



# Business Plan and Annual Report 2020

Charity Name: The Starlight Trust

Registration Number: EW16594

Principal Address: 63, Tharp Road, Wallington, Surrey, SM6 8LG

# Charity Management & Activities

## Managing trustees

Name	Office	Dates Acted
Sarah Argrave	Managing Trustee, Animal Care Manager, Webmaster, and Wildlife Services Manager	All year
David Argrave	Managing Trustee, Animal Care Assistant, Treasurer, and Animal Collection & Transport Officer	All year

## Other trustees

Name	Office	Dates Acted
Louise Gale	Trustee, Foster Carer, Deputy Wildlife Services Manager, and Animal Collection & Transport Officer.	All year
Amanda Lynch	Trustee	All year

## Objectives & Activities

### Charity Objectives

For the benefit of the public, to relieve the suffering and distress of animals in such ways as the trust shall decide including (but not exclusively) the following ways: -

- (a) to rescue, take in and provide care, shelter and sanctuary for stray, lost, neglected, abandoned, ill-treated and unwanted pets, primarily small pet rodents, and to rehome these animals wherever possible.
- (b) To promote humane behaviour towards animals by providing appropriate care, protection, treatment and security for animals which are in need of care and attention by reason of sickness, maltreatment, poor circumstances or ill usage.
- (c) to educate the public in matters pertaining to animal welfare in general and the prevention of cruelty and suffering among animals.

### Activities Undertaken

Founded in 2008, the trust operates a rescue and sanctuary for small pets and feral pigeons from founders Sarah and Dave Argrave's home. In general, there are around 60 animals in our care at any one time. We tend to focus on animals which are vulnerable, in neglect situations, or which have been refused help elsewhere, and on quality over quantity.

The trust also runs two websites which offer advice and assistance to the public caring for animals.

Helpwildlife.co.uk was set up in 2005 and offers advice on what to do when finding a sick, injured or apparently orphaned wild bird or animal, who to turn to for help and how to resolve conflicts with 'pest' species holistically and humanely.

Smallpetsmatter.co.uk was set up in 2012 with the aim to promote better care for pet rodents. This site remains suspended due to lack of resources to keep it updated.

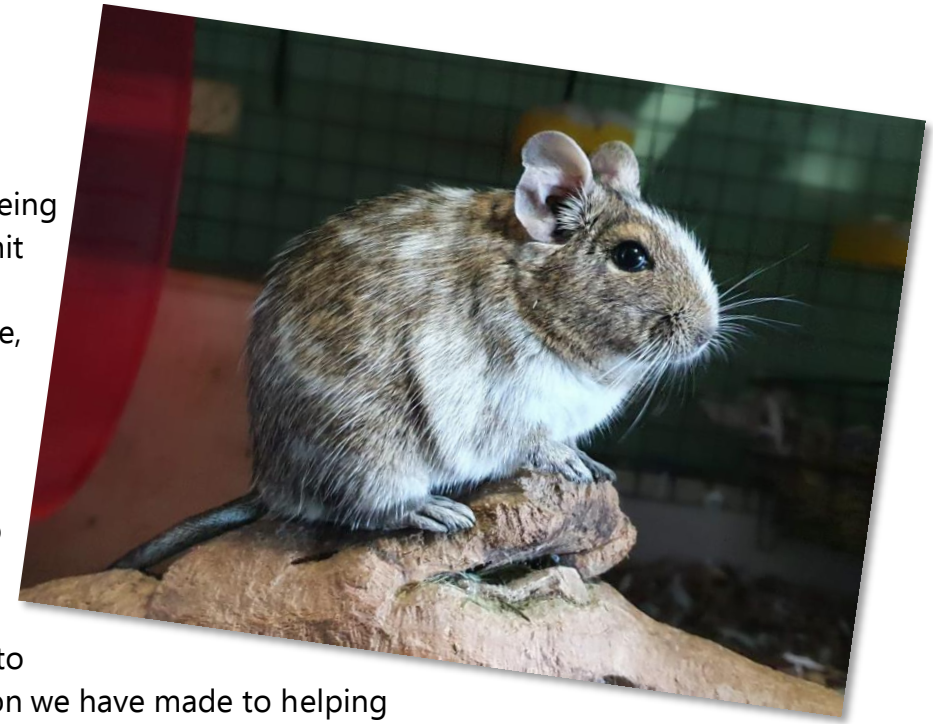
# Introduction

Inevitably, due to global events, 2020 did not go as we had planned. With one of the managing trustees being Clinically Extremely Vulnerable to Covid-19 and the trust being run from their home we had to severely limit any activity which might involve contact with other people even during the periods when this was legally allowed. As a result, from mid-March we suspended intake of pet rodents since we could not identify a safe, effective way to receive them into our care, ensure their veterinary needs were met, and adequately vet prospective new homes. Adoptions were limited to those rodents who were already in our care.

The year has been helpful in showing us ways in which we can continue to make a valuable contribution to animal rescue even when we cannot physically rescue animals ourselves. As a charity operated by disabled people from a very small house, this is important to us. Even in 'good' years the number of animals we can help directly is limited and we're always mindful of how long we might physically be able to continue due to health and space issues. This year, our animal intake has been reduced but we are proud of the contribution we have made to helping wildlife through our new helpdesk attached to HelpWildlife. This has enabled site visitors to contact us for bespoke advice and we helped more than 2000 people through it.

There was a huge jump in the quantity of donations being received via our HelpWildlife project, possibly due to the increased public facing activity there. In some cases, despite our best efforts to make it very clear what the donations were for, monies came to us which were intended for wildlife rescues listed on HelpWildlife. Taking funds away from frontline wildlife rescues is something we desperately want to avoid so wherever possible these were refunded or redirected, sometimes incurring us costs in doing so. In order to ensure these donations are, as far as possible, used as intended, we have rearranged our accounts data to separate donations received for/via our rescue work from those received for/via HelpWildlife. Once the costs of running HelpWildlife are covered, excess funds can then be used to fund the transport of wildlife casualties to rescue where the finder is unable to get the animal there themselves, or to financially support wildlife rescues listed in our directory. The 'donate' page has been removed from HelpWildlife and donations can now only be made via 'ko-fi.com' which defaults to donations of £1 to try and ensure that we only attract small donations from helpdesk users as intended.

We also continued with our work supporting other pigeon rescues by providing free faecal sampling. Demand for this was quite high in 2020 with us testing an average of four samples a week. Some of our 'regulars', having seen the value of sampling, have gone on to get their own microscopes and learn how to test samples themselves.





# Quarter 1: January - March

## Finances

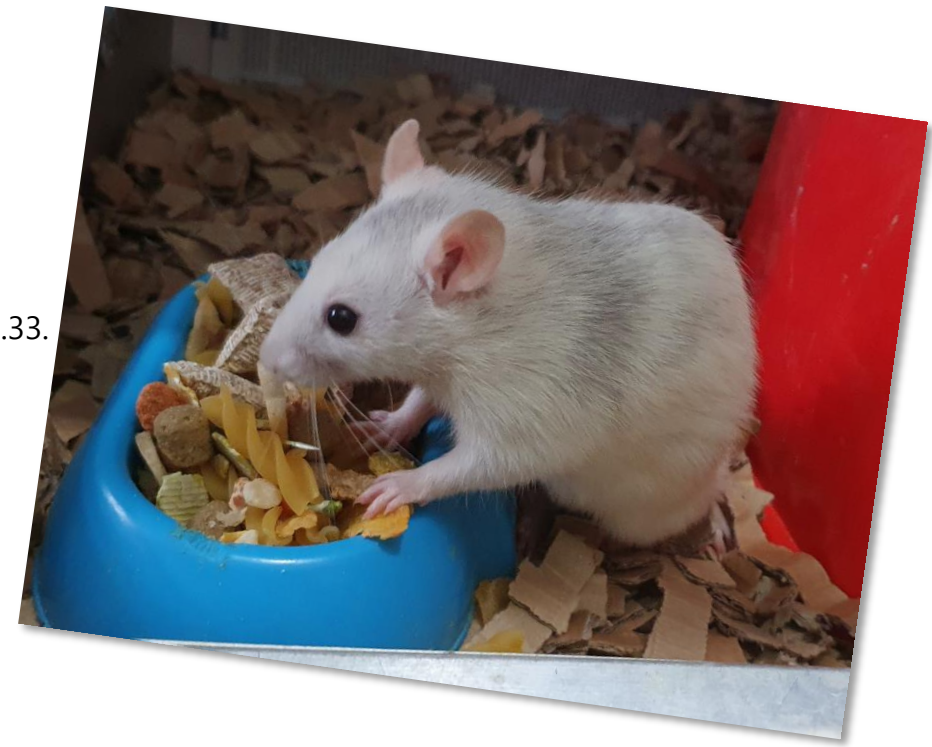
Income this period totalled £1554.29, almost all via the rescue side. Expenditure was within income at £906.33. £874.71 of this was spent directly on animal care.

## Animals

Intake continued as normal during the first quarter, before the pandemic really hit. We admitted 45 - 14 rats, 2 Syrian hamsters, 10 degus and 19 pigeons. 5 of the degus were passed to another rescue with better facilities for possibly pregnant degus soon after admission.

## HelpWildlife

26,721 visits were made to the site compared to 17,717 for the same period last year. 15 new rescues were added to the directory. Around 87 people were helped through the HelpWildlife Advice Group on Facebook but the exact figure has been lost. In March we set up our new helpdesk, enabling people who find sick, injured or at-risk wildlife to contact us via Facebook, Twitter, Email or a button on our website to request bespoke advice.



# Quarter 2: April - June

## Finances

Income this period totalled £2026.17 with a little more than £500 of this coming via HelpWildlife. This jump in wildlife related income coincides with the launch of our wildlife 'helpdesk' and already exceeded our goal of raising around £450 to cover the costs of operating the website and helpdesk software.

Expenditure was within income at £1172.31. Spending focus shifted due to setting up the Helpdesk - animal care spending was only £475.32, £283.83 was spent on IT and telephony, and £203.22 of the HelpWildlife funds was spent on supporting other rescues or getting wildlife casualties to rescue.

## Animals

We officially closed to pet rodents on the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020 due to one of the managing trustees being Clinically Extremely Vulnerable so none were admitted during this period. 26 pigeons were admitted.

## HelpWildlife

82,707 visits were made to the site compared to 58,665 for the same period last year. 25 new rescues were added to the directory. In this first quarter of running both the helpdesk and Facebook group, we helped 1075 people with queries about sick, injured or at-risk wildlife. In June, we advertised for extra volunteers to help us keep up with demand.

The unexpected consequence of the helpdesk was the greater feedback from members of the public about the rescues they were contacting. In most cases this was positive and helped us to ensure the listings were up to date. But, very sadly, some of this was negative and, in some cases, clear patterns emerged where a handful of rescues were repeatedly giving incorrect advice. We took the difficult decision to remove a small number of rescues from the directory to avoid site visitors receiving incorrect information.



# Quarter 3: July - September

## Finances

Income this period totalled £3153.13 of which £726.62 came via HelpWildlife.

Expenditure was within income at £2765.38. £1480.32 was spent directly on animal care including £640 on new custom caging. £292.73 was spent on IT/Telephony including a further license for the Helpdesk to enable us to bring on board some admin support to help cope with the volumes of enquiries. We also received charges from Google for the use of their Maps API for the first time due to the high number of searches taking place on HelpWildlife. We spent £403.82 of HelpWildlife funds supporting wildlife rescues.



## Animals

Rodent intake continued to be paused but one little Dwarf Hamster snuck her way in! Only 8 pigeons were admitted as we focused on the busy help desk work and battled with some complicated cases amongst the current pigeon guests.

High winds felled a tree which unluckily fell onto one of our foster aviaries, Teddy Towers. The good news, though, is that no-one was harmed. Several panels of the aviary need to be replaced but we were also planning an extension to this aviary so we will do both at the same time.

## HelpWildlife

80,723 visits were made to the site compared to 59,331 for the same period last year. 13 new rescues were added to the directory. We helped 1048 people with enquiries about sick, injured or at risk wildlife through our helpdesk and Facebook group.

In August we were involved in setting up a network of volunteer drivers to help with getting wildlife to rescue where there were transport difficulties. However, in September we took the decision to withdraw HelpWildlife from this project. We also decided to close the HelpWildlife Advice Group on Facebook as it was becoming increasingly difficult to moderate.



# Quarter 4: October - December

## Finances

Income this period totalled £2145.59 of which £738.69 came via HelpWildlife.

Expenditure was well within income at £923.02. The majority - £610.01 - was spent directly on animal care.

## Animals

Admissions during this period were all pigeons – 18 of them in total. We undertook a project to enable us to embed entries from our animal database into the website which makes keeping the animal details on the website up to date much quicker and easier.

## HelpWildlife

47,895 visits were made to the site compared to 37,255 for the same period last year. 36 new rescues were added to the directory. 246 people were helped through the helpdesk. The fall in requests probably reflects the quieter time of year once the breeding season ended, though there will be some who may have contacted us via the Facebook group and chose to post in another group instead rather than sending our page a message.

The quieter helpdesk, closing the Facebook group and withdrawing from the transport project enabled us to re-focus on HelpWildlife's core aim of providing an up to date directory of wildlife rescues in the UK. We commenced a project to review all the listings on the site and archived 178 listings which had been closed for five years or more. We then revised the types of listing, bringing in a three tier system to reflect the different capacities of the rescues listed and how much 'publicity' they could cope with. The result was a clearer and more consistently laid out directory which is easier to use and maintain. We also made some minor design changes and brought in a new membership plugin which links with the directory plugin, making it easier for rescue owners to manage their listings.



# Annual Summary

## Finances

Total annual income was £8879.18. £6865.93 of this came in via Starlight Trust and £2013.25 via HelpWildlife. Total annual expenditure was £5767.04. £4554.95 was spent on animal rescue activities and £1212.09 on HelpWildlife. £677.22 of the HelpWildlife spending was on our own costs and £534.87 was spent on getting wildlife to rescues or supporting wildlife rescues. The receipt of donated goods via our Amazon Wishlist made a sizeable contribution towards keeping expenditure within income levels.

This leaves us with balances of £2310.98 balance for Starlight and £801.16 for HelpWildlife. Adding in the balance from the end of 2019 means the Trust overall had £9160.16 at the end of 2020. In terms of liabilities, at the beginning of 2021, we decided to make informal grants totalling £300 to rescues who were especially helpful to helpdesk enquiries during 2020, leaving us with enough to cover HelpWildlife's anticipated costs for 2021 regardless of donations received. We will also need to pay for the order currently with Rosemead Aviaries which will provide replacement panels and an extension for Teddy Towers and a safety porch for Trafalgar Oblong. This is expected to cost around £700.



## Animals

Intake overall was 97 animals which is the lowest since 2016. This reflects the limitations brought on by the pandemic and the extra focus on online work through the HelpWildlife helpdesk. We rehomed 21 animals and released 49. We also checked samples for 222 pigeons in the care of other rescues – a contribution which will have saved over £3000 in lab fees, not to mention ensuring those pigeons received prompt and accurate treatment.

## HelpWildlife

238,046 visits were made to the site compared to 172,968 for the same period last year - an increase of 38% and the site's busiest year so far. The introduction of the helpdesk was a great success and we were able to provide advice to 2369 people through it. The fact that we incurred charges from Google shows that many visitors were using the search facility to find rescue help – more than ever before. Following on from the receipt of some concerning feedback about the advice given by some rescues and the decision to remove some of the rescues concerned, we have now established a process for capturing this feedback in our database in order to clearly evidence these decisions should they need to be made again in future.



# Looking Ahead

## Finances

We go into 2021 blessed to be in a comfortable position financially. Our annual costs in recent years have been between £5000-£8,500 so we have achieved our ambition to have one year's running costs in reserve as a 'safety net'. In 2021 we must take the next step and register with the charity commission since our income is consistently exceeding the minimum £5000 pa. Following on from this we would like to create a 'savings' account for the Trust into which one year's running costs can be tucked away for safe keeping. If income via HelpWildlife continues to exceed needs, we will need to establish a formal process for distributing the excess to wildlife rescues.



## Animals

It's likely that rodent admissions will remain paused for most, if not all of 2021 in order to be sure that the risks of the pandemic have truly cleared before we start trying to rehome again.

Our other concern now is numbers of permanent resident pigeons. The new, larger aviary at HQ was intended to hold around 20 residents. It currently holds 23 and there are at least four more birds currently indoors who are expected to need to stay with us permanently. If we cannot find more foster placements for permanent residents then we will have to stop taking in any more new pigeons since we won't be able to guarantee their futures if they cannot be released. So an early priority for 2021 will be to renew our appeal for pigeon fosterers though this will, of course, be complicated by the pandemic too.

## HelpWildlife

Spring and Summer of 2020 were very busy on the helpdesk and we simply don't know how much of that was due to lockdown and more people being at home. So how busy it will be in 2021 remains to be seen. If it continues to be busy or volumes increase, we're likely to need further volunteers to cope.

The directory is in good shape from our work late on in 2020 but there are some further advice articles we'd like to get added to help with Spring enquiries. Currently, about a quarter of the listings on the site have been claimed by the rescue owner. This is something we'd like to increase both to reduce the impact of checking on our one, wonderful volunteer Penny, but also to help ensure listings are as full and up to date as possible.

# Annex A: Detailed Animal Stats

				ADMISSIONS IN PERIOD					ANNUAL OUTCOMES	
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL	RELEASED	REHOMED
DOMESTIC	MAMMALS	RATS	FANCY RAT	14	0	0	0	14	0	17
		HAMSTERS	SYRIAN HAMSTER	2	0	0	0	2	0	4
			RUSSIAN HAMSTER	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
		FIBREVORES	DEGU	10	0	0	0	10	0	0
	TOTAL DOMESTIC MAMMALS			26	0	1	0	27	0	21
	BIRDS	PIGEONS & DOVES	DOMESTIC PIGEON	0	1	0	2	3	0	0
	TOTAL DOMESTIC BIRDS			0	1	0	2	3	0	0
	TOTAL ALL DOMESTICS			26	1	1	2	30	0	21
WILD	MAMMALS	RODENTS	WOOD MOUSE	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
	TOTAL WILD MAMMALS			0	0	0	0	0	1	0
	BIRDS	PIGEONS & DOVES	FERAL PIGEON	19	25	6	15	65	48	0
			WOOD PIGEON	0	0	1	1	2	0	0
	TOTAL WILD BIRDS			19	25	7	16	67	48	0
TOTAL ALL WILD			19	25	7	16	67	49	0	
TOTALS				45	26	8	18	97	49	21

# Annex B: Receipts & Payments

<b>Receipts</b>	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
<b>Starlight</b>					
<i>DONATION</i>	1,434.75	1,518.67	2,381.90	1,352.14	6,687.46
<i>FUNDRAISING</i>	75.70	3.40	44.61	7.68	131.39
<i>OTHER</i>	-	-	-	47.08	47.08
<b>TOTAL STARLIGHT</b>	<b>1,510.45</b>	<b>1,522.07</b>	<b>2,426.51</b>	<b>1,406.90</b>	<b>6,865.93</b>
<b>HelpWildlife</b>					
<i>DONATION</i>	43.84	504.10	726.62	738.69	2,013.25
<i>FUNDRAISING</i>	-	-	-	-	-
<i>OTHER</i>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL HELPWILDLIFE</b>	<b>43.84</b>	<b>504.10</b>	<b>726.62</b>	<b>738.69</b>	<b>2,013.25</b>
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>1,554.29</b>	<b>2,026.17</b>	<b>3,153.13</b>	<b>2,145.59</b>	<b>8,879.18</b>
<b>Payments</b>	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
<b>Starlight</b>					
<i>ANIMAL CARE</i>	827.27	475.32	1,480.32	610.01	3,392.92
<i>OTHER</i>	47.44	361.29	554.53	198.77	1,162.03
<b>TOTAL STARLIGHT</b>	<b>874.71</b>	<b>836.61</b>	<b>2,034.85</b>	<b>808.78</b>	<b>4,554.95</b>
<b>HelpWildlife</b>					
<i>IT/TELEPHONY</i>	31.62	247.63	292.73	93.75	665.73
<i>RESCUE SUPPORT</i>	-	77.59	403.82	20.24	501.65
<i>FEE/REFUND</i>	-	10.48	0.76	0.25	11.49
<i>TRAVEL/TRANSPORT</i>	-	-	33.22	-	33.22
<b>TOTAL HELPWILDLIFE</b>	<b>31.62</b>	<b>335.70</b>	<b>730.53</b>	<b>114.24</b>	<b>1,212.09</b>
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	<b>906.33</b>	<b>1,172.31</b>	<b>2,765.38</b>	<b>923.02</b>	<b>5,767.04</b>
<b>POSITION AT YEAR END</b>					
IN YEAR BALANCE - STARLIGHT					2,310.98
IN YEAR BALANCE - HELPWILDLIFE					801.16
BALANCE CARRIED OVER FROM LAST YEAR (UNALLOCATED)					6,048.02
LIABILITIES					990.00
<b>END OF YEAR BALANCE</b>					<b>8,170.16</b>