



# **Rags to Riches Romanian Dog Rescue**

Charity Registration 1171592

## **Third Annual Report 2019-20**

# Trustees' Annual Report for the period 5<sup>th</sup> April 2019- 4th April 2020

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## Foster carers needed

**Rags to Riches has only a few dedicated fosters and we are looking to increase our pool of fosterers (whilst keeping it as a small manageable team). This will allow us to increase the number of dogs we can save from the atrocities that face those dogs in the public shelters and those living on the streets.**

**We need dedicated, experienced volunteers who have the time and space to care for these dogs until we find their forever homes. If you are interested, please contact Liz or one of the other trustees or go to the website for more information and application forms.**

**[www.rags-2-riches.co.uk](http://www.rags-2-riches.co.uk)**

## Administration and Legal

Charity Name: **Rags to Riches Romanian Dog Rescue**

Other names **Rags to Riches / R2R**

Charity is known  
by:

Registered Charity **1171592**  
number:

Charity's principal **1 Green View, Crambe York YO60 7JP**  
address:

**Rags to Riches Romanian Dog Rescue is a constituted  
Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)**

### The Charity Trustees are:

|                     |             |                      |
|---------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| Elisabeth Jay:      | Chair       | Appointed April 2020 |
| Lisa Holmes         | Vice Chair  | Appointed April 2020 |
| Lynsay Baker        | Secretary   | Appointed April 2020 |
| Pauline Carruthers: | Treasurer   | Appointed April 2020 |
| Richard Leggott     | Publicity   | Appointed April 2020 |
| Dawn Jacques        | Fundraising | Appointed April 2020 |
| Julie Routledge     | Patron      | Appointed April 2019 |

All Trustees agreed and voted to be reappointed. Method of appointment in accordance with the constitution. Every Trustee must be appointed by a resolution passed at a meeting of the Trustees, with regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO.

## The objects of the CIO are :

For the benefit of the public to relieve the suffering of dogs in Romania in need of care, treatment and protection and in particular to provide rescue homes or other facilities for the reception, care and treatment of such animals.

To promote humane behaviour towards dogs in Romania by raising awareness, providing appropriate care, treatment and protection, for dogs which are in need of care and attention by reason of sickness, maltreatment, 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.”

### Provisions of services: Policy



Funding and oversight of appropriate care, treatment and protection of dogs whilst they are in Romania and being prepared to travel to the UK. This includes all veterinary treatment, microchipping, neutering, vaccinations and appropriate shelter.

- ◆ Funding and oversight of purchases made for the above including medications.
- ◆ Funding and oversight of transport to the UK
- ◆ Safe and experienced care in vetted foster homes to include veterinary treatment if required.
- ◆ Safe, pre-checked adoption homes in the UK - all dogs' microchip registrations remain in dual registration with the Charity for the life of the dog.
- ◆ Ongoing support for adopters and dogs
- ◆ Spay/neuter campaign funding in Romania
- ◆ Education and awareness raising

All our policy and adoption and fostering documents are reviewed yearly.  
The following policies are available:

|   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| Education & Awareness                     | Compliments & Complaints |
| Financial Management                      | Data Protection          |
| Rehoming                                  | Rescue & Care            |
| Donations and Provision of food and items | Direct adoptions         |

## Chair and Trustee report

As the financial year ended our attention was turned to the far reaching and devastating impact of Coronavirus. The pandemic hit rescues across Europe . Rags to Riches reacted quickly to this impact, and sent money to the rescuers in Valcea to help them through the challenging times ahead as they struggled with an escalation of abandoned, sick and starving dogs. Ignorance and panic resulted in more work with fewer volunteers, and higher vets bills and lack of accommodation. We are also aware of the impact the pandemic may have on our summer fundraising activities and annual dog show and we will have to look to other ways of fundraising to enable us to continue to boost our funds.

We still have concerns re the impact of Brexit on genuine rescue work , which has already resulted in rising transport costs. The tighter controls do seem to be having an impact of the illegal trading of puppies, which has been a concern to welfare and rescue groups.

Every dog we bring over has a past that we often know little about, and some of these dogs have been subjected to needless cruelty and abuse. Many are starved, lacking veterinary care, and living on the streets where puppies are born into disease and almost certain death . The rescuers in Romania work with our caring foster team to ensure that every dog is given the best possible care and chance of a happy future. Their hard work, commitment, and professionalism, even when faced with the most heart-breaking situations, is admired by us all. This year our charity supported several rescues from Romania. This includes a number we have supported for direct adoptions. We also paid vets bills for many other desperate dogs in Romania when we were alerted to emergency situations.

The year ahead will see us focusing our energy on reacting quickly to the changing times ahead and providing timely and effective support to the rescuers in Valcea to try to finish the new shelter before winter. We also are aiming to increase the spay neuter campaign working in partnership with the Finnish group.



### Volunteer, Equality and Diversity

Rags to Riches recognise the benefits of a diverse community of volunteers and are committed to being an inclusive organisation where everyone is treated with respect, dignity and where there is equal opportunity for all.

# Thankyou

There are many individuals, groups and organisations who we would like to thank - including those who wish to remain anonymous! We truly are appreciative of all the help offered and if we fail to mention anyone, then apologies are extended now...

So a big thank you :

- ◆ To all the rescuers in Romania who work tirelessly to help the dogs on the streets and in the public shelters in particular the volunteers Florentina Cioaca and Nicoleta Stefanescu in Valcea, Mirela Marcu in Calarasi and in Craiova Alina-Mihaela Danciulescu.
- ◆ To all our volunteers who have helped with our fundraising events in the last year , in particular the annual dog show which just cannot happen without a large and willing team of helpers - including of course our judge Christine Spencer
- ◆ To all our fantastic followers who have donated prizes, sold raffle tickets, and taken part in our fundraising activities on line. A special thank you to Dawn Jacques (the car boot queen)
- ◆ To the transport companies who deliver our dogs safely from Romania and to the volunteers who turn out to collect and deliver dogs in emergency situations.
- ◆ To our fosterers who work tirelessly with the foster dogs, with love, care and patience to ensure they have a happy life ahead of them.
- ◆ To the people who give their time and expertise to make home checks on behalf of our Charity where distance means we cannot do these checks personally
- ◆ To the adopters of our dogs who give them a loving life long homes.
- ◆ Finally on a personal note thank you to all our families who quietly offer background support and are always there to lend a hand in times of crisis.



Dawn and Liz car booting

## Future plans for year 2020-21 for Rags to Riches for the next year include:

- ◆ **Continuing to support spay and neuter campaigns in Valcea .**
- ◆ **Continuing a variety of fundraising activities.**
- ◆ **Hosting various events for volunteers, fosterers and the general public to raise awareness and educate.....**
- ◆ **Recruit more fosters to enable us to rescue more dogs**

## The New Shelter Project

In the early months of 2018 Rags 2 Riches joined forces with Bettina Stocker and the German group Herzenshunde to raise the necessary funding for a large down payment on a suitable property with land attached perfect for establishing a good-sized private shelter in the Valcea region. Since then a huge amount of work and donations has been put in.

Over the last 2 years we have continued to assist with groundworks, fence building, water supply and assisted with the building of the road to the property. Smaller items such as security cameras and lighting we have also purchased.

It is now hoped that the first dogs will be moved mid winter 2020/21 .

The process has been a long drawn out one , mainly due to a difficult winter weather wise, and planning permits, and latterly the pandemic.



The picture left is the current shelter in Valcea where Florentina and Nicoleta care for the dogs they rescue.

The land itself is rented and they are constantly under threat of losing it. The conditions though poor by our standards are worlds away from the horrors of the public shelter and life on the streets.

The ladies also care for many dogs in their own homes.

With well over 200 dogs in their care at any one time, plus caring and feeding those dogs on the streets and public shelters , rescuing dogs, taking part in spay neuter campaign and much much more. These ladies and others like them are true angels.

## The story of Rosa has began in April last year...

This story is presented as written by Florentina Ciacoa.

Rosa was not a Rags to Riches dog but this story is typical of the conditions dogs live in and suffer in Romania

It was a weekend of April and we were in the middle of one of our neutering campaigns for scared females, with the purpose to dart scared females dogs that can not be caught in normal way to be spayed.

I was driving with dr Ovidiu Rosu to a well know forest outside of the city, Malul Alb, a very well know place where people abandon everything what they do not need anymore- alive cats and dogs, bodies or garbage... an area where we neutered the females for 9 years and saved many souls...

There we found Rosa, a small size girl who's story before we do not know and did not understand why she was abandoned... she was in heats and big males were running after her. She did not trust us and we could not touch her. The vet Ovidiu darted her and we managed to catch her. She was spayed and we decided to not return her in the forest, as the chances to survive were small... she was a small soul and her tiny body was covered by alive and dead ticks-hundreds. We gave her treatment against parasites and we believed she will become a wonderful dog after we cut her matted fur.

But after few days after rescuing her, I found her lying and with no reaction. She arrived by emergency at vet and despite the investigations, the vet could not find the cause of her bad health and could not fix a diagnosis. Despite all these, I told the vet to try the best treatment for her, as we did for other dogs with nervous system damage!!

It could be from the ticks, from the shock of darting with anaesthesia or simply because of the shock of being abandoned we will never know from where was her general damage... Or all of each combined...

Slow and sure, the vet started the treatment with medicines for the nervous system and infusions to feed her because she was like a vegetable.

After 2 weeks of treatment, the vet saw no improvement at Rosa's health and she was worse and worse-could not stand on her feet, could not eat or drink, could not react at any stimulus and lost more and more weight... the vet prepared the injection with euthanasia in a Saturday morning and let it near Rosa's cage... it was a busy and short program day and they forgot about the euthanasia...

The treatment continued the same and Monday the vet stuff was shocked to see Rosa was stretched the head smelling food from other dogs... they put a bowl with wet baby food and even she could not stand up, she put her in the bowl and moved her tongue limping slow from food... it was one of the miracles you live very rarely in life and the happiness of this moment cannot be described in words.

The willing of this little soul to live cannot be described by any medical reason or science... !

Day after day she was limping from the food and in few weeks, she even made the first step again.

But then we discovered other problems... it seemed she could not see well, she had balance problems and she could not pass or avoid obstacles...she could not pass over thresholds or get out from the cage alone. She was still skinny and had digestive problems. And any medication applied did not help her too much... she did not need infusions anymore, but she was blocked in this stage and did not continue to improve...

After 7 weeks, the vet said it is the time Rosa to leave the vet office. it was June and she needed to enjoy the Summers vibe... and the most important, this dog needed something what she lost when she was abandoned in that forest-the LOVE!

Rosa needed a quiet environment, a gentle and loving person and to continue her medication...

I knew who is the person fit for this and ashamed, because she always helped me with lost souls, I asked her help and she did not refuse... So Rosa arrived in foster and here started another chapter from her life...

The beginning of this chapter was not easy also... she needed a lot of care and medication. We bought special probiotic and had a diet based on natural cooked food and continued the treatment for the nervous system with pills.

Besides all this, Rosa spent hours every day in her foster arms, stitched on her chest, in the rocker, at the threes shadow, caressed by the sun's ray until the sunset... in the nights, Rosa slept on the left arm of her foster, even the foster had her own dogs who became jealous... besides all medication, Rosa could not come back to life without love . After other 2 months, Rosa ran in the yard

I could never thank enough to the angel who brought her to life, Mrs Angela and to the only vet who could give her the right medication in lack if any diagnosis.

The name Rosa comes from a beautiful pink rose from Mrs Angela's yard.

Maybe you wonder why you did not know about this story until now... well from the same reason as always-the lack of time... because all efforts were involved in searching the best solution to save her every day... and today to he able to present you this wonderful story .

Because our material and emotional resources used to save her created a real life lesson... the costs were never covered and I did not stop to believe she will survive.

Now Rosa is almost a normal dog and continues to improve her health day after day .



## **Why Romania ?**

So many people ask us this very question. Below is a short answer to a huge problem. Overleaf are recent pictures from just one public shelter in Valcea Romania, every town/city has one or more. Hard to look at but is the reality of **‘Why Romania’**

It may be hard for many to realise that there is no equivalent charity to our RSPCA, PDSA, Dogs Trust etc in Romania. The limited care the dogs receive is mainly voluntary and unpaid. Often the work of the volunteers is restricted by lack of funds, lack of time and limited access due to the hostile and negative attitude of the local authorities. It is a constant battle.

The streets and countryside are littered with stray dogs and puppies mostly starving. Many are sick and injured. Due to the apathy and lack of animal welfare rights these desperate animals are often treated like vermin. Volunteers feed these dogs when they can.

The public shelters hold huge numbers of stray, sick, injured and abandoned dogs of all ages, shapes and sizes. The injured and sick will not receive veterinary care unless the 'volunteers' are allowed access to help them. Many desperately ill or paralysed dogs are left to suffer or die.

Once in these shelters dogs stand little chance of survival and their condition soon deteriorates. Disease is rife and many dogs are riddled with parasites and suffering dreadful skin conditions. Fights amongst themselves are frequent as they battle for food and space. Sadly small and weak dogs will often not survive these fights. These dogs are in a desperate situation and they are fighting literally for their lives which is often very difficult for us here in the UK to understand.

Saddest of all are the pregnant bitches who give birth and do their very best to rear their litters in impossible conditions. Filthy and crowded, many puppies do not survive the first few hours. Even if they do, their mothers are so undernourished that they succumb to disease and parasites. Many are born in the countryside but fare no better past weaning. Of the hundreds of puppies to be born, many do not survive the first few weeks of life.

Due to the reluctance of the Romanians who do not believe in neutering or euthanasia this situation is not going to improve in the near future. We are well aware of that fact. But what we are determined to do is make a difference for a few of these dogs in the short term. In the long term we will continue to raise funds to support the spay and neuter programmes that are so essential to prevent the continued cycle of suffering.

**ONLY WITH YOUR HELP AND SUPPORT CAN WE CONTINUE TO HELP THE DOGS**



**SAVING ONE DOGS WON'T CHANGE THE WORLD !BUT FOR THAT DOG THE WORLD WILL CHANGE FOREVER!**

## RAGS TO RICHES FUN DOG SHOW 2020

The day dawned with blue skies and lots of sunshine. Our volunteers arrived early and work started, setting up for the day.

Our judge for the day was well-known highly experienced animal behaviour and training consultant Christine Spencer. She had a hard job in front of her as we had record entries for the show, but of course Christine effortlessly made everyone including some nervous dogs and puppies, feel secure and relaxed. Christine was ably assisted by our two very capable ring stewards Vicki and Laura, who kept the big classes in order despite the sweltering weather.



The stalls were mainly gathered around the top of the field to enable visitors access as soon as they arrived. They included a Tombola, doggy items, jewellery sale, and the popular scrumptious delights for dogs and humans made and donated by Christine Ames. The rags to Riches information stall was kept busy, as was the refreshment area— with lovely food much of it home made and kindly donated.

Many of our ex-fosters and their adopters were present and it was lovely for fosterers to re-engage with them, and for many to see in person dogs they have seen and watched progress on our Facebook page, from Romania in dire circumstances through to their forever homes in the UK.



Seeing so many of them together, happy and cared was a wonderful experience for everyone (and worlds away from the dogs on the previous page) and highlights what Rags to Riches is all about.



Overall the show was another great success and everyone had a great day. We raised £ 1,029 despite there being fewer visitors than last year, probably due to the exceptionally hot weather on the day .

## Rags to Riches – Independent Examiner’s report of 19/20 accounts

### 1. Introduction

1.1. I report to the Trustees on my examination of the accounts of Rags to Riches for the year ended 31st March 2020.

### 2. Responsibilities and Basis of the Report

2.1. As the Charity Trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

2.2. I report in respect of my examination of the Trusts accounts carried out under Section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed applicable directions given out by the Charity Commission under Section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

### 3. Independent Examiner’s Statement

3.1. I have completed an examination of the records held and I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by Section 130 of the act; or

the accounts do not accord with those records.

### 4. Noted Findings Expenditure

4.1. A random sample of 12 items of expenditure was chosen from the items recorded on the bank statement, one from each month of the financial year.

4.2. It was noted that 7 out of 12 transactions checked did not have receipts on file. On further investigation, P Carruthers advised that 2 were for transport costs for which receipts are not provided, 3 should have receipts on file so these will be chased up and evidence for 2 of the transactions was sent via email.

4.3. It was also noted that in some instances, personal bank accounts had been used to make payments as opposed to the business account. Although it would be best practice to make payments from the business account, it is acknowledged that the nature of the business means it is sometimes more prudent to use a personal account then transfer the money across. The auditor was advised that this has been checked by P Carruthers with the Charity Commission who confirmed they are happy with this.

### Recommendations Income

4.4. A random sample of 12 donations was chosen and attempts were made to ensure that there was a corresponding entry on the bank statement or paypal listing.

4.5. It is pleasing to note that no anomalies were identified with all donations being recorded on the bank statement

4.6. Receipt books and cash were not checked as part of this audit.

### 5. Recommendations

5.1. Receipts should be kept for all purchases made as evidence that the purchases are for legitimate charity business and these should be retained on file.

**6. Independent Examiner Details** Signed: L.Greenhow Name: Lauren Greenhow

Professional Qualification: CIPFA Address: 11 Oak Road, Market Weighton, YO43 3GW

Date: 15 August 2020

## **Treasurer's report**

This is the third year of Rags to Riches as a registered Charity and it has again been financially successful with a balance at the bank at the end of the year of £20,089.

With a reserve of £1,000 and the decision by trustees to ring fence the legacy money of £8154 for the new shelter and a commitment to assist with the spay neuter campaigns over the summer of 2020 with the Finnish group we are left with a healthy balance to help when and where needed.

As you can see from the Independent examiners report the collection of receipts still has a few problems though the majority have been resolved. Receipts for the new shelter, spay neuter campaigns and vets bills from Valcea are now sorted. When donating for various other items especially to other volunteers throughout Romania it can still be difficult if not impossible to obtain receipts, often we send money in emergency situations. However we can usually show where monies have gone and that they have been used for the purpose intended. After discussions with the charity commission, trustee board, volunteers in Romania and major donors we now pay vet bills direct to the vets who provide us with invoices (Valcea only). Many payments for the new shelter have been directly invoiced to us, usually in the form of photos invoice/receipts. This has all been approved by the charity commission as the future way of working.

Another problem is when money is needed to be direct to banks in Romania it costs us over £25 to send through the CAF bank and can take over 2 weeks. Transferring this money to a private account and then onto Romania is not only free but can be done within a few days something which is important especially when dealing with workmen at the new shelter. Again the Charity Commission are aware of this way of working and though they would rather we had a better way of working are fully understanding of the problems.

Transport is still a challenge, both rising costs and actually finding quality transport. Raising the adoption fee to £280 helped but we are still out of pocket.

We are delighted to have given added support to the building of the new shelter in Valcea from fundraising and donations including a substantial legacy.

The subscriptions have stalled and unfortunately went down to an average £290 a month. This money is ring fenced for vets bills for dogs in Valcea.

PayPal costs continue to impact on individual donations. Paypal also places a small charge on some subscriptions and we encourage supporters to use banking methods which are free.

Facebook birthday and events fundraisers have brought in extra funding and is yet another way we can raise money.

The principal funding sources are from fundraising and donations. We need to continue to grow in this area with new ideas especially now as the pandemic has curtailed many of our other fundraising activities.

**Pauline Carruthers (Treasurer)**

**Accounts overleaf page**

## Annual Expenditure

Expenditure relating to the period April 5th 2020 to April 4th 2020 was £14,275

This expenditure was split:

- Transport : £3218
- Preparation £1,316
- New Shelter £1,597
- Donations for vets bills, emergencies, food etc.. £5179
- Spay-Neuter Campaigns £1,088
- Administration and running costs £1877

All our trustees and volunteers are unpaid.

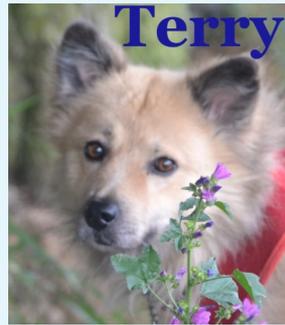
## Annual Income

Income relating to the period April 5th 2019 to April 4th 2020 was 25471

This is split into income raised from dogs adopted and fundraising ventures:

- Dogs adopted £ 2,435
- Subscriptions £ 3,519
- Dog Show £ 1,029
- 
- Many other fundraising activities including, on-line birthday funds, calendars Christmas stalls, on-line draws, and competitions, car boots, raffles, coffee mornings and the sponsored events. £6430
- Other donations and appeals £3903
- Legacy £8154

This year we brought fewer dogs due to a lack of foster places.  
This years foster dogs now with their new families .



I am your conduit between the past and the future, the bridge to a new life.  
I am the one who sees you scared, dirty, sore, lonely, and unwanted.  
I am the one who sees your pain, and waits patiently for you to trust me  
I am the one who feeds and cleans you, giving you love you have never had  
I am the one who falls in love with you, knowing you are transient  
I am the one who sees your tail wag for the first time, sees you play with a toy.  
I am the one who sees you gaining confidence, shinning as never before  
I am the one who must let you go, with a tear in my eye  
I am the one who sends you on to a safe happy life  
I am the one who knows the next dog needs me  
I am the one who is proud to be fosterer