



NEWSLETTER

MID ANTRIM ANIMAL SANCTUARY

Dog Lovers, I need your help!!!

Dear friends,
My name is Vodski. I am 11 years old and have been living at the sanctuary since 2014.

Everyone is very good to me here and recently I got a chance to go home with a lovely volunteer called Moira to see how things would go.



This is the story of my adventure:
Moira has 2 other doggies for me to play with, "Sparks" and "Henry" and we 3 musketeers got on really well and had lots of fun together. Moira took Sparks and me on long walks together and I loved those walks with my new BFF, due to his age Henry was not able to join us.

I went in Moira's car with Henry for a trip to the shops and old boy Henry and I had a snooze while Moira did her shopping. These shops always included treats for us and some for my other buddies at the Sanctuary.

I had a lovely cosy bed to sleep in or to take naps after running around the garden with Sparks - I love the freedom of being able to run around the garden without a lead for a change, pure bliss!

I don't like to blow my own trumpet too much, but I'm a very good sleeper and I never bark or make much noise.

Oh dear, CATS! I discovered I am afraid of cats when they are indoors and unfortunately for me there were cats living at my friend's house who came in to be fed and at night.

I could feel myself shaking and getting really upset when the cats were in and although I hate to admit it I even barked I was so scared.

Anyhow..... here I am back at the Sanctuary after my foray into a lovely home even though Moira tried everything she could to reassure me and make me welcome.

I admit I am not a very cuddly dog except on my own terms but I did sit on my friend Moira's lap and I am very partial to having my head stroked. I can be a bit difficult I will admit and would need someone who is prepared to be patient with me as Moira was and be guided by the team here at the Sanctuary.

I now know that I really would love to have a home of my own as long as there are no cats!

If there is anyone out there willing to give me another chance please talk to my "people" at the Sanctuary who will tell you that I need an adult only home and I need a special food to keep me healthy.

Love from Vodski and Moira

Our Rescued Puppies

Some of you may remember in January this year that 28 puppies were found in the back of a truck bound for Larne Port, travelling illegally to unknown fates and destinations. 28 tiny tails huddled together in the back of a cold, dark truck not knowing what their future held for them. 28 pairs of frightened eyes that were saved only by a tip off just in time from a member of the public to the PSNI.

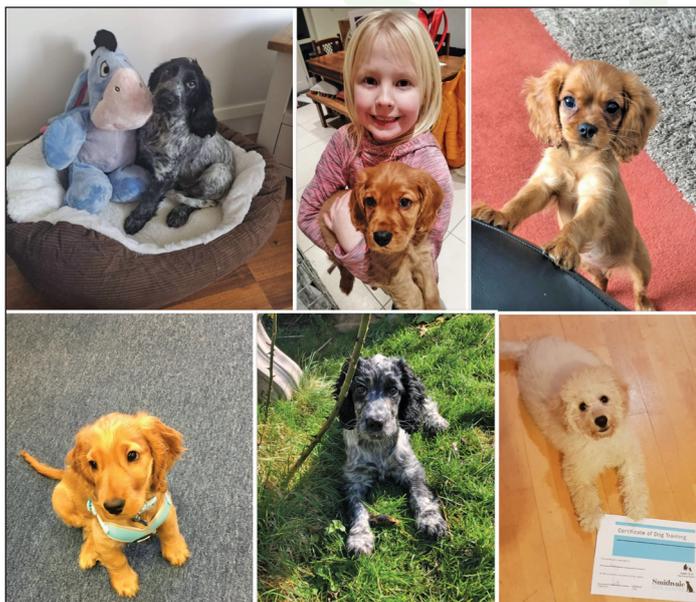
The pups were a mixture of Cocker Spaniels, Cockapoos and Cavaliers all ranging in ages from 7 weeks old to 12 weeks old and although physically weren't in poor condition, psychologically it was clear that they were in need of help. Along with a few other Sanctuaries around Northern Ireland we were there to offer helping hands when they were needed the most.



Here at the Sanctuary we took on six of these little bundles of fluff and they were headliners. Literally! Their story reached hundreds of thousands of people via TV, Radio, Facebook and Newspapers. It was clear that there was going to be no shortage of suitable homes for these wee ones and we were absolutely overwhelmed with interest in them from all around Ireland and beyond.

After a thorough veterinary check was over we put the pups straight into foster homes with some of our staff and volunteers until they were ready for their new homes. They had been through quite the ordeal and their living conditions prior to the truck were unknown but they were understandably very shaken. Some needed to build trust and were unsure of human affection, others found normal household noises hard to deal with like the kettle boiling and the TV, but they all adjusted quite quickly and bonded well with their foster families, some of which even became their new adoptive family. We like to call this a 'Foster Fail'.

Soon they were all happy, healthy puppies and after meet and greets and homechecks they were ready for their big adoption day and it was time for them all to head off and start their new lives. So today we'd like to share with you some photos of the pups settled into their new homes. We look forward to being able to watch them grow up in safe and loving environments. We're sure you'll all be with us in wishing them all a very happy ever after.



We would like to thank everyone involved in the rescue, care and adoption of these lucky pups and also to everyone out there who shared their story, offered help and expressed interest. So many animals out there won't be lucky (or unlucky) enough to make the headlines like these little ones but with your help and support then we can be there to make sure that their stories matter too.

We can only do this work with your help and support, thank you!

**Check out our new website -
www.midantrim.org**

Contains all our latest animals looking for their forever home, our latest news and ways to donate and support our work!

Our Shop

Our charity shop, located at 7 Castle Way Antrim, supports the work of the Sanctuary and is manned by a dedicated group of volunteers.

We welcome a variety of donations and now, allowing for the size of our premises, can accept items of good quality furniture.

You can help us with our work by donating items, volunteering or by calling in, saying hello to our volunteers and grabbing yourself a bargain at the same time.

Check out our events for 2019!

Sunday 5th May: BELFAST MARATHON

Team Mid Antrim will take part in this year's marathon – you can support them and us by making a sponsorship pledge.

Wednesdays 1st/8th/15th/22nd May: ESSENTIAL DOG TRAINING, Sanctuary Premises

Essential Dog Care Course, facilitated by Robin Bates and includes:

- **1st May - Training and behaviour.** The essential things you need to know about your dog and how to train them. How to avoid common behavioural issues like fears and phobias and aggression.
- **8th May - Body language.** Dogs communicate with us and other dogs using their body language... how to spot it and what it means and why a wagging tail does not mean the dog is happy or friendly.
- **15th May - Meeting your dogs needs.** How to keep your dog happy and settled without indulgence.
- **22nd May - Why dogs do what they do?** What motivates your dog and are they being naughty or just being a dog? Cost **£15** per session or **£50** for all four. Bookings via Eventbrite, at reception or contact us by phone: **028 9446 3993**. Refreshments will be served.

Sunday 9th June from 11.30am: ANTRIM SUMMER FESTIVAL PET SHOW Antrim Castle Gardens

Join us and Antrim Festival Group for the much anticipated pet show which is part of the Festival in the Park event; alongside this year's headline act, Johnny Brady, will be kids entertainment, craft stalls and refreshments. A great family day out!

Saturday 15th June at 3.00pm: REUNION WALK, Antrim Castle Gardens

An exciting get together with all our ex residents; join us for a stroll around the iconic Castle Gardens and then for some refreshments. A great chance to catch up with former residents and see how they are getting on in their forever homes.

Wednesday 26th June at 6.00pm: SPONSORED DOG WALK, Sanctuary Premises

This an opportunity to get all our animals out for a walk around the Antrim area and raise much needed funds at the same time.

Saturday 17th August from 11.00am: SUMMER OPEN DAY, Sanctuary Premises

Our major annual event – a fun day for everyone with a wide variety of stalls, children's entertainment and our much loved FUN dog show with many crazy categories. Always a great opportunity to catch up with our work and former residents.

Saturday 23rd October at 8.00pm: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, Sanctuary Premises

An opportunity for our members to get an update on our work.

Saturday 14th December at 11.00am: CHRISTMAS FAIR, Sanctuary

The Sanctuary gets ready for Christmas with our annual Christmas Fair where there will be refreshments, a wide variety of stalls and our ballot draw. Santa normally comes along to say hello.

Photograph of the Year, so far....

Check out this super photo of Mr Tom Adams and the lovely and very proud Patch looking forward to his new forever home. This photo went viral and attracted over 2000 comments on our facebook and 60,000 on twitter! Behind the camera was our very own Animal Care Assistant, Shelagh.



Extended Spring/Summer Opening Hours

We're delighted to extend our opening hours and we'll be open until 8.00pm every Wednesday evening until September 2019!

The Story of our Kitty with a purrfect ending!



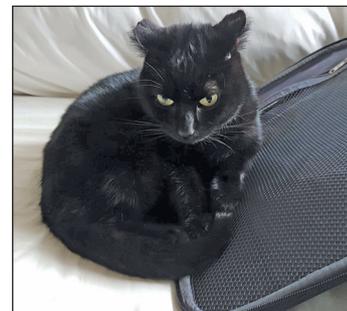
As you can see Kitty is a gorgeous black female cat. Back in the Autumn of 2017 Kitty found herself caught up in a Halloween bonfire and although she was rescued it was not before she sustained significant burns, particularly to her ears.

Kitty spent a long time at the vets recovering and with expert help and loving care she eventually came through her ordeal. As no one claimed Kitty she was brought to us around November 2017 so she could find her forever home; she didn't have to wait long and her luck took a turn for the better when Glenn and his family came to visit the cattery. The connection

between Kitty and the family was instant and she was booked for rehoming immediately.

In January 2018 Kitty left the Sanctuary with her new family and quickly settled in to her new surroundings, it was definitely one of those meant to be moments! Though Kitty has been through a lot she learned to love again and shows love and affection to her new family; she loves sitting on their knees, taking over the bed and following all family members around the house.

Kitty's story has turned out purrfect however there are so many other cats and dogs at the Sanctuary with their own stories to tell and who would love to have a happy home like our Kitty now enjoys!



Volunteer Induction Dates

Our volunteers play a major role in the work of the Sanctuary and assist in the roles of dog walking, kennel cleaning, fundraising, reception duties and working in the cattery and our charity shop. If you want to be part of our team check out our induction dates below:

- **1st June at 10.00am**
- **7th September at 10.00am**
- **2nd November at 10am**

For more information check out our website or contact us on **028 9446 3993**

Street Collectors

We are always looking for folk to help us with our street collections; if you have a spare hour why not support our great work! Our street collection dates for this year are:

- **8th June at Ballyclare**
- **31st August at Antrim & Larne**
- **19th October at Carrickfergus**
- **2nd November at Newtownabbey**

Socialisation Programme

Here at the Sanctuary we aim to ensure that all our dogs have a happy and healthy life in their forever homes and to assist with this we're delighted to announce a new element within our rehoming process. All new adopters will now have the opportunity to attend a 2 hour session with Robin Bates, our animal behaviourist, to address any concerns or issues that they and their new companion may be encountering or indeed just to share ideas on all matters dog related.

These sessions will be held on the following dates and anyone interested in attending should contact the Sanctuary on **028 9446 3993**:

- **1st June at 2.00pm** • **20th July at 2.00pm**
- **7th September at 2.00pm** • **5th October at 2.00pm**
- **23rd November at 2.00pm**

Our Vet in the making!

Having volunteered at the sanctuary for 10 years I have had an abundance of opportunities! I have been there when we had our old building, during the temporary move to Ballyclare and when our new premises were opened!



At the eager age of 14 I showed up to the Sanctuary with my mum in the hope that I could volunteer for my Duke of Edinburgh placement. Staff members quickly introduced us both to the most amazing long term resident of the Sanctuary; an elderly staffie x boxer called Boomer! We weren't to realise that she would quickly capture our hearts and come home with us within that year; are you ever a proper volunteer if you don't end up re-homing one of the animals?

I had explained to all the staff that I dreamed of being a vet when I grew up and when the opportunity arose Margaret, the Animal Welfare Manager, introduced me to the voluntary vet, Michael Morfett! Seeing Mike working through the various cases and the care he provided inspired me to work hard to achieve the grades I needed if I was going to have the opportunity to become a vet.

Soon my Duke of Edinburgh placement came to an end but I'd grown so fond of the Sanctuary, the residents and the wonderful work the staff do I wasn't going to leave! I'd met lots of interesting people all with a story to tell, got involved in lots of fundraising opportunities and was enjoying every minute of working with the animals.



2013 soon approached and I had been offered an interview at the University of Nottingham to study Veterinary Medicine!!

I was thrilled, during my interview I spoke about the years of experience I had within the Sanctuary, about the interesting medical cases, volunteering opportunities, the rehoming processes and the great work the staff and volunteers do. I soon received a phone call saying I'd been offered a place!

Throughout my time at university I have continued to volunteer at the Sanctuary at every opportunity when I get home. The staff and volunteers have always been extremely supportive asking how the course was going and telling me about interesting cases. I attend every Sanctuary veterinary clinic I can and have had the opportunity to examine thousands of cats, dogs and even the odd pigeon! My confidence has soared through these opportunities I have been given, for example hand-rearing kittens, providing vet checks, medications, vaccinations and microchipping, all under the direction of Mike.

I wanted to use the knowledge I gained throughout my Sanctuary work to help other veterinary students, so I set up a Shelter Medicine Society at university. This involves holding talks on Shelter Medicine topics such as infective diseases and involves fundraising for small local charities and helping them to improve their protocols through guided advice. Lastly, I set up monthly neutering clinic's where I teach my peers how to examine, castrate, vaccinate and microchip animals. None of this would have been possible without the experiences and opportunities Mid Antrim Animal Sanctuary provided me with!



I cannot thank the animals, staff and volunteers of the Sanctuary enough for helping me get to where I am today. I truly wouldn't be the same person without it and wouldn't have the skills or confidence in veterinary work that I have today! My heart will always lie with Mid Antrim and I have loved seeing the sanctuary grow and improve alongside myself!

As I finish my last few months of university and examinations and begin to apply for charity medicine jobs I find myself finally ready to enter the big wide world of work! I'm finally nearly a proper grown up vet (even if I will still always be "wee 14 year old Shanni" in the Sanctuary staff's eyes!).

Shannon xxx

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