be walked daily. But dogs, like humans, are social animals. They need companionship as much as we do. So what happens when everyone now working from home has to go back to the office? And what if people who found having a dog a delight when there was nothing to do but stay at home finds it a burden when it becomes possible once again to have a social life outside the house? It's wonderful that many dogs that were in shelters have now found homes, but are we giving enough thought to the long-term needs of the dogs? And have we considered the knock-on effects of the demand for puppies – more business, not just for legitimate and responsible breeders, but potentially also for puppy farms and irresponsible breeders? Are we thinking enough about the future as well as our present situation?

# NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

## SOUTH AFRICA



### Animal clinic perseveres through pandemic and violence

SA.MAST, the South Africa Mass Animal Sterilisation Trust, has continued to provide care to animals through 2020 despite the pandemic and violent land invasions in the area around our clinic.

During the year, we were able to provide over 1700 sterilisations and nearly 4000 vaccinations, in addition to more than 28,000 other veterinary treatments. The bravery and dedication of the SA.MAST staff are amazing, and we are grateful to the donors who have made our work possible.

**Tamsin Nel**

**SA.MAST**

## SWEDEN



### New challenges and some hope

2020 was a challenging and highly different year from the previous one. But, with regard to animals and their rights, we can see some hope and some encouraging progress. Here are a few sparks of hope:

First, there are fewer battery hens in cages and 2 million fewer chickens were slaughtered in Sweden during the first three months of 2020 compared with the previous year. Over 99 million chickens are slaughtered per year in Sweden. That's a mindboggling number considering that we are roughly 10 million people living here, but more good news is that meat consumption is on the decline. More news relating to farm animals is that Sweden gets to keep the right to require abattoirs to give animals sedation prior to slaughter (having said that, carbon monoxide gassing is very stressful).

Next, squirrel hunting is now banned, and there are new proposals for stronger legal action/laws against animal cruelty. In 2020, 80,000

animals were rescued from being subjected to cruel or painful animal experiments. Consumer attitudes are also changing, with 249 out of 290 municipalities opting not to buy feather ornaments at Easter and Stockholm Fashion Week being fur free.

The County Administrative Board of Västernorrland (way up in the North) received a notification through the new Lex Maja (an animal welfare law named for Maja, a cat that died after being left untended for 11 days in 2016). The notification concerned a dog and cat left without any supervision at all when their owner was taken seriously ill and treated in hospital. Previously hospital staff were prohibited from doing anything in these cases, but thanks to this new law staff have the legal right to call the police without risking being charged with breaking patient-doctor confidentiality. It is the first time this new law has been implemented since its introduction in 2019. The dog and cat are now being taken care of in a temporary home.

**Sandra Kinley**

## OBITUARY

### Revd Hugh Broadbent

It is with great sadness that we report the loss of a much-loved colleague here at ASWA, the Revd Hugh Broadbent. Hugh served on the ASWA Committee for many years and was responsible for writing many of the ASWA publications including *Thinking about Vegetarianism*, *Thinking about Animal Testing*, *Animal Welfare Patterns of Worship*, and *Worshipping with the Whole Creation*. All are available for purchase in the ASWA on-line shop.

Hugh also served many years as a parish priest, starting off as a Curate at St Stephen's, Chatham in 1978. When he first joined ASWA, he was Vicar of Holy Trinity, Bromley Common as well as Chaplain at St Olave's Grammar School in Orpington. His last position was that of Rector of Snodland. Sadly, he had only recently retired when he became ill.

Last year, Hugh wrote a wonderful book called *Where is Love? Creation and the Cosmic Christ*, which we recommend to all our readers. It is available for purchase from Waterstones and Amazon. The book was a culmination of much of his reflection about the God's love in a suffering world. It has received excellent reviews. During his last few weeks, he also recorded a study for ASWA called *The Two Gardeners*, which is available to watch on our website.

Hugh died peacefully at home on Advent Sunday, 29th November, surrounded by his beloved wife, Jane and their children and grandchildren. Due to Covid, his funeral was limited to his immediate family but it is hoped that a service of thanksgiving can be arranged for later this year, assuming restrictions are lifted.

We will miss Hugh's gentle wisdom at our Committee meetings and are grateful for the many years of service that he gave to ASWA.



# ETHICAL BEEKEEPING



My husband Stephen and I run a small ethical bee business, Hog's Back Bees and Bee Products, that developed out of our beekeeping activities on our smallholding in Ash Green, which lies on the midway along the north side of the Hog's Back, the North Downs feature that runs from Farnham to Guildford. Our smallholding was developed to grow much of our own food and the foray into beekeeping in 2011 started as a means to boost pollinators in our area, and hopefully assist in arresting the apparent decline in the honeybee population.

We started with two colonies and now the total ranges around 90 colonies overwintering, more during the bee season in spring/summertime. We are ethical beekeepers – the welfare of our bees is most important to us. Many beekeepers' main objective is to harvest as much honey from their colonies as possible and those beekeepers know exactly how much honey, in weight, they have taken off each hive (something to boast about!). Because honey is healthier for humans than sugar, beekeepers remove the honey, the bees' natural food that they have worked so hard for foraging nectar all season, and then the bees get sugar in return. Needless to say, we don't approve of this practice.

For us, the main objective is that our bees are well cared for, don't get hurt and are treated with respect (each little bee life is important to us) and don't get stressed. We ensure that they have plenty of their own honey to live on during winter and into spring, which means leaving them with more than they are likely to need.

What do we do differently from many other beekeepers?

We don't kill the queens in our colonies in order to have a new queen every year or every other year, which is common practice. Our queens are left with their colonies for as long as they last, which tends to be up to four years. That way we find out about their temperament, longevity and their foraging abilities so we can decide which queens are best to breed from.

We don't move our colonies to other parts of the country thereby stressing them. They are left in their own apiary at our home.

We keep our bees in an as natural a way as possible; the queen can move to any part of the hive. Many beekeepers place what's called a queen excluder (a metal wire grill which worker bees can crawl through but the male bees and the queen can't) between the lower box where the queen is and where she lays her eggs, and the boxes above that which will be for the honey. Using a queen excluder often results in the queen running out of space for egg laying and the bees end up swarming taking the queen and half the population to find somewhere else to live as they run out of space. Our queens can go into any box in the hive, thereby enabling the bees to move around in a much more natural way like they do in a nest in a tree.

We don't clip the wings of our queens which some beekeepers do. They do this so the queen can't fly and that's how they avoid swarming. The queen will try to fly and falls on the ground outside the hive where the bees join her and form a big swarm on the ground. Again, a practice of which we do not approve. It goes against the natural instinct of the bees. We try to avoid swarming by monitoring our bees on a weekly basis and ensuring the bees have sufficient space, reducing the need to swarm.

Our aim is for our bees to be able to live and behave as naturally as possible.

This ethical beekeeping practice means we have much less honey to harvest. We don't remove multiple boxes of honey from each hive. At the end of the season, we check how much honey is in a hive and work out how much the bees will need. Sometimes

the colony has only produced enough honey for themselves in which case we leave them with all the honey and don't take any. Some hives produce much more honey than they could possibly need, in which case we take a select number of honey frames.

The average winter losses of bee colonies in recent years for our part of the country has been around 24%. We have never lost any colonies over winter and we strongly believe that the way we care for and look after our bees, especially the fact that we leave our bees with plenty of their own natural food (honey) to live on, has contributed to this success rate.

We are encouraged to see that more and more new beekeepers who visit our apiary, watch us handle our bees with the utmost of care, and learn about our ethical beekeeping practices are of the opinion that that is the right way to look after bees. They come to us for beekeeping training to learn our methods with the welfare of the honeybees being most important.

We normally do beekeeping talks to groups over the winter months but unfortunately due to Covid-19 this is not possible this year. We have witnessed a growing interest in bees and beekeeping in recent years and our beekeeping experience events in summer are always well attended.

Honeybees are extremely hard working and fascinating creatures. The way a colony works, with each bee having a role, is an example of amazing teamwork which we humans can learn from. Do you know that one bee makes one twelfth (1/12) of a teaspoon of honey in her 3 weeks of foraging? That makes one appreciate every drop of honey! I love our bees and working with them is an absolute pleasure. Being a full-time beekeeper is hard work but I do enjoy working with our lovely bees.

For more information about us, our bees and our honey and pure beeswax candle range, please feel free to join our FB site: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1484258728327906>

or I can be contacted on 07803 069798.

**Astrid Bowers-Veenman**

# THE BOND BETWEEN HUMANS AND COMPANION ANIMALS

Anyone who has had a companion animal knows how important they can be in a person's life. Companion animals are, for many, not just 'pets' but much-loved family members. Since the start of the COVID19 pandemic, the demand for companion animals has increased greatly in many countries as people seek companionship during periods of lockdown and isolation. This is not surprising, as companion animals can alleviate loneliness and provide comfort and relieve stress. As Julius, Beetz, Kotrschal, et al. describe in their book *Attachment to Pets*<sup>1</sup>, humans can form psychological and emotional attachments to companion animals similar to those that are formed within close human-to-human relationships.

The close bond that often develops between human and companion animal is evident in the relationship between Elizabeth and her dog, Banbury, who sadly died in 2020. Elizabeth told us, "Banbury travelled with me wherever I went and I loved being with him. He was not only my dog, he was my life companion. He made me laugh and cry, and sometimes he did make me angry. But no matter what he did, I feel that he was such a blessing for me to have for all those years, and I was honoured by him choosing me to be in his life."

Those who have companion animals delight in the joy that their companion animal brings to them and also delight in the joy that their companion can bring to others. Elizabeth's relationship with Banbury demonstrates this aspect of the human-animal relationship, as she says, "I was not the only human who loved him, as there were many people who thought he was such a wonderful dog, a dog that would also make them laugh and he brought joy to those around him."

Companion animals can reduce stress and help us switch off from the demands of work and busy lives, as revealed in the relationship that Sarah and her husband had with their cat, Annabel. Sarah tells their story, "We adopted Annabel, a little tabby cat

with four white paws, in March 2019. I loved her, and she loved me. My husband was utterly besotted with her, and she adored him. Her character was affectionate, playful, and just independent enough to retain her credentials as a self-respecting cat. I work from our small cottage, and his office is just a few minutes away, so it can be hard for us to escape from the quandaries and stresses of our professional lives. Annabel brought a new source of life, energy and unpredictable delight to our quiet home life that helped to pull us out of our own heads." The emotional bond between humans and companion animals is often strengthened by the physical contact shared, as illustrated by Annabel's interactions with her family. Sarah tells us, "She sat in my husband's lap for hours almost every evening, and her tranquil (non-verbal) companionship and evident contentment was unquestionably therapeutic. There is some magic in the sensory grounding of a cat in the lap – the warm weight, soft fur, gentle vibration and sound of purring – not to mention Annabel's exceptional beauty and charm. Many, many photos were taken. Songs were composed. Calendars were created and distributed to her considerable fan base. We were devastated by her untimely death and mourned her loss.

Annabel's successor, Edna, has a different nature, but she is a solace and a joy in many of the same ways. We hope that she will be with us through many years to come."

As with the close relationships we have with other humans, the bonds between human and animal persist even after a companion animal has died. Returning to Elizabeth and Banbury's story, Elizabeth says she remains close to Banbury, stating, "I know that he is not with me in body, but I know that he is with me no matter what I do or where I go, and I shall never forget him as long as I live."

When we think of companion animals, we typically think of dogs and cats and perhaps small mammals like rabbits or hamsters. But these 'common' companions are not the only ones to share our lives. Our Secretary, Sam Chandler has a small flock of rescued sheep. She says, "I have always loved



farm animals of all kinds and when I was a child I dreamt of running an animal sanctuary. I know that my small flock of eleven sheep is a tiny drop in the ocean in animal rescue terms, but it is hugely rewarding knowing that I have made a difference for those few. They all have their own stories and seem to 'find me' rather than me actively looking for them. Some of the local smallholders in my area know I am the 'mad sheep woman' and have contacted me when they have a sheep they don't want." Sam doesn't own her own farm-land and so has to rent two paddocks from a friend, which limits how many sheep she can take at a time, and she acknowledges that sheep are quite time consuming, "The wet weather in the winter months plays havoc with their feet and in the Summer you are constantly on the lookout for fly-strike which can be fatal if not caught quickly. Daily checking is therefore essential." Despite this, Sam derives great joy from her sheep, and values the time she spends with them, saying, "As a Curate in my local church, I value the peaceful time I spend with them twice a day and many sermons are planned in my head whilst tending my little flock!"

We should not underestimate the importance of the human-companion animal bond. The psychological and emotional attachment that can form in the relationship between a human and companion animal is very real. The loss of a companion animal can, therefore, be a devastating bereavement. And there is no doubt that human-companion animal relationships bring joy and provide benefits to both human and animal.

**Jennifer Brown with contributions from Elizabeth Hollidge, Sarah Tanton, and Samantha Chandler**

<sup>1</sup>. Henri Julius, Andrea Beetz, Kurt Kotrschal, Dennis Turner, and Kerstin Uvnäs-Moberg, *Attachment to Pets*, 2013 (Cambridge, MA, USA: Hogrefe Press).

# ANIMAL BLESSINGS AND SERVICES FOR ANIMAL WELFARE SUNDAY

## ASWA Annual Service 2020

The year 2020 was, among other things, a year of cancellations. Our usual service for Animal Welfare Sunday was one of the many events that was not able to go ahead. We were due to hold our service at St Botolph's in Boston, Lincolnshire but made the decision to cancel for the sake of the safety of those attending and the staff at St Botolph's.

To mark the date, we put together a recorded, online celebration and asked ASWA President, Bishop Dominic Walker, to record a sermon. Members of the ASWA Committee recorded prayers and readings. The service is still available to view on our website and we will keep it on there through February 2021 so that those who have not yet watched it can do so.

This year, we hope that we might be in a better place by Animal Welfare Sunday (Sunday 3rd October). We hope that the majority of the population might have been vaccinated and that it will be safe to hold a service. St Botolph's have very kindly agreed to be our hosts. Please look out for emails to confirm this nearer the time and hopefully we will be able to confirm a firm date in the Summer Issue.

## Samantha Chandler

### ASWA Secretary

We would normally include here reports from churches around the UK and around the world on the animal blessing services that they held on or near Animal Welfare Sunday. As COVID limited what could be done in gathered public worship, we asked members and churches how they marked Animal Welfare Sunday in 2020. A number of members watched the ASWA service on-line, but others celebrated this special Sunday in other ways, as can be seen below in the responses we received.

Just privately, rejoicing in open fields.

## Joan Heath

2020 would have offered a superb opportunity for Animal Welfare

Sunday proponents with the Feast of St Francis actually falling on the first Sunday of October, but unfortunately with COVID that was not to be. But it was too good an opportunity to be missed completely. I help run Christian Vegetarians and Vegans UK. I am also a (retired) Anglican priest. So, I posted out to our membership, in both spoken and written form, a talk on what we believe the Christian attitude to animals should be, along with the traditional Franciscan blessing of animals, so people could bless their own animals at home. A copy of the (written) form of this can be found under 'Downloads' on our website, <http://www.christian-vegetariansvegans.org.uk>

## John Ryder

We were able to go ahead with our Animal Welfare service in October within our church building as we were COVID-secure. We celebrated at both our traditional 9am and contemporary 10.30am services, however we did so under the title of Creation Celebration. We chose this title so that we could celebrate creation as a whole with animals as our focus.

The date tied in with our 10.30am All Age service so we invited families to bring photos of their favourite animals or to send them in if they were watching online. The children were given a blank photo frame to decorate with colouring pens, paper and stickers to use for their photo or drawing. We had an interactive fun animal-themed quiz and many of us came dressed in animal onesies or fancy dress.

For both services we highlighted the needs of the local Foodbank with a short video we produced and asked people to bring items of pet food or supplies to donate to the Foodbank.

We had a great time celebrating all of God's creation and look forward to doing it again this year.

## Kate Lee

### St Mary's, East Molesey

As we couldn't hold the service safely inside in October, and the weather here at that time was so dreadful,

I set a time in the afternoon on the 4th October and advertised I'd be available at the church entrance if people would still like to bring pets for a blessing and that's what they did.

I was surprised so many turned up and fortunately not all together. It was all very safe.

I blessed each pet and those who brought them, anointed any sick pets, and then folk were invited to write on some wooden stars and hearts and hang them around the churchyard on the trees. These were in memory of departed pets, in thanksgiving for animals, or anything else animal-connected they wished to pray for. It was absolutely lovely and there was a great intimacy about it. So much so that I'm thinking of making it a more regular thing than a once or twice a year regular service.

One adorable little rabbit brought for a blessing was Cuddles, who sadly died couple of months later and so I had a funeral for him when I was called by the child who was in great distress. Such a gorgeous rabbit.

## Lynn Hurry

### St Mary-at-Latton, Harlow



We complied an online Zoom service for our Junior Church. This was a pet service, and we gave a presentation about St Francis and sang *If I were a Butterfly*.

Feedback was good and we asked for pictures of pets to be drawn and submitted.

## Julia Walmsley, St Chad's

The Inverness Cathedral held a Pet Blessing service on Friday 2nd October. Due to COVID19 the service was slightly different than we have had in the past, as we followed the guidelines from the Government and College of Bishops to keep everyone safe in these strange times. The service was led by Rev Katrina O'Neill, Deacon of the Cathedral and Rev Ellie Charman, Priest of the Scottish Episcopal Churches in

Thurso and Wick. Normally Provost Sarah would go around and bless each pet individually, but with social distancing measures that was not possible this year. Rev Ellie, who came along to assist at the service, gave the blessing for the pets from in front of the altar and the list of names of pets was read out. We also had a time of remembrance for those pets that had died. A candle was lit next to a statue of St Francis, and names were read

out. We were delighted to welcome the dogs and their owners, along with representatives of local animal charities. We also livestreamed the service so that those unable to attend in person could take part from home. We raised £85 for the work of Pets as Therapy.

**Revd Katrina O'Neill**  
**Inverness Cathedral**

## THE VALUE OF PET FUNERALS IN MY MINISTRY

From the moment she walked into our lives, Flossie has been very much part of our family. With her wide spaniel eyes, her sleek chocolate labrador frame (even at the age of nine and a half, thanks to the spaniel in her), and her ever-wagging tail, our Flossie always offers an overenthusiastic welcome to anyone who comes to Crondall Vicarage. She continues to play an important role in my village ministry, making me go out in all weathers, meeting many in our wider community as we trek through the village and across the fields, enabling passing conversations, which have been especially beneficial to so many during the lockdowns of the past ten months.

All our pets, from hamsters, to guinea pigs, rabbits to dogs, have played an important part in our family life. Anyone who has ever owned or looked after a pet will know the impact of their nature and character on those around them. The Hellings Clan have learnt much from Flossie – the benefits of boundless energy, eternal optimism, constant enthusiasm, and the need to guard against gluttony, which seems an inherent part of having labrador genes. As with our other pets, when Flossie dies, we will, of course, all miss her and mourn her passing. Why wouldn't we when we have cared and shared so much?

For many years now I have been asked to take small informal services for cats and dogs at Dignity Pet Crematorium in Winchfield, when families have wanted some Christian and spiritual input in marking their pet's death. People have very different relationships with their pets, as we do with all family members. When the relationship has been very close, people often find their grief at losing a beloved companion is hard to process, and they feel a very real sense

of loss, so having the opportunity to thank God for all they have shared with their pet, facilitated by a church minister before a cremation, can be very helpful. Society seems to have become increasingly detached from the reality of death over recent years, aspiring to overcome all illnesses and live longer and longer, if not forever. But the world is not set up so that everyone can live forever. Although the lifespan of humans has extended remarkably in many parts of the world over recent centuries, like our four-footed friends, we have a finite life on earth. Death is a necessary part of life. Entrusting our sadnesses to God as well as our joys is an important means of addressing our mortality and looking forward with hope to eternal life with God. I'm sure that's why people gain real comfort from entrusting to God their beloved pets who have died.

In my role as Vicar, I believe I am here to travel alongside folk through all the ups and downs of life, and where a pet death causes real distress, it is my privilege to help share God's comfort and reassurance. I know eminent theologians like St Thomas Aquinas have stated that pets don't have immortal souls, but there is an argument for suggesting that a heaven without dogs for a dog lover could not be heaven at all; a heaven without birds for an ornithologist would be unimaginable. I don't claim to have any answers. I just know that we should always thank God for all the blessings we enjoy, including our pets, and leave the rest to God, putting our trust in his love, compassion and care, which is such an important part of our Christian calling.

**Revd Tara Hellings**  
**Vicar of Crondall and Ewshot**

## ASWA COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

It's Election time again! There is, however, no postal voting form in this issue of *Animalwatch* because at the time of going to press the number of candidates for committee places does not exceed the number of vacancies. There is only one candidate to be elected this year, the Revd Jennifer Brown, standing as a committee member for a further three years.

ASWA committee members are trustees, which means they have legal duties and responsibilities. The tasks of the committee are to manage the day-to-day running of ASWA, including the planning of ASWA services, commissioning and producing informational material, managing the budget, organising fund-raising events and the production of *Animalwatch*, to name but a few. You will find information about the candidate standing for re-election below:

**Jennifer Brown:** Jennifer has been an ASWA member since 2001 and has been editor of *Animalwatch* since 2011. Jennifer is a Church of England priest and combines self-supporting ministry in the Diocese of Oxford with teaching at Ripon College Cuddesdon and being Director of Training for the College of Preachers. She sees care for our fellow creatures as very much a part of the Christian calling. She lives in Oxfordshire with her husband, dog and cat.



# A 150 YEAR LEGACY IN ANIMAL WELFARE



## Animal Welfare in South Africa

The majority of not for profit organizations (NPOs) are largely donor-dependent and facing significant declines in available donor funding, especially now following the nationwide lockdown and subsequent economic impact. Lack of resources and capacity remains a recurring theme, and many of the NPOs barely have sufficient resources to cover their immediate operational costs.

There are currently 228,822 registered NPOs in South Africa of which 23,492 are located in the Western Cape<sup>1</sup>. In Cape Town alone, more than 200 of those registered NPOs are animal welfare organisations. This demonstrates the dire need for aid and quality interventions in animal welfare to alleviate the burden on, and migrate our most vulnerable towards, improved access to quality veterinary care.

South Africa has one of the largest global Gini-coefficients, a division between rich and poor, with more than 70% of the population falling within the lowest rung of the economic pyramid. An estimated 82% of South Africans access health services in the

public sector (HWSETA, 2018). We can infer that the same population is likely to access veterinary care from the NPO sector. Over and above the latter, the effect of lockdown, reduced working hours and rising unemployment have put an increased strain on the animal welfare system. We are now starting to see a further increase in people who are no longer able to access care in the private sector turning to the welfare sector for their veterinary needs. The full extent of the socio-economic impact of the pandemic and its ripple effects are only starting to manifest now.

## Cape Town, A 150 year legacy in Animal Welfare

Cape Town, also known as the Mother City, is the second-most populous city in South Africa, after Johannesburg, and is the largest Western Cape Province city. The Cape of Good Hope SPCA, governed under the Society for the Protection of Animals Act (Act 169 of 1993)<sup>2</sup>, enforces the protection of animals under the Animals Protection Act (Act 71 of 1962)<sup>3</sup>. One hundred

2. Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 169 of 1993.. n.d. Available: <https://www.gov.za/documents/societies-prevention-cruelty-animals-act>.

3. Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962. n.d. Available: <https://www.gov.za/documents/animals-protection-act-22-jun-1963-0000#:~:text=The Animals Protection Act 71,prevention of cruelty to animals>.

fifty years in existence, the end-to-end operations of the Cape of Good Hope SPCA include an inspectorate, a multidisciplinary hospital, pound, farmyard, wildlife, horse care and education unit, and a fully-fledged rehoming service overseeing animal adoptions as well as four mobile clinics.

The 24-hour-service inspectorate with its 21-strong staff complement consists of 13 inspectors, three trainee inspectors, two field officers and three collection officers who serve an area of more than 3,200 square kilometres (Approx. 1240 mi<sup>2</sup>). This area of operation includes the Cape Town Metropole of 2,400 square kilometres (Approx. 930 mi<sup>2</sup>) and the Stellenbosch municipal area of more than 800 square kilometres (Approx. 300 mi<sup>2</sup>), stretching into the Cape Wine lands.

As the leading animal welfare organization, The Cape of Good Hope SPCA is a high-volume animal facility in the country and sees on average 45,000 cases per year, of which more than 60% are moderate to severe cases. Treatment cost can quickly escalate over ZAR 850 (Approx £41) per animal per day in those moderate to severe cases. At the heart of this significant caseload, the hospital, our veterinarians and animal welfare assistants demonstrate the capability to oversee, manage and execute high volume operations without compromising quality.

## Quality of care

Our quality of care is maintained at a high clinical standard aligned with international best practice. The animal hospital has a capacity of several hundred cases overseen by four veterinarians. Each veterinarian can manage 80 to 100 cases per day, of which 15 to 20 are surgeries. "We are fortunate to have a lower cadre of para-veterinarians and assistants that help free up our professional time," says Dr Stephanie Chatry.

Lower cadre para-professionals are a significant cost-saving strategy in terms of professional time and, with a credit-bearing qualification, contribute to job creation and career pathing

1. Department of Social Development on its registration process, funding, monitoring and evaluation of NPOs: PMG. 2020. Available: <https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/30312/#:~:text=There were 228 822 Non,compliant with the relevant legislation.>



for young adults. Para-veterinarians are registered with the veterinary council under the supervision of the Chief Veterinarian practising per the Veterinary and Para-Veterinary Professions Act 19 of 1982. They assist with administering injections, taking blood samples and doing blood smears, administering specific tests, and compiling the clinical information for the veterinarians to make diagnoses and prescribe treatment. Para-veterinarians manage mundane tasks that free up the veterinarians' professional time to focus on complex clinical procedures and surgeries, a unique differentiator in our ability to handle the volume and optimize service delivery in a manner not attainable by other animal welfare organizations.

### Top surgeries and causes

Each veterinarian can perform between 15 to 20 surgeries on an average day. "These surgeries can range from bones stuck in the abdomen, which is quite an invasive procedure to cut those bones out and also requires an extended hospital stay to aid recovery and monitor for postoperative complications. Another example is a blocked bladder caused by stones that formed in the bladder, also an invasive procedure to enter the bladder and remove those stones to clear obstruction so that the animal can urinate again," said Dr Chatry.

Bite wounds are quite common; "We get dozens of them," says Dr Chatry. She lists her top five surgeries performed daily as 1) bite wounds, 2) sterilizations, 3) lump removals, 4) lacerations; and 5) removal of foreign bodies from the digestive tract.

### Facing the Socio-economic impact of lockdown in Cape Town

The Cape of Good Hope SPCA recorded a more than 22% increase in the number of cases over the period between November 2020 and January 2021 and the numbers continue to increase daily. According to a recent report by the Dullah Omar Institute titled, *The Socio-Economic Rights Impact of Covid-19 in Selected Informal Settlements in Cape Town*, the lockdown in South Africa has made it even harder for people to enjoy basic needs and amenities such as food, water and sanitation, information, transportation, employment and health<sup>4</sup>. If our most vulnerable populations are struggling to meet their own basic needs for survival, how are they meeting the needs of their animal companions? In this context, the Cape of Good Hope SPCA does not only see animals; we also see the owners of those animals.

The most pressing socio-economic problems are poor living conditions and high levels of crime and social disturbance. Also, many areas within the Cape of Good Hope SPCA's operation area are notorious for their gangsterism and violence. Several studies have found a connection between violence and animal abuse,<sup>5</sup> where more than 70% of those who are perpetrators of violence are likely to abuse animals<sup>6</sup>. Would it be fair to say we are amid a triple burden in Animal Welfare?

### The need for continued service delivery

Daily, our inspectors face challenging, intimidating and often threatening situations where animals are at risk or in distress. However, we must keep our inspectors on the road and in the

4. The Socio-Economic Rights Impact of Covid-19 in Selected Informal Settlements in Cape Town. Retrieved from <https://dullahomarainstitute.org.za/socio-economic-rights/research-and-publications/publications/report-on-the-impact-of-covid-19-in-informal-settlements.pdf>

5. The relationship between domestic violence and animal abuse: an Australian study U.S. National Library of Medicine. Available: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/18326483/>.

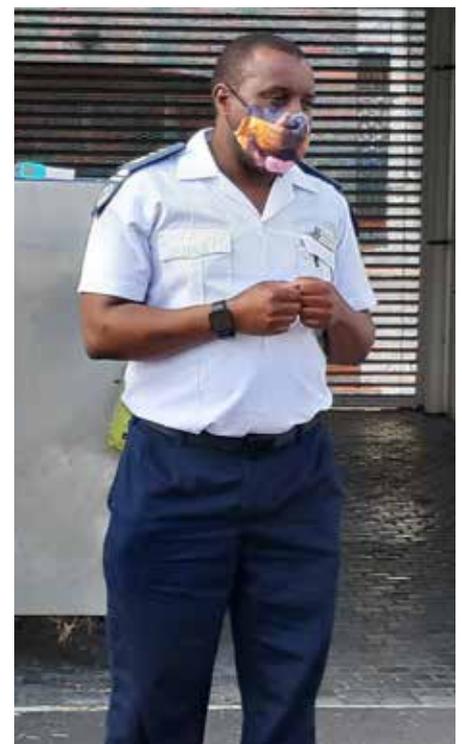
6. Person & reporter, W. 2020. Pets, the overlooked victims of domestic violence witness. Available: <https://www.news24.com/witness/news/pets-the-overlooked-victims-of-domestic-violence-20201106>.

frontline of the fight against animal cruelty.

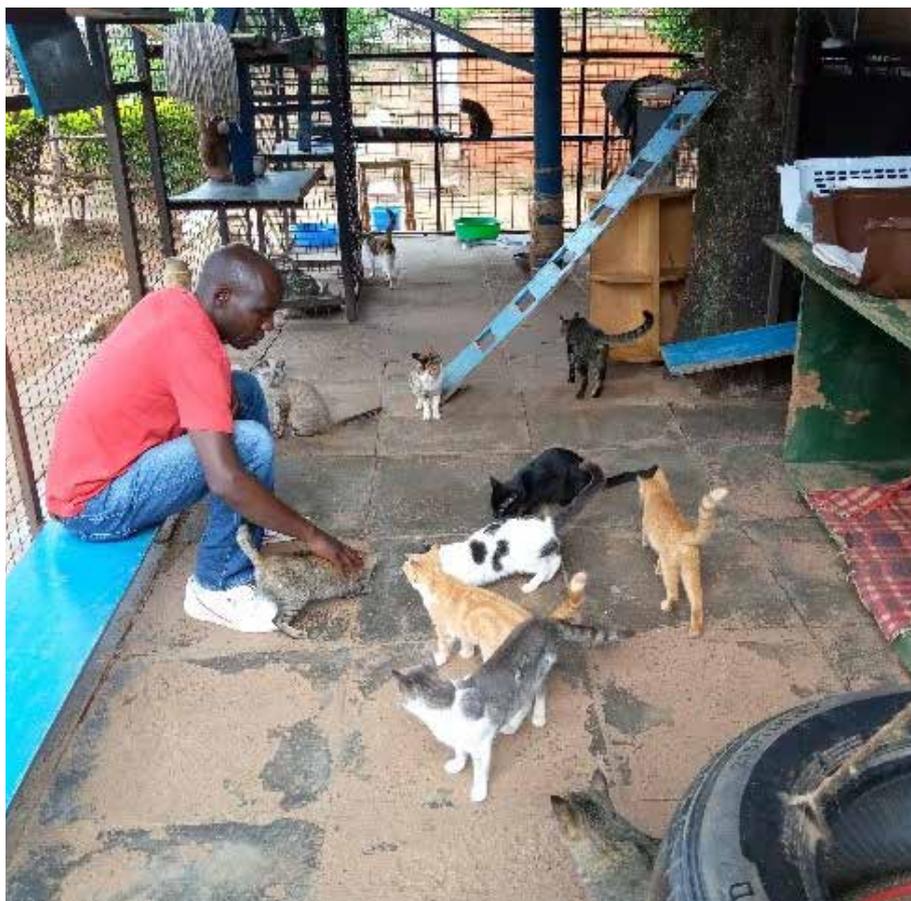
Our hospital continues to perform pioneering animal orthopaedic surgery and ongoing clinical interventions to mitigate as well as treat life-threatening disease such as canine parvovirus, while our mobile clinics are a critical component of our commitment to deliver care to those most in need. Operating in the informal settlements around Cape Town, the mobile units provide primary veterinary care including dipping, de-worming and administering vaccinations. Animals in need of sterilization – and those that are ill or injured – are transported to our animal hospital for further treatment, and returned to their owners after treatment.

The Cape of Good Hope SPCA is not government funded, and our work on the front lines in the fight against animal cruelty would not be possible without the support of our donors. Their continued support is even more critical in our most incredible time of need.

**Mqabuko Moyo Ndukwana**  
Chief Executive Officer



## GROWING PAINS AT THE HAVEN



Twenty-three years ago, the Uganda Society for the Protection & Care of Animals consisted of a part-time vet, a cell phone, brochures and posters, and an Executive Committee for oversight. Now, the USPCA operates a shelter, The Haven, which houses almost 300 dogs and cats, has a staff of ten, a veterinary clinic at the shelter, runs a large outreach program for community spay/neuter and humane education, and rescues, on average, two animals every day of the year (injured, abandoned, and cruelty cases). Over the last two decades, the USPCA transformed from 'the little engine that could' to the locomotive that drives animal welfare in Uganda.

But while the USPCA's visibility and demand for their services has increased exponentially, their funding has not. Nor has the shelter space kept up with the seemingly never-ending intake of dogs and cats.

On top of this already financially and spatially stressed condition, COVID-19 hit and the USPCA was faced with new challenges and unpredictable situations. Due to COVID concerns, many expats had to leave the country. Some weren't given adequate time

to take their pets or plan for their care and relinquished them to The Haven. Others left their pets in their compounds hoping someone would rescue them. The USPCA was there for all the surrendered, abandoned, and neglected pets.

Many of the USPCA volunteers – dog walkers, dog and cat socializers, puppy trainers – were expats who have departed the country. Likewise, these expats had made up a significant portion of in-country donors, and their donations disappeared with them. With restaurants closed and hotels barely functioning, donations of food dried up.

Yet the dogs and cats keep coming. It's impossible to turn a dog or cat away from The Haven, there's no place else for them to go. Originally built to hold about 80 dogs and 30 cats, at the height of the COVID-19 lockdown, The Haven had more than 300 animals and made a desperate plea for foster homes. Luckily, many fosters came to The Haven's rescue.

About five years ago, my organization, Animal-Kind International (AKI), and the USPCA started a Land Fund to

raise money to purchase a larger plot for The Haven, where dogs and cats could be kept in more comfortable surroundings; students could more easily visit to learn about pets; potential adopters and volunteers could more easily interact with the animals; a Haven that becomes a learning center for African animal welfare advocates from across the continent; and a shelter not rented, but USPCA-owned.

Recently, residential buildings have sprung up all around The Haven, and complaints have increased about the noise and the smells from the shelter. Every day we worry that the landlady will ask the USPCA to vacate the plot. USPCA volunteers have redoubled their efforts to find an affordable, accessible plot and AKI has redoubled our efforts to raise enough money to purchase land. With no government aid, we have to rely on individual donors to raise the funds.

For those of you who know the USPCA, you know the huge impact that the organization, under the leadership of Shelter Manager Alex Ochieng, has had on the welfare of Uganda's cats and dogs. For those of you who don't personally know the USPCA, we invite you to get to know them. You can find out more and donate by visiting <https://www.animal-kind.org/uganda> or

<https://uganda-sPCA.org/home.html> (see 'Ways to Help'). Every donation helps us get closer to our goal of giving all Uganda's dogs and cats in need the Haven that they deserve. We're so grateful for your support.

**Karen Menczer,**  
**Founder & Director, Animal-Kind International**



# THE BIBLE AND...

## Companion animals

This Bible study is intended to help individuals and small groups think about what the Bible can say to us about the importance of companion animals and how we relate to them.

### Numbers 22.21–34

So Balaam got up in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the officials of Moab.

God's anger was kindled because he was going, and the angel of the Lord took his stand in the road as his adversary. Now he was riding on the donkey, and his two servants were with him. The donkey saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road, with a drawn sword in his hand; so the donkey turned off the road, and went into the field; and Balaam struck the donkey, to turn it back on to the road. Then the angel of the Lord stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, with a wall on either side. When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, it scraped against the wall, and scraped Balaam's foot against the wall; so he struck it again. Then the angel of the Lord went ahead, and stood in a narrow place, where there was no way to turn either to the right or to the left. When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, it lay down under Balaam; and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he struck the donkey with his staff. Then the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey, and it said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?" Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have made a fool of me! I wish I had a sword in my hand! I would kill you right now!" But the donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey, which you have ridden all your life to this day? Have I been in the habit of treating you in this way?" And he said, "No."

Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road, with his drawn sword in his hand; and he bowed down, falling on his face. The angel of the Lord said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? I have come out as an adversary, because your way is perverse before me. The donkey saw me, and turned away from me these three times. If it had not turned away from me, surely I would by now have killed you and let it live." Then Balaam said to the angel of the Lord, "I have sinned, for I did not know that you were standing in the road to oppose me. Now therefore, if it is displeasing to you, I will return home."

### 2 Samuel 12.1–6

But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord, and the Lord sent Nathan to David. He came to him, and said to him, "There were two men in a certain city, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had very many flocks and

herds; but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. He brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children; it used to eat of his meagre fare, and drink from his cup, and lie in his bosom, and it was like a daughter to him. Now there came a traveller to the rich man, and he was loath to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb, and prepared that for the guest who had come to him." Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man. He said to Nathan, "As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die; he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity."

### Tobit 6.1b–2 & 11.4

The young man went out and the angel went with him; and the dog came out with him and went along with them. So they both journeyed along, and when the first night overtook them they camped by the Tigris river.... As they went on together Raphael said to him, "Have the gall ready." And the dog went along behind them.

The Bible doesn't say much about companion animals, and that's not surprising. In the ancient world, the world of the Bible, companion animals were not unknown, but weren't common. Most household animals would have been working animals, such as sheep dogs or donkeys. But that doesn't mean we can't learn from what the Bible does have to say.

The passages here appear to mention companion animals as we would understand the term. In the first of these, the companion animal is also a working animal, as Balaam uses his donkey for transport. The story is a familiar one, the donkey protects Balaam from an angel that Balaam cannot see, but because he does not understand what is happening, Balaam loses his temper and beats his donkey. In the story, God gives the donkey a voice and the donkey demands to know what he has done to deserve such cruel and, it seems, unusual treatment. The words that the donkey speaks hint at a close companionship between man and animal, "Am I not your donkey which you have ridden all your life... am I in the habit of treating you this way?" The implication is that they have been together for years and work well together. Balaam should have known that the donkey's uncharacteristic behaviour was not being done out of disobedience or perversity, but for a good reason.

The passage from 2 Samuel is another familiar one. This is the parable that Nathan tells to David after David has had Uriah killed in battle so that he can marry Uriah's wife, Bathsheba.

This is a parable and not meant to be understood as a real event, but even so, the fact that David takes it at face value suggests that it was not unknown for a family to keep animals as pets, even animals that would normally be thought of in more utilitarian ways. David is enraged by the story and the loss that the man in the story has suffered. David's understanding isn't complete, however, and not just because he fails to realise it is a parable about his own behaviour. David orders that the rich man who took the poor man's lamb should, "restore the lamb four-fold," in other words, give the poor man four lambs in place of the one he took. But, just as no compensation could replace Uriah's life, no number of lambs could replace that one, the one that was like a daughter to the poor man. A companion animal is not a commodity, but rather a beloved member of the family.

The story of Tobit, found in the Apocrypha, is perhaps less well known. This is the story of an old man who has suffered misfortune and expects that he will soon die. He therefore sends his son to a relative in another country to retrieve some money that was left with him, so that the son will have means to live and to care for his mother in her old age. God hears Tobit's prayer, and sends an angel to accompany the son, Tobias, on his journey. But, as we can see from these verses, Tobias has another companion – his dog. These are the only two mentions of the dog, but from them we see that the dog lived in the house ("the dog came out with him", suggesting the dog had been in the house), so was probably more of a pet than a working animal. We are told that the dog followed along behind them on their journey home, indicating that the dog had travelled with them throughout, a faithful, if unmentioned upon, companion.

### Questions for Groups:

In what ways might these passages suggest that we have responsibilities towards companion animals?

How can we use these passages to help us understand human–animal relationships?

How can the relationship between humans and their companion animals reflect or make visible God's kingdom?

Scripture quotations are from New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicized Edition, copyright © 1989, 1995 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

## THE DICKIN MEDAL

Many animals have fought alongside soldiers. Some of these animals had amazing skills and would help without being asked. Some even gave their lives to save us.

The Dickin Medal is an award devised for animals that have shown great bravery and is the animal equivalent of the Victoria Cross. The Medal is named after Maria Dickin, who founded the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA) charity. The first recipients of the Dickin medal were three pigeons (named White Vision, Winkie and Tyke). All three carried messages about aircraft that had crashed. These pigeons served with the Royal Air Force (RAF) and were presented with their awards on 2nd December 1943.

There have been 71 Dickin Medals awarded. One of the horses who received the award was named Warrior and became known as 'the horse the Germans couldn't kill'. During the First World War, he braved shells and machine guns and was awarded the Dickin Medal in the conflict's centenary year. There was a film made about him called *War Horse*.

In 2017, eight-year-old Mali received the Dickin Medal for helping to save the lives of troops in Afghanistan. He was seriously hurt by two grenades which caused injuries to his legs and chest, and another grenade that damaged his face. He was presented with the Dickin Medal on Friday 17th November at the People's Palace in London. Mali's Medal is special as it has a 'Centenary' bar to show the charity's 100th birthday.

The most recent recipient of the Dickin Medal is Kuno. This amazing dog wore night vision goggles to tackle a gunman who was attacking the Special Boat Service forces, despite being shot in his hind legs. Due to his injuries, he ended up with a fake paw.

For Remembrance Day this year our Guide unit looked at pictures and videos of some of the animals that have received the Dickin Medal. We learned all about their heroic acts and how courageous they were. I am glad we have these animals to help us when we are in need and I hope we can do the same for them. I feel safer knowing they would help us. I also feel worried for the animals giving their lives to save ours. I think these

animals should be as respected as the soldiers are. There is an organisation called Nowzad that looks after animals from Afghanistan and lets them reunite with the troops. These animals are really unique, and we are lucky to have them around.

Thank you.

**Abi, a 12 year-old Girlguide from NW England**



## ANIMAL-FRIENDLY CHURCH(ES) 2020

We are pleased to announce that again for 2020, two churches have been named as joint winners of the Animal-Friendly Church Award. They are St Mary the Virgin, Ticehurst, East Sussex and St Mary-at-Latton, Harlow, Essex. The runner up for 2020 is St Mary's Church, Codford, Wiltshire. We hope to include interviews with representatives from the two winning churches in our Summer issue.

The winners of the Animal-Friendly Church Award are drawn from among those churches that have

been granted Animal-Friendly Church status. We are delighted that this includes churches in the UK and overseas.

It's very exciting that so many churches already meet the criteria to be recognised as animal friendly. We hope that, as concern for the whole of God's kingdom continues to grow amongst Christians, more churches will apply for Animal-Friendly Church status.

**Jennifer Brown**



# TRAIL HUNTING AND THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

The Magna Carta is a powerful symbol in the UK legal system. Even though only three clauses remain in force (13, 39 and 40) it encapsulates values which are of profound importance in the constitutional framework. The expectation that the law applies to everyone, and that justice is not for sale, is enshrined in the parts of the text which remain on the statute book. This is not an accident. These are fundamental to the rule of law and have been retained down the centuries for a reason. It is also worth noting that in this context they arose out of a Christian understanding of justice. It was, after all, the scholarly Archbishop, Stephen Langton, who brokered the deal, and the charter was drafted by clerics.

Furthermore, they are principles which bishops in the contemporary world have wanted to defend. On a number of occasions in 2020, senior Church of England clergy have spoken out in robust condemnation of secular authorities flouting the law (e.g. in relation to public figures flouting lockdown rules, and more recently, governmental disregard for international undertakings with the European Union). It was therefore disappointing that when admissions came to light that trail-hunting was being used as a smokescreen for illegal fox hunting, that the Church of England did not join organisations like the National Trust and the Forestry Commission in banning trail-hunting from its land. It is very hard to maintain credibility in speaking truth to power, if your own house is not in order.

I wrote to the *Church Times* in my capacity as Chair of ASWA, and the response from some correspondents who wrote in reply was very telling. In short, there were attempts to rehash old debates about fox hunting, accompanied by the demonstrably false and hackneyed claims put forward to try to justify torturing and killing animals for fun, such as the claim that the foxes hunted are almost always sick or elderly. I am sure that most readers will be all too familiar with the kinds of arguments used by the pro-hunting lobby. On this occasion, however, it was shocking that people considered it a relevant debate to be having. If you

disagree with the law, at least in a liberal, democratic context (different considerations apply in totalitarian states) then the legitimate response is to campaign to have it reformed. It is not acceptable, at least from the standpoint of Anglican theology, to break a law just because you happen to disagree with it. It does not matter a scrap whether people think that fox hunting should be permitted, the fact is that it is not permitted.

The admissions from within the hunting community provide evidence that trail-hunting is not simply a controversial sport, it is a cover for an illegal activity. It is not the case of a few bad apples misbehaving. Abuses are endemic. This is the reason why large, highly respected, and very moderate organisations have taken the step of banning it from their land. It is not acceptable for Anglicans to refuse to follow suit on the basis that some people support arguments in favour of hunting. Individual beliefs and preferences are not the point, a criminal offence is a criminal offence. The Church of England cannot facilitate premeditated crimes and expect to be taken seriously in condemning others for illegal actions.

Those involved in illicit fox hunting are criminals, and generally quietly confident that they will either not be caught, or at least will not suffer any punishment which will have a serious impact on their life. Whether they are banking on overstretched police forces lacking the resources to enforce the prohibition, or the assumption that they can pay a fine if needs be, they are operating on the basis that the rule of law does not apply to them. How can a Church claim to advocate for justice and social equality, and condone people embracing this kind of exceptionalism?

It is interesting that when speaking up for animal welfare, we often find ourselves met with objections about human concerns being more important. On this occasion, however, when we object to a practice on the basis of human-centred issues around the rule of law, suddenly the pro-hunting lobby want to go back and debate animal welfare, asserting that they are doing foxes a favour! The truth is this, embracing compassion and

justice is beneficial to both humans and animals alike. The argument on fox hunting has been won. Parliament has outlawed the practice. Why should we return to a moral question which our democratically elected legislature has decided upon? The law is on the statute book, people of good will should obey it.

**Helen Hall**  
Chair, ASWA

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## ANIMALS IN THE WAR – AN ACROSTIC POEM

**A**nimals have feelings  
**N**ever without some hope  
**I**ndividual beings  
**M**ade to help all  
**A**ll the soldiers fighting  
**L**iving their worst life  
**S**inging the praises of our  
animal heroes

**I** wish they wouldn't make the  
animals help in the war  
**N**othing makes it right to force  
them to risk their lives for us

**T**ogether animal and owner  
**H**elping them stick with  
each other  
**E**veryone is making it a  
little less cruel

**W**ar and warriors  
**A**nd fighting and battles  
**R**aising the stakes for our  
animal heroes

**Matilda, a 12-year-old Guide in  
NW England**

# ARE YOU AN ANIMAL FRIENDLY CHURCH?



## Christians have a sacred duty to care for God's Creation

The Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals is now awarding 'Animal Friendly Church' certificates to churches which practise and promote a compassionate attitude towards God's creatures.

Applicants will also be automatically entered into our annual **'ASWA Animal Friendly Church of the Year Award'**  
The Winner will receive a hamper full of ethical and useful goodies for your Church and a plaque to display on your wall.

For further details visit our website

[www.aswa.org.uk](http://www.aswa.org.uk)

or apply in writing to: PO Box 7193, Hook, Hampshire, RG27 8GT

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## ANGLICAN SOCIETY FOR THE WELFARE OF ANIMALS

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