



## **Bulletin No. 100 January 2021**

Happy New Year to all Members, Volunteers, Therapets and Friends!

We hope you are all well and were able to enjoy the festive season in a Covid secure manner. As we move into 2021, we can only hope that with the vaccines being implemented, and the new lockdown to reduce transmission, life will soon resume some form of what we were used to prior to the pandemic. As I write this, I realise that it is exactly one year since I took on the position of CEO and much of my time has been spent keeping the charity 'afloat' in lieu of us being unable to provide the majority of our services. Our office is closed again but we are monitoring email and post. Not exactly the year I was expecting but despite the frustrations, I am glad that we are still here and passionately believe our services will be vital in the future! With this in mind, we will be sending out our membership renewals shortly and hope that as many of you as possible will continue to support us throughout 2021.

As you will see below, one of our long-term volunteers and Board Members, George Leslie, is retiring after 30 years of involvement with the charity. We would all like to thank George for the work that he undertook, particularly as he took on the mantle from Marjorie Henley Price, which contributed to CCST's longevity.

We have all been touched by the pandemic and it is likely that when our Therapet visits resume, the people, and places we interact with will be very different; it may take some time for us all to adjust to the loss of familiar faces and adapt to new routines. Due to the ongoing restrictions and extremely high number of Covid cases, we still do not have a timeframe for the resumption of our physical visiting service and therefore there are opportunities for anyone who is willing and able to provide some form of online/virtual visits, but these do depend on the availability of the organisation we are working with and our volunteers' ability to get their Therapet on camera! Please do not despair if you offer a virtual service and it doesn't work out as this can be challenging to manage. When we deem it safe to do so, we will implement a number of pilot Therapet visits with specifically invited volunteers to consider potential issues prior to resuming visits for everyone. We need to consider the health and well-being of all involved and will therefore not resume visiting until we are entirely

satisfied that it is at a time of least risk and adheres to Scottish Government guidelines. When we reach that point, we will not ask or expect anyone who does not feel ready, to resume visiting.

In a way, this pandemic has forced us to learn new skills, be more tolerant of things that we cannot control, support those around us and be thankful for their support and appreciate what goes on in the lives of others that has an impact on their day. As a charity, we feel it is important to keep communicating with everyone and let the nation know that our volunteers and Therapets are still here, ready, and willing to visit when able. I would like to thank you all once again for your support this last year and for being ambassadors for us in whatever way you have been able. We are all looking forward to a brighter 2021 and getting our Therapets back in service but in the meantime stay safe and well, be patient and we will keep you updated as and when our service delivery changes.

Take care everyone

Mel Hughes  
CEO

## News from the Trustee Directors



After 30 years of service as a Trustee and Trustee Director, George Leslie has decided to retire. George was appointed as a Trustee in 1990 and was extremely supportive of the work Marjorie Henley Price undertook to establish the charity. George was also chairman for many years. His extensive knowledge as a veterinarian and business owner accompanied by his experience in the bureaucracy of politics supported the development of our policies and our input into important legislative matters. We would like to thank George for his dedication and wish him an enjoyable retirement, in the hope that he will be able to join us for a post Covid awards lunch in the future!

## Membership Renewal 2021

We would like to thank all our members for their continued support during this last unusual year. Our membership renewals are one of the main ways we receive regular income, and it might interest you to know that we currently have over 200 members who are not active Therapet volunteers and are

simply 'supporters'. There will be no change to the membership fees this year and we hope that many of you will continue your support by renewing in 2021.

We shall shortly be emailing our membership renewal form. Any members who have requested printed materials will receive a hard copy. However, if you would like a paper copy, please contact the office, preferably by email if you can as the office is closed due to the lockdown. If you do phone, there is an answering service that will be checked weekly.

The current Annual Membership fees are:

Single	£10
Joint	£15
Senior Citizen	£5
Under 16	£5
Corporate*	£20

The Therapet Registration fee is a one-off payment of £5. Anyone can support CCST by becoming a member, but, for insurance purposes, Therapet Volunteers must retain their membership.

*\*The Corporate membership is for organisations e.g., dog clubs or vet practices, that are interested in our work and wish to support us, but they usually do not have active volunteers with us.*



From 1988 the charity was run predominantly by volunteers. In 1998 we took on an office administrator and we now have two part-time and two full-time members of staff to manage our administration!

## Pet Health

During the pandemic there has been a huge rise in the number of dogs imported from overseas. Our 'resident' vet, Stewart Donald, has written some guidelines to consider regarding potential health risks. Please go to the news section on our website to read this article.



The demand for dogs has also led to an increase in dog theft and the price of puppies. Please do take every precaution when out walking your dog and be wary of leaving your dog unattended in a vehicle or outside a shop.

Please also take care during wintry conditions and watch out for slips, which can lead to bruising, and muscle/bone/joint conditions for you and your dog. Dog and cat paws are also susceptible to problems with grit and salt, so it is recommended that you wash paws after walks or outdoor activities.

## In Memory of...

Every year we celebrate the lives of our animals who have given so much to us as family pets and to others as Therapets. Since our last newsletter, we have sadly said goodbye to the following Therapets:



### **Billi Jean, Pomeranian, Lee Muir, Edinburgh**

As a Therapet for seven years, Billi Jean was a regular visitor to the Royal Hospital for Sick Children where she brought smiles to everyone she met. She also visited schools and Paws Against Stress Sessions in both Edinburgh and Fife. She will be sorely missed by owner Lee and the rest of her canine housemates.

### **Cai, Papillon, owned by Marian MacLeod, Edinburgh**

Cai had been a Therapet for nine years who loved his weekly care home visits and participating in the Pause Against Stress sessions. He loved being cuddled by the people he visited. He will also be missed by his little friend and housemate Sofi.

### **Fizzy, Labrador Retriever, owned by Karen Cormack, Aberdeen**

Fizzy had been a Therapet for 9 years and retired in September 2020, but sadly died in October 2020. Fizzy worked in NHS Grampian with several handlers and throughout that time and was an excellent ambassador for the Therapet service, Fizzy will be missed by housemate Lexi.

### **Glen, Labrador Retriever, owned by Miriam Hamilton, Aberdeen**

Glen had been a Therapet for four years, retiring in March 2020 and loved his visits to nursing homes and schools. He will be missed by housemates and Therapet colleagues and housemates Sadie and Ollie.

### **Gracie, German Shepherd, owned by Morven Woods, Fife**

A Therapet since 2015, Gracie had visited Sheltered Housing for one-to-one visits and a few schools. Morven has been a member of CCST for many years prior to that and Gracie recently earned her five-year medal. Gracie died peacefully in her sleep on 22nd December.

**Honey, Labrador Retriever, owned by June Gibson, Dundee & Angus**

Honey visited Lunan Court & Seaton Grove Care Homes and received a five year medal for visiting in 2019 and will be sadly missed by those she visited as a Therapet and as a pet to her owner.

**Koston, Border Collie, owned by Dorothee Venn, Aberdeen**

Kosti had been a Therapet since 2018 and was described by Fiona Watts one of Aberdeen's Area Representatives as 'a lovely calm soul' and will also be missed by housemate Ellie.

**Mara, Golden Retriever, owned by Mr Geoffrey & Mrs Wendy Gardens, Orkney**

Mara, registered in 2017 had been visiting Gilbertson Day Centre, but retired in December 2018 due to a health condition. Mara sadly died in July 2020 and is sorely missed.

**Poppy, Labrador Retriever, owned by Christine Drennan, Glasgow**

Poppy visited Gartnavel Royal Hospital in Glasgow where she visited McNair House, and adult ward for those experiencing severe mental health difficulties. However, Poppy had the right character for this very challenging environment.

**Sheba, Border Collie Cross, owned by Aidan Dunbar, Dundee & Angus**

Sheba had been a Therapet since 2011, initially working in care homes and hospitals in Edinburgh. She then moved to Arbroath and visited care homes, schools (for Reading with Dogs) and Colleges for Paws Against Stress. Sheba received her ten year medal - what a heroine! She will be sadly missed by Aidan and Therapet and housemate Willow.

In our September newsletter we erroneously listed Therapet Bute, Bichon Frise, owned by Elizabeth Mulholland, Glasgow & Strathclyde as female. Those who knew Bute will know that he was in fact male and we apologise to Elizabeth for this mistake.

Apologies if we have missed any Therapet. Please do let us know and we will give them a mention in our next newsletter. If your Therapet has recently passed away, please contact the office and let them know whether or not you wish to continue to receive correspondence. This is important as so much of our communication is instant via email these days and sometimes grieving pet owners want to continue to receive news while others find it too difficult.

# 'Virtual' Therapet Visits

## 'Reading With Dogs'

Throughout lockdown we have offered a variety of virtual Therapet visits. Volunteer Sharon Fergus and Therapets Skye and Harley have been successfully providing activities for St Peter The Apostle High School, Clydebank. Principal Teacher of Learning, Teaching and Assessment, Heather Pepler, commented



"Obviously things are a bit different, so we have focused on how to encourage pupils to read and be on screen as many pupils don't actually like being on a google meet and it does take a little getting used to. Most of our pupils have animals so we focused on making toys for them. We used books which they would read to Sharon and the dogs, and she would talk through instructions with them stage by stage. It worked really well and the kids enjoyed it.

We've had some super results from this programme: one of our pupils didn't like to read at all and always had a learning assistant read for him. He has made great progress since being on our programme. Other pupils have become more fluent and confident when reading out. When I spoke with parents, they are really supportive and have noticed a number of improvements in their kids. Overall, it's been a really positive experience."

If you are interested in taking part in a virtual session with a school, contact your Area Representative or the school themselves about this and do let us know about it.

Things you will need: laptop/computer/tablet/iPad/phone with camera and internet connection. The school will do the rest.

## 'Paws Against Stress'

We ran our first Virtual 'Paws Against Stress' session with Glasgow University Students' Representative Council at the beginning of December. Four volunteers participated and we had over 25 students involved. Each volunteer had multiple dogs in their household, not all of them Therapets, so it was lovely for the students to see the dogs interacting and learn about the lives of our Therapets. One of the students had a cat who also made an 'on screen'

appearance. The session was an hour long and was very well received with lots of positive comments from students who were missing their own pets, were stressed with exams and the circumstances resulting from the pandemic. We are looking forward to running similar sessions for other Tertiary Education establishments in the New Year.



Our very first Therapet was Spencer, a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, in 1988. He was owned by Tom and Dorothy Wilkins who are still members today and one of our awards is a tribute to Spencer.

## **STV Focus on Therapets in Aberdeen**

In December, some of our volunteers from the Aberdeen Airport Canine Crew were filmed by STV for a piece about life during lockdown and how Therapet Visiting Services have had to change. It was aired on 18th December in the North East & Tayside region and featured interviews with volunteers Carole Ledingham, Clair Petrie, and Fiona Watts, with Therapets Dorothy and Bruno.

The volunteer comments included observations about the dogs missing their physical visits and how important these visits are to those who are experiencing isolation. Dorothy the Jack Russell has been sending postcards of any trips she managed within the Covid restrictions to a local care home as well as a monthly newsletter recounting her daily life. Bruno the German Shepherd has been involved in online sessions entertaining nursery children where he is read stories. Aberdeen Airport Duty Manager, Fraser Bain also commented on how much the dogs had helped calm nervous fliers since our partnership with them in April 2019 began and our Therapets have been sorely missed during the pandemic.

## **National Befriending Week in the Borders**

Therapets Holly a Bichon Frise, and Hamish a Collie/Terrier Cross helped to tackle loneliness and isolation during the Covid 19 pandemic through participation in the Befriend Project (Berwickshire). During the first week of November, they were able to say hello to missed friends by wagging their tails at windows to bring a smile to friend's faces while staying Covid secure. An article about this appeared in the Berwickshire News recently and can be found here <https://bit.ly/37jbs3xBerwickshireBefriending>

## Annual Awards Lunch 2021

As you all know, sadly due to the circumstances with the Coronavirus pandemic, we had to cancel our 2020 Awards Lunch. However, looking forward, we have made a provisional booking at the Stirling Court Hotel on Sunday 28th November 2021. We are hoping that our physical Therapet visiting services are able to resume early enough in the year to allow the event to be meaningful.

Please do look on our website for details of the awards and how you and your Therapet could potentially be nominated for an award next year.

<https://www.canineconcernscotland.org.uk/2019-ccst-awards>



## Volunteer Coordination Roles

### Vacant Positions

We are still looking for someone to coordinate the following positions. Area Representative roles may be shared or split into different projects, e.g. someone overseeing 'Paws against Stress' events, school activities or assessing and placing new volunteers. Please email Mel on [mel.hughes@canineconcernscotland.org.uk](mailto:mel.hughes@canineconcernscotland.org.uk) if you would like to know more about any of these positions.

- Dumfries & Galloway - someone from the west to assist with the Area Representative work
- Edinburgh West Area Representative

81-85 Portland Street, Edinburgh, EH6 4AY

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



- Perthshire Area Representative

**Joy**  
The Therapet

JOY through the touch of an old hand, trembling.  
JOY that is gifted with no dissembling.  
A hug from a sad child, withdrawn and shy.  
A hug that is healing; he knows not why.  
A hug for a dog that is called a toy,  
A tiny Chihuahua who radiates JOY.

A poem by long serving volunteer Sally Leiper  
*Photo: Sally's Therapet, Billie Jean, spreading joy  
around a care home.*



The Trust has over 150 types of dogs who are active Therapets. Although, there are many more combinations of breeds within that number which haven't been classified.

## Fundraising and Donations

There are so many ways that supporters have raised money for us this year. Here are just a few!

### Virtual NC500 Sponsored Walk

We made it over **470** miles round the **NC500** and raised over an amazing **£4,000**.

Despite wet and windy weather with intermittent spells of sunshine, supporters from around the country participated in our Virtual Sponsored Walk during the last weekend of October.



Our walkers from all parts of Scotland managed an amazing 470+ miles over the course of the weekend and some were still walking with slightly better weather the week after. One volunteer who was unable to walk, completed the whole route in a flight simulator! Many who were unable to participate supported friends, family, dogs and donated in memory of those who are sadly

no longer with us. We received so many beautiful photographs of scenery, dogs and owners and hopefully we managed to get them all up on our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram sites. Some are also on our Just Giving page <http://www.justgiving.com/canine-concern>

Well done everyone involved! Next time we will aim for summer when the weather should be better and we will hopefully be able to join up with others for an enjoyable day out!

## **Donation in Memory of Margaret Jane Duncan**

Sadly CCST volunteer Angela Warden's mother Margaret Jane Duncan passed away suddenly in July of this year. At the funeral the family asked for donations on behalf of CCST and raised £300 from the small group allowed to attend. Margaret and her husband have always been great supporters of the charity and the work their daughter Angela is involved in with her two Therapets; Hizzy and his son Lomond.



Canine Concern Scotland Trust and Therapet would like to thank them for this donation at this time. *Picture of Angela and her dad, Allie Duncan with Therapets Hizzy and Lomond*

## **Retirement Donation from Peter Adair - Dumfries**

We were very grateful to recently receive the cheque for £515.52 from Wallace Hall Academy Dumfries. The staff and pupils had arranged a 'Non Uniform Day' held on behalf of Peter Adair's retirement as long serving teacher and Head of the Maths department. Peter must have been very well thought of and we're sure will be sadly missed! Peter's wife Annette is the Area Representative for Dumfries, so we are doubly indebted to the Adairs for their generosity - not to leave out Therapet Corbie their Miniature Schnoodle!

## **William Grant & Sons Ltd, Distillers**

Earlier in 2020, our northern volunteers participated in a charity day at the Glenfiddich Distillery in Dufftown, after which we received a donation. One of our members, Jenny Morrison, works for the company and is proud owner of Therapet Dee Dee. In December Jenny offered us a donation, which her employers matched. We are very grateful to both Jenny and William Grant & Sons Ltd for their donation of £300.

## Fundraising through Online Shopping

A supporter has spotted this useful tool if you use online Amazon shopping! Use this browser extension <https://couponfollow.com/smilematic> to be directed to Amazon Smile automatically and allow us to benefit from your purchase.

# Smilematic

Smilematic is a free Chrome extension that will automatically turn your everyday Amazon purchases into AmazonSmile donations.

You'll never again miss an opportunity to raise money for **your favorite charity**

Add to Chrome - It's Free!

Also supports Safari, Firefox & Edge

▶ Watch It In Action

We are registered with easyfundraising, which also has a donation reminder that may be added to your web browser. There is also an app for your phone or tablet that will easily facilitate the charity donation when you shop.

