

The Old and the New with Offaly SPCA

So how was it for you – that late, unlamented, Year of Recession, 2009?

Probably, as for most people, there were more downs than ups. But probably also there were some bright periods, and that certainly was the case for the Offaly S.P.C.A. There could be no denying that 2009 was a difficult year. On the one hand, income from World Animal Week activities and various fund-raising ventures was somewhat reduced. On the other hand, demands on the services provided for care of animals remained high. At one point, it looked as if the coffers would be empty before the end of the year.

Happily, all such fears proved groundless. Thanks to a combination of strict controls on expenditure and continuing support from an animal-loving public it turned out that this was ‘a very good Christmas’ for the Society.

Opening of an office in Tullamore undoubtedly contributed to awareness of the problems being faced and in the weeks leading up to the festive season volunteers manning the centre were greatly encouraged by many expressions of goodwill. Some of these were accompanied by donations in the form of cash, dog food or cat food and some – including two gifts of €100 – were made anonymously. End result was that none of the cats and dogs in the care of the Society have had to ‘feel the pinch’ of the recession. Some even had visits from Santa who was able to fill their stockings with much appreciated gifts!

Further good news came in a letter from the Dept of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food notifying the Society that a grant €18,000 was being made to help fund their work during 2010. That represented a reduction of €2,000 on the figure for 2009 but in view of the heavy demands being made on the National coffers it was more than anyone had dared to hope for. On behalf of all the animals which will be looked after during the coming year, the warmest of ‘thank yous’ has been extended to the Minister and the Department.

Recognised as absolutely invaluable, of course, are the contributions made by people who foster dogs, cats, etc. pending re-homing by the OSPCA. Very encouraging too is the fact that more and more members of

the general public are showing their concern by 'phoning the Society (on 086 3785584) when they see an animal which is straying and clearly in distress. These waifs and strays generally are 'taken into care' though in some circumstances it is specially appreciated if those who report the case are able to provide short term accommodation until arrangements can be made for any necessary veterinary attention and for fostering.

All things considered, there are good grounds for hoping that 'a Good Christmas' will be followed by an even better New Year for Offaly animals! Here's hoping!