



Little Valley animal shelter

Issue 62

September 2021



30

Celebrating
30 years helping
Devon's animals

Black Hat Lane, Bakers Hill, Exeter EX2 9TA T: 01392 439898
www.rspca-littlevalley.org.uk Charity No. 205154



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FROM THE CEO

As our lives adjust to the new norm, we remain strong and intact and despite the challenges the pandemic has created, there have been some positives as we have learnt to adjust creatively and to adapt the way we operate in terms of rehoming and animal welfare generally. Some of these COVID safe driven changes are now recognised as best practice and are permanent features at the shelter.

Organisationally we have also made improvements and have become more cohesive, efficient and most importantly agile, thereby ensuring that we are better prepared for the challenges and opportunities that lay ahead.

One such opportunity in terms of our animal welfare services is in the form of North Devon, as RSPCA Head Office have formally approved Little Valley taking over the North Devon RSPCA branch. Encouragingly, RSPCA Head Office have also agreed to the changing of our branch name, which is currently RSPCA South, East and West Devon but in due course (once the merger is complete) will be simply RSPCA Devon Branch to reflect the fact that we will be covering almost all of Devon.

This really is a wonderful development as it will enable us to reach out and help more animals than ever before that need



our care and support, and also through better communication, training and educational support we hope to improve animal welfare generally across the Devon area. The new branch name will also provide a much more joined up message about the area we cover and will help enormously with communication.

Despite the fact that the last 18 months have been a truly challenging time for all of us, you kept reaching out to help the animals we care for at Little Valley through your generous gifts, your support of our shops and your kind and thoughtful messages, for which we are truly grateful.

Because of you and the resilience of our animal care teams, the support of our retail staff and volunteers, Little Valley has continued to deliver outstanding care and support throughout the pandemic, of which we are all very proud.

HUGH LOWSON, CEO

SHELTER NEWS

As I sit here writing the latest shelter update on a dull morning I'm wondering if it will be as hot as yesterday. Staff had a little break from the heat of the day to pop up the road and watch the TOB cycle race. Fair to say we were all grateful not to be a cyclist! There seems to be no build up to it being hot, so please take extra care of your animals as well as yourselves. They really don't want to be going out for a walk in the heat of the day, put in a hot car or shut in the garden without shade.

We are pleased several of our previous volunteers have returned. Sadly not all, so shortly we will be opening for new volunteers to join us at the shelter. Please monitor our website for updates on this and how to apply for any positions either with the dogs/cats/small animals or even on reception.

Remember our charity shops are always looking for more help as well.



SHELTER INFO

Telephone opening times:
6 days a week (Closed Wednesdays)

11am - 4pm
01392 439898

(Visits by special appointment only)

RSPCA Cruelty & Advice Line:
0300 1234 999 (open 7am-10pm)

With more people generally having both vaccinations we feel the new normal is here and we will continue to be open for appointments only. This has worked very well for rehoming and made it easier for the staff to organise their working day, meaning better support for the animals in our care. We are always at the end of the phone for a chat or pop us an email if not so urgent. Sadly we have said goodbye to one of our receptionists, Ant, but wish him all the best for the future.

We have seen more feral/farm cats than ever before but have done really well to place so many recently. Fostering is also going well with Mayo recently going to a foster home as well as unhappy cat Gwen. Both are doing well so far. More information can be found about fostering on our website. If you have a space at home we would love to hear from you. I finish on a cute note with a kitten update (and picture!). Up until now we had mostly seen older kittens but now we are seeing mums with young... it will be a busy end to the year for the cat team!


JO EVANS, SHELTER MANAGER

LITTLE VALLEY'S SUMMER RAFFLE

Thank you to everyone who entered our Summer Raffle. The total raised was £3,500 which, considering we haven't had an event to sell tickets at, is really positive and will go a long way towards helping more animals.

A special mention to the team at our Budleigh Salterton shop and Exmouth Auxiliary who went the extra mile to sell as many tickets as they could! And to volunteer Amanda Leach who single-handedly sold £133 worth of tickets!

All winners have heard from us already - congratulations!



**So, the moment you've been
waiting for..
drum roll please..
the winners are:**

1st: Sue Gorfin

2nd: Nicholas Clarke

**3rd: Emma-Louise
Browse**

THERE'S LIFE IN THE OLD DOG YET!

Who remembers Janey?

She recently featured on our social media alongside a plea for donations to allow us to operate on a lump in her side. She's 14 years old and without this operation we feared the worst for this lovely (surprisingly spritely) dog.

Janey first arrived with us back in May when her owner went into a care home and was sadly unable to care for her any longer. After an assessment with our vet we quickly realised she was going to need surgery if we were to give her the happy retirement she deserved.

Thanks to our supporters, we were able to raise the money we needed for her operation and, after she had fully recovered we began to hunt for her perfect home.

And perfect home we found. Have you ever seen a trio more suited in all your life?

Barbara and John have welcomed Janey into their lives and the three have settled into a happy routine together, with energetic Janey well and truly keeping them on their toes!

She's been introduced to their friends, family and neighbours and is loved by all she meets. What she loves the best though, is playing with her many toys, starting at around 7am and only stopping for cuddles on the sofa!

But this happy ending sadly isn't always the case for the older animals we care for at Little Valley. Some people are put off when we suggest they take on an older pet, fearing they won't have much time left with them, or they'll be lacking in energy.

Janey is well and truly the epitome of the phrase: "there's life in the the old dog yet" and we couldn't be happier that she's found a wonderful home at her age. So, if you're looking to adopt a pet from Little Valley, please consider giving a home to an older animal just like her.



Janey, John and Barbara on a recent visit to the Shelter.

Our Golden Oldies Veterinary Support scheme offers help with age related vet bills to people who adopt animals over the age of 10.

MICE TO MEET YOU...

Rodents are often the forgotten choice when considering pet adoption, with the majority of people opting to pick up younger animals in pet shops. But we nearly always have rodents who need homes. Here's a rundown of the most common small rodents which come through our doors!

Gerbils: Gerbils are very active and social animals, and they're happy in a same-sex pair or small group. With regular handling, gerbils can become quite tame, but their high energy levels can make them difficult to hold.

Mice: They're quick and jumpy, but mice do calm if handled regularly and many learn to take food from their owner's hand. They live for one to three years on average. As social animals, females often do well in same-sex pairs or small groups, but males tend to fight other males.

Chinchillas: Chinchillas are largely nocturnal, being active and playful during the night but preferring a quiet spot during the day. They don't tend to like being held, as they would rather be moving and exploring, but many still learn to enjoy the company of their owners.

Syrian hamsters: Syrian hamsters live around two to three years. They are typically solitary animals who need their own housing. Hamsters handled from a young age are generally friendly and playful but they are nocturnal and can be grumpy if woken during the day.



Rats: Rats live an average of two to four years. They are very social, so it's best to keep a same-sex pair. With regular handling, they can become very tame and enjoy human companionship. They need out-of-cage time for social interaction and exercise and can even be taught some simple tricks.

Dwarf hamsters: Dwarf hamsters can be social with other hamsters of their own species and can be housed in same-sex pairs or small groups. They can live up to three years. Although dwarf hamsters have a reputation for being a little nippy, most are easy to handle with a gentle touch.

Degus: Degus are quite social animals that live in communities of up to 100 in the wild. They do well housed in same-sex pairs or small groups in captivity. These rodents are easily tamed when handled from a young age, and some even enjoy cuddling with their owners!



www.rspca-littlevalley.org.uk/adopt-a-rodent/

RETAIL NEWS



Hello, I'm John Coles! Who is John Coles you may ask? Well, I have recently joined the charity as Retail Development Manager and my role is looking after our shops and developing the retail offer.

A career in retail and wholesale with some charity work in shops and fundraising, my work has spanned both major retailers and independents at both store and senior level covering all aspects of retail from department stores to grocery and out of town businesses.

Our family's love of animals drew me to apply for the role and I was very happy to accept. Our current dog Pepsi is a rescue dog and we have had a rescue cat called Ratbag (the name's another story).

Having joined on the 2nd August I'm spending lots of time in the shops to get a better understanding of how they work and the people who run them.

Shops are now fully open with Covid-19 rules still in place and generous donations arrive daily which keeps us busy! The volunteers are very good and most love to get involved in helping out in all areas.

We are looking to increase our presence and sales via online channels with shops passing on up market lines where we can maximise profits. My view is the shops have to be run as retail businesses but we must never forget why we're here (to help Devon's needy animals). I want to make shops more of a visual voice for Little Valley, raising awareness of our locality as well as our proud connection to the RSPCA.

JOHN COLES, RETAIL DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

OUR SHOPS:

BRIXHAM

1 Market Street, Brixham TQ5 8EU

Tel: 01803 859695

BUDLEIGH SALTERTON

46 High Street, Budleigh EX9 6LJ

Tel: 01395 442349

COWICK ST, EXETER

31 Cowick Street, Exeter EX4 1AL

Tel: 01392 213847

SIDWELL ST, EXETER

150 Sidwell Street, Exeter EX4 6RT

Tel: 01392 210691

NEWTON ABBOT

49 Courtenay St, Newton Abbot TQ12 2QN

Tel: 01626 330716

EBAY IS HERE TO STAY!

Hello! My name is Amy and I joined Little Valley Animal Shelter in July as Branch Administrator. Prior to joining Little Valley I spent four years working for another local animal rescue where I ran reception and helped with general administrative tasks related to pet rehoming – I hope to bring the knowledge and experience I gained in that role to Little Valley. I am a self-confessed crazy cat lady – I have two majestic moggies of my own and previously rehomed a cat from Little Valley. I love being able to work for a charity that is close to my heart.

One area I'm excited to start working on as part of my role is the Little Valley eBay shop. The money we raise from selling donated items on eBay helps with the running of the Shelter, so I am keen to develop our eBay offering to make it bigger and better! I hope to make the eBay shop easier for customers to find and navigate along with increasing the amount of, and variety of listings on offer. In the future I also hope to start using other e-commerce platforms alongside eBay to reach new customers.

To help grow our online offering, I'm currently recruiting for additional volunteers to provide assistance with various tasks e.g. researching, listing and mailing items. So, if you have an eye for antiques or retail experience and could spare a few hours each week to help animals in need head to www.rspca-littlevalley.org.uk/vacancies for more info.



I am also on the lookout for treasures to sell – items that sell particularly well online include rare and unusual items, antiques, items with celebrity associations and new items. If you have any items like this that you would like to donate for us to sell on our eBay shop, I'd love to hear from you - abrown@rspca-littlevalley.org.uk.

If you can't donate items to us directly, you can have a go at selling your own items on e-Bay to benefit our charity – there's an option to choose to donate a percentage of the sale of your items (from 10% to 100%!) to Little Valley when you create a listing.

AMY BROWN, BRANCH ADMINSTRATOR

A big thanks to the person who kindly donated their unwanted Brompton bike - it's recently sold for £740.00 on eBay, a great result!

CAN YOU HELP?

Amazon Wishlists

We can't stress enough how excited our animals get when they are presented with a new batch of tasty treats. And, we can't stress enough how excited our dog team are when their poo bags are restocked (sad we know)!

If you'd like to treat our animals please have a look at our Amazon Wishlist and send something our way. Just log into your Amazon account (you'll need one for this) and type into the search box "RSPCA Little Valley Wishlist". After that you can pick and pay for what you like to send and it'll be delivered direct to our door!

Gift Aid Guide

Gift Aid is one of the simplest and most effective ways you can give to Little Valley – and better yet, it's completely free. Since 2016 we have been able to claim £5,300 in Gift Aid. That's enough to rehome 57 dogs for a year, or vaccinate 662 pets!

So, if you have donated to us in the last 6 years, or if you ever donate to us in future, please remember to fill in a Gift Aid form at www.rspca-littlevalley.org.uk/support-us/ and make your donation worth even more.

Donate

It goes without saying that we rely on the generosity of our donors to make the biggest impact on the animals we care for.

Any donation you are able to give will directly improve lives; paying for food, bedding, vaccinations, operations and much, much more.

If you can afford to give a contribution you can do so in one of the following four ways:



Online: Donate via Paypal (you do not need a Paypal account) using the links on our website: www.rspca-littlevalley.org.uk.



On the phone: Donate by card over the phone by calling the Shelter Reception on 01392 439898 (11am-4pm every day except Wednesdays).



Send us a cheque: Made payable to 'RSPCA South East & West Devon Branch' to RSPCA Little Valley Animal Shelter, Black Hat Lane, Bakers Hill, Exeter, EX2 9TA.



Bank transfer: Donate straight into our account using:
Account Name: RSPCA South East & West Devon Branch
Account No: 00823295
Sort Code: 56-00-49

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THANK YOU!

Rabbit and Stitch

New online homewares start-up Rabbit and Stitch have kindly been in touch to say they'll be donating 10% of all their profits to Little Valley to help us continue working to find rabbits (and other animals) their happily ever afters.

As well as this, owner Laura is giving 100% of profits made on items which have been made from donated materials.

It's great to have your support Rabbit and Stitch - here's hoping business will be booming for you!

If readers would like to check out the fabulous range of homewares on offer please visit:

www.rabbitandstitch.co.uk/rabbit-stitch-shop

Young fundraisers

A team of young people taking part in the National Citizen Service (NCS) this summer, chose to support Little Valley as part of their Social Action Project. The Team raised over £300 by completing a Car Wash at Morrisons and through an online awareness raising campaign. They then researched which items were needed at the Shelter and donated care packages for the animals.

This concluded 2 weeks of summer activities for the NCS Programme which they completed via Petroc. In addition to fundraising, the groups also spent time doing outdoor activities at the Ultimate Adventure Centre in Bideford and developing life skills through a series of workshops in areas such as business enterprise, community engagement, budgeting, careers and cooking.

To celebrate their success, the team were invited to a Graduation Ceremony at the Queens Theatre in Barnstaple where they collected certificates signed by Boris Johnson!!

Thanks so much to you all - your efforts are so appreciated by all of us here at Little Valley, and by the animals we care for.



Celebrating their successes! The NCS team letting off steam at the Ultimate Wipeout Centre - you lot deserve it after all that car washing!

FEATURED ANIMALS FOR ADOPTION



Dandelion and Ember

These two adult male guinea-pigs have been with us for yearly two months and are still yet to find a home to call their own. They are quite shy and nervous so take a while to warm up to new people. Also, like many other guinea-pigs, they prefer not to be handled so would need an owner who is understanding of this.

Despite their shyness, they are cheeky and fun to watch and love playing all day in their tunnels and hidey holes.

www.rspca-littlevalley.org.uk/guineapigs



Parver

Youngster Parver came from a sheltered and quiet background which sadly has made him nervous and difficult to rehome. We think he's had minimal contact with people from an early age so is a bit mistrustful and fearful when approached and handled.

His new home will need to be with calm owners who are experienced with nervous cats and are able to give this lovely fellow the time he'll need to adjust. Any potential adopters will also need to be prepared for the possibility that Parver will never seek out cuddles (although we are very optimistic that he will).

www.rspca-littlevalley.org.uk/adopt-a-cat/

FOREVER HOMES FOR FERRETS

2021 really has been the year of the ferret! So far this year, we've looked after and found homes for upwards of 20, and more just keep coming through our gates. Like Cleopatra (left) who came to us when she was two years old and her previous owners no longer had room for her. She's incredibly playful, and can be nippy at times so will need an experienced home. And Donatello and Raphael (middle and right) who were collected by an RSPCA Inspector after having been found dumped in a field in a cage on a hot summer's day without food or water.

If you have room for any of these fun-filled furies in your life please head to:

www.rspca-littlevalley.org.uk/adopt-a-ferret/



Time for a cuteness fix!



Introducing Dewey!!!

This sweet young fellow arrived with us, along with his two brothers, from an owner who had too many animals to cope.

He's been recently neutered and is now ready to find a home of his own with a young neutered female rabbit for company.

www.rspca-littlevalley.org.uk/rabbits/dewey/



HAPPILY REHOMED



Poppy (now Esmé) is settling in brilliantly in her new home. She was adopted when Elmo (right) lost his long loved partner Miffy and needed a new friend. As you can see, the pair have bonded like a dream and when Esmé isn't zooming around the garden at lightning speed, or showing off her escape artist skills, these two can be usually be found cuddled up together.



Don't worry! Verbena isn't about to be swallowed into a black hole, she's just hanging out playing on her favourite mat in her new home. Verbena came to us as a young kitten and was rehomed in August after only a week at the Shelter. She's loving her new life of fun, and spends her days playing and snoozing, as all kittens should!



Curious Toby is home and happy! New owner Claire sent us this picture when she first got home with this fantastic little chap. She wanted to thank the staff at Little Valley for all their help and support, especially Millie from the dog team who was patient and kind throughout the adoption process. Right back atcha Claire, thank you for adopting!



Well hello Boris - looks like you've made yourself at home! Mary and Nick adopted this lovely chap in June and say it's the best thing they've ever done. He's very affectionate and has peacefully met the neighbour's cat with no problems - good for you Boris!



Beauty (above) has been growing in confidence each day since she went home with new owner Ann and her husband. She's responding well to training when rewarded with lots of praise and treats and feeling more comfortable around other dogs too. Best of all she loves tummy tickles, and when she rolls over on laps she stays there until she ends up falling asleep!



Lovely Luna (below) and her new pal Sharkbait have been getting on like a house on fire since Luna was rehomed at the end of August. They snuggle and play together and Luna's been enjoying exploring her new luxurious pad.



Finishing off our happily rehomed feature this issue is an extra lovely story about Mystic (left & below). Mystic had to have one of her legs amputated when she arrived at Little Valley so was with us for some time whilst she healed. We're so pleased to say that she has now been rehomed and is having the most wonderful time!

Her new owner Diana told us; "She's had some supervised excursions into the garden this week, and is very excited about this new adventure, but is still quite happy racing around the house and playing with every toy she can get her paws on!"

Enjoy yourself Mystic, you deserve it!



PET VACCINATIONS, OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

Vaccinations might be a subject up for debate right now but making sure your pet is vaccinated should never be. We advocate the use of vaccinations to protect pets against common, but potentially dangerous illnesses and every possible animal at the Shelter is fully inoculated before heading to their new homes. This is to protect them, and also the wider pet community, as the more animals that are vaccinated, the lower the risk of infection.

So, what diseases do the usual vaccinations protect against? *

What diseases should dogs be protected against?

- Canine parvovirus (a.k.a. parvo)
- Canine infectious hepatitis
- Canine distemper
- Leptospirosis
- Kennel cough



What about cats? **

- Feline panleukopenia virus
- Feline herpesvirus
- Feline calicivirus
- Chlamydomphila felis
- Bordetella bronchiseptica



And rabbits?

- Myxomatosis
- Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease 1 (RHD-1)
- Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease 2 (RHD-2)



Lastly, ferrets?

- Ferret distemper

Booster vaccines are also required throughout your pet's life to ensure they receive the correct level of protection. The frequency of booster is dependent on the jab so speak to your vet to work out how often you need to book your pet in. Vets will often give your animal the once over at the same time as they receive their boosters so it's doubly important to keep to these appointments.

If you miss a booster for any reason just speak to your vet and be honest. There is a period in which the cycle can continue as usual, but you may need to start the vaccine again if too much time has been left between boosters.



***We are not vets, so our advice is based on experience and vet recommendation alone, please speak to your vet if you have any questions or concerns about how vaccinations work and the protection they offer.**

****We don't vaccinate our cats against leukaemia but recommend adopters discuss with their vets.**

LONG STAYING GUCCI IS READY TO BE LOVED

Anyone who has kept half an eye on the happenings at Little Valley over the past year will recognise Gucci. We've been looking for a home for her for over a year and, despite having a few hopeful moments, are yet to be successful.

She's been tricky to rehome for a number of reasons, but we refuse to give up so we ask again, if you are reading this and thinking Gucci could be for you, please contact the Shelter.

Gucci is an Akita, a large and powerful breed originally used for guarding royalty and nobility in feudal Japan. They are fearless guardians but, when given the chance and socialised properly, are also affectionate and amusing pets. Here are the key things you need to know about this beautiful and loyal dog:



She travels well

She walks on a loose lead

She is housetrained

She is affectionate with people she knows

She loves playing with toys

She is very intelligent

She will be a lot of fun to train

She loves her walks

She forms a close bond once comfortable with you

She enjoy walks with dogs her own size with gentle introductions

IT'S OUR BIRTHDAY AND WE'LL WALK IF WE WANT TO!

It's time to dust off your walking boots and grab your pac a mac, we're celebrating our 30th birthday and you're all invited!

Kicking off at **10am on Sunday the 14th of November** (our official birth month), we've set a gentle and easy route around the beautiful Stover Country Park, (just off the A38 near Newton Abbot). The flat and even route will be dotted with games and puzzles to keep little ones busy along the way, and everyone who finishes the walk will receive a free Little Valley goodie bag!

This walk will be open for **registered participants only**, and we're asking for a £10 donation per person (over 16) to secure your place.

If you'd like to be there please email us on **bigbirthday@rspca-littlevalley.org.uk** for details about how to sign up!

CHALLENGE
Celebrating 30
years helping
Devon's most
needy animals.
YOURSELF!

Little Valley's
BIG BIRTHDAY WALK
Stover Country Park - 10am
Sunday 14th November

For all the details and to sign up today email:
bigbirthday@rspca-littlevalley.org.uk

£10
registration fee

Animal fancy
dress optional (and
encouraged!)

Dogs on
leads welcome!

Little Valley
animal shelter

OUR BOARD NEEDS YOU!

At Little Valley, trustees are responsible for the overall strategic management of the Branch and Shelter. Working with the management staff, they draw up policies to ensure the Shelter and Branch run as smoothly as possible. We are looking to recruit new and fresh thinking trustees to join our board and so strengthen our ability to support our staff and volunteers in their efforts to make the biggest difference to the lives of Devon's animals.

Trustees can come from any walk of life. We need trustees with a variety of skills from HR and animal health to communications, PR, fundraising and retail. You do not necessarily have to have professional qualifications, just a commitment to animal welfare and the ability to work as part of a team.

In order to become a trustee, you need to have been a member of the RSPCA Branch for at least three months (although this can be done after you have registered your interest).

Please head to www.rspca-littlevalley.org.uk/vacancies/ and follow the instructions to apply. If we think you'd be a good fit for our board you'll be invited along to a few trustee meetings as an observer, to see if becoming a trustee is for you.

Three reasons to join our board:



TO GIVE SOMETHING BACK

Becoming a trustee is a fantastic way to give something back to a cause you care about. You'll be playing an integral part in the way Little Valley is run, ensuring it remains sustainable, financially viable, and above all, continues to help Devon's most needy animals.



TO LEARN NEW THINGS

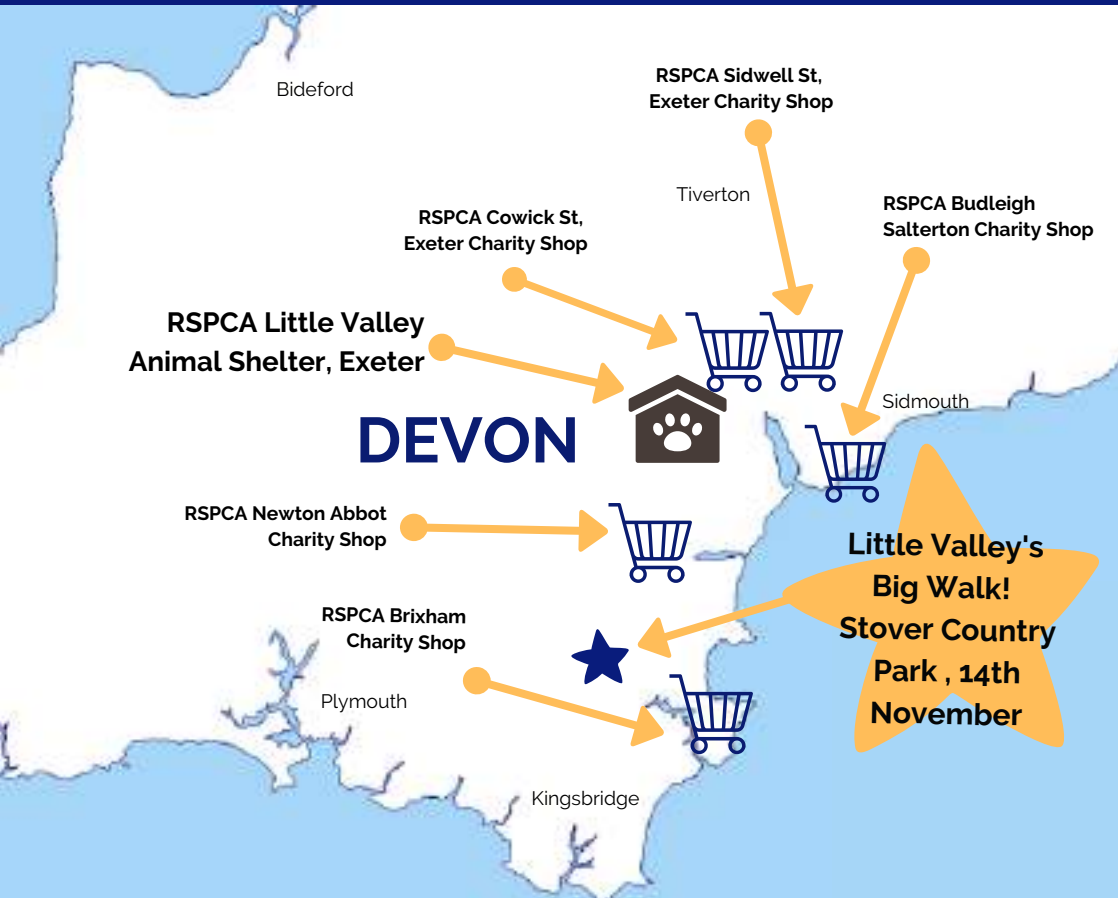
Getting involved as a trustee for Little Valley will mean you can put your professional skills to good use, but it is also a great opportunity to learn new things. You'll get great insight into what's involved in the management of charities and gain skills to help you work well within a leadership role.



TO MEET NEW PEOPLE

By joining Little Valley's board you'll get the chance to meet new people from a range of different personal and professional backgrounds. There will be meetings to attend, day-to-day tasks to complete with other volunteers and staff at the Shelter and shops, events or activities to do within your local community, as well as many other opportunities to meet new and interesting people.

RSPCA LITTLE VALLEY - KEY LOCATIONS



 @rspcalittlevalley

 @rspcaexeter

 @rspcalittlevalleyexeter



Little Valley
animal shelter



Registered with
FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR

www.rspca-littlevalley.org.uk