

Annual Progress Update
2019-2020

Our year...





#EndLoneliness

An estimated 51,000 pensioners in the North East are chronically lonely and 50% more likely to die prematurely than people with good social networks.

Many of them have been dog owners; the North East has the highest proportion of dog owning households in the UK.

Together, we can help.

Our year...

When we launched Wag & Company in 2016, we knew what a difference a friend with a furry friend could make and how important it would be to make it happen for older people isolated in their own homes as well as in care or medical establishments.

Our fourth full year of operations and Wag & Company has gone from strength to strength and we are reminded every day how important it was to create this special organisation and what a huge difference it makes.

By the end of March we had 393 Visiting Wag Teams befriending elderly dog lovers from Northallerton all the way up to Berwick-upon-Tweed across to Haltwhistle and pretty much everywhere in between.

Wag & Company volunteers have made over 74,000 friend visits since the beginning and nearly 3000 North East people are benefitting.

At the end of the year we had 50 applicants in the recruitment pipeline and we were on target to hit our March 21 target of 500 volunteers making a big dent in our continuously growing waiting lists. Important new partnerships had begun to develop enabling us to access even more vulnerable elderly dog lovers in need across our region.

We have 107 1:1 home placements and we actively visit 237 care and medical placements with 89 more on our waiting lists. Amazing really!





Our year...

On the 16th of March 2020, we had to temporarily suspend all our visiting activities because of the global pandemic and the safety of our volunteers and our elderly friends.

Until then, 2020/21 was set to be our best fundraising year with more Wag runners than ever before in the Great North Run, walkers in the Great North Dog Walk and we were set to celebrate our 5th Walk for Wag at the Kielder Waterside, the main fundraising event for Wag & Company.

Covid-19 is undoubtedly a large bump in the road and a very distressing time for our elderly friends as well as our volunteers.

We are committed to creatively and continuously supporting everyone remotely and we are so proud of everything our volunteers are doing to support their elderly friends in these difficult times.

We are confident that 2021 will see us emerging stronger than ever to make people smile again when restrictions lift and they will need us more than ever!

The Wag story so far...

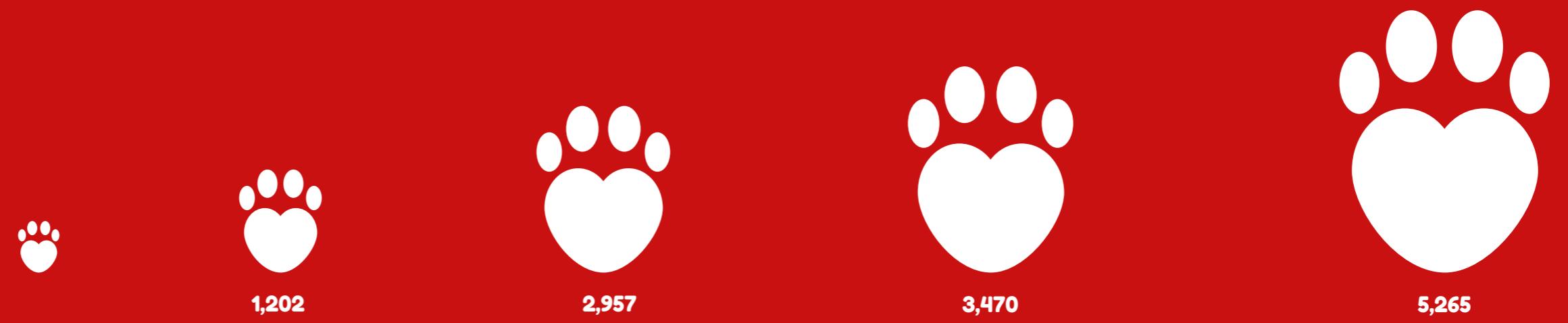
Volunteers:



Friend visits:



Lives touched:



Launch 2016

2018

2020

2022

2030



Our impact across the region...

Impact in Newcastle upon Tyne	
27	Visiting Wag Teams
24	Care & Medical placements
15	Home placements
25	Placements waiting
7739	Friend visits

Impact in Stockton-on-Tees	
48	Visiting Wag Teams
29	Care & Medical placements
9	Home placements
4	Placements waiting
5963	Friend visits

Impact in Gateshead	
26	Visiting Wag Teams
15	Care & Medical placements
18	Home placements
6	Placements waiting
3200	Friend visits

Impact in Darlington	
8	Visiting Wag Teams
5	Care & Medical placements
0	Home placements
2	Placements waiting
1605	Friend visits

Impact in County Durham	
68	Visiting Wag Teams
47	Care & Medical placements
5	Home placements
7	Placements waiting
10294	Friend visits

Impact in Redcar and Cleveland	
20	Visiting Wag Teams
16	Care & Medical placements
3	Home placements
12	Placements waiting
6549	Friend visits

Impact in Northumberland	
99	Visiting Wag Teams
54	Care & Medical placements
29	Home placements
8	Placements waiting
23243	Friend visits

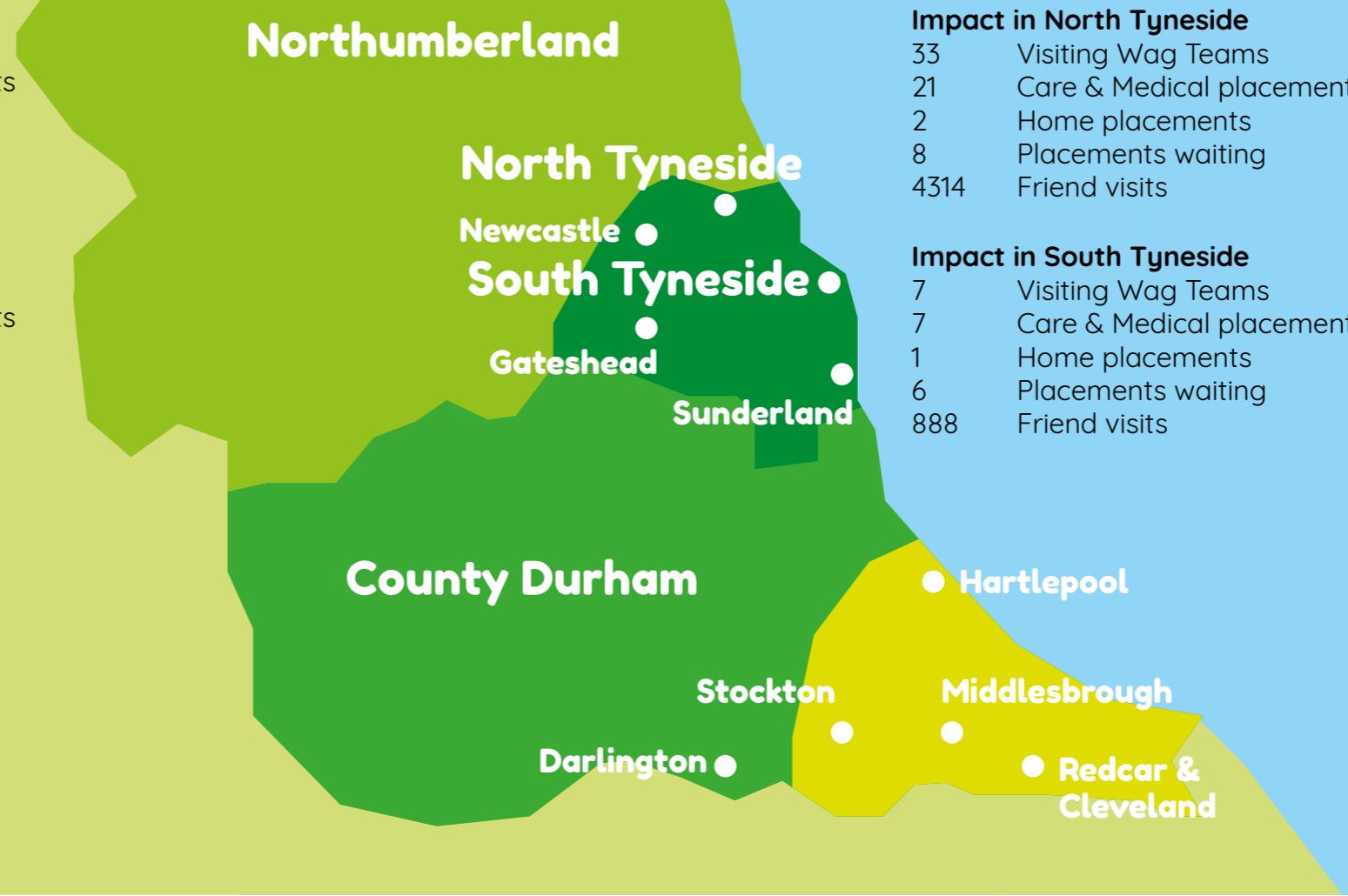
Impact in Sunderland	
35	Visiting Wag Teams
19	Care & Medical placements
12	Home placements
4	Placements waiting
6516	Friend visits

Impact in North Tyneside	
33	Visiting Wag Teams
21	Care & Medical placements
2	Home placements
8	Placements waiting
4314	Friend visits

Impact in Hartlepool	
5	Visiting Wag Teams
5	Care & Medical placements
0	Home placements
2	Placements waiting
804	Friend visits

Impact in South Tyneside	
7	Visiting Wag Teams
7	Care & Medical placements
1	Home placements
6	Placements waiting
888	Friend visits

Impact in Middlesbrough	
12	Visiting Wag Teams
13	Care & Medical placements
2	Home placements
8	Placements waiting
3554	Friend visits



Our year...

Our three year National Lottery funded Digital Transformation Project: Enabling Growth and Sustainability was launched in July 2019; we were delighted that one of our best friends, Mrs Sheila Moody, 91, was able to be part of this momentous moment. Not a dry eye in the house!

For the first time we were able to effectively equip our office team with the right hardware and software and as the year ended we were ready to complete the launch of phase 1, our new finance and CRM systems as well as our new website.

It was quite a relief for us all as demand consistently outstrips our available resources and so many people really need our special friends.

Overall this project will enable the charity to more than double its activities by 2022/23 and raise the level of income required to support that.

Phase 2 is underway, including the upgrade and rebuild of our Volunteer Recruitment & Referral Management System, the launch of our new Volunteer Zone including bespoke digital assets and impact reporting and the introduction of new digital fundraising initiatives as well as our new e:shop opening in September. Exciting times!



Our year...

Our unique home placement service continues to grow and at the end of March 2020 we had 107 home placements benefitting from regular friendship and the company of a dog.

Our new relationship with Stockton Borough Council continued to develop as improving wellbeing and preventing loneliness is one of the Council's priorities. Their Assistant Director of Adult Strategy and Transformation, Emma Champley, commented

"We commission Wag & Company's unique and preventative home visiting service as part of our preventative offer as we see the importance of the positive difference it makes to people."

We continue to work closely with, and receive referrals from, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, and many other Agencies including the British Red Cross, the Alzheimer's Society, Age UK and increasing numbers of GP practices.

In addition we are visiting nearly 240 care and medical establishments.

Wag volunteers are making a meaningful difference to the lives of elderly dog lovers, often bereaved and isolated, mostly physically challenged and some with failing health.

Their kindness, friendship and the love and cuddle of a dog again positively affect the health and wellbeing of strangers who've become friends, real friends, fellow dog lovers, who they immediately have something important in common with, the love of a dog.



Managing income, making a difference...

Generating income, whilst at the same time respecting our key principles below, is inevitably challenging but so far so good:

Key principles:

- Financial contributions to Wag & Company are always voluntary.
 - We never charge our elderly friends for our special service; it's important to us that they feel that they are receiving genuine acts of friendship and kindness, not either a paid for service nor a charitable one. We're a community of dog lovers of which they are a part.
 - We never charge our volunteers for their deployment costs, core Wag assessments, insurance or uniform; these special people give so much already.
 - Our small office team are focussed on supporting our community of volunteers and safeguarding our elderly friends in line with high standards of customer service and risk management.
- We rely entirely on everyone's help to enable these life changing friendships and so far, whilst it's always nerve wracking, we are doing really well.
- As we said before, our National Lottery grant, notwithstanding the effects of Covid-19, is setting us on the right path for achieving our growth targets to meet the substantial need as well as introducing new ways to enable people who love what we do to join with us in this journey to end loneliness for older dog lovers in our region.
- It's doable you know and we're doing it!**

#EndLoneliness



A breakdown of our income and costs 2019/20

Income*

Grants, including Digital Grant Staff	£122,069.04
Fundraising activities	£29,705.51
Donors and supporters	£6,830.08
Beneficiaries	£8,385.60
Legacies	£100

£167,090.23

Surplus

£28,561.22

Costs*

Staff, payroll and pensions	£105,857.67
WAG management system and website	£1,989.52
Volunteers recruitment, insurance and starter packs	£5,675.55
Fundraising and marketing materials	£8,911.97
Professional fees, accounts and general office	£15,453.24
Gifts for elderly friends	£641.06

£138,529.01

* Excluding Digital Grant Other Costs



Managing income, making a difference...

Our income in the year was dominated by the restricted grants from the National Lottery to support our digital transformation project, Enabling Growth and Sustainability.

The majority of the remainder was secured through other grants, fundraising activities, including our fantastic annual walk at Kielder Water and Forest Park; we also had greater support from organisations who benefit from our services this year.

It was a good result but there are challenging times ahead, particularly now with the impact of Covid 19.

Our costs are kept as low as possible but remain primarily staff costs focussed on enabling and supporting the service.

Our office facilities and branded volunteer polo shirts are generously donated by local businesses and our leadership is carried out on a voluntary basis; so ongoing costs

are totally focused on the sustainable deployment of volunteers - recruiting, assessing, matching, inducting, insuring, equipping, deploying and supporting - as well as the ongoing safeguarding of home placements.

Costs have been managed in line with budget and our unrestricted reserves are in line with our governance requirement to hold 3 months operating costs in reserve.

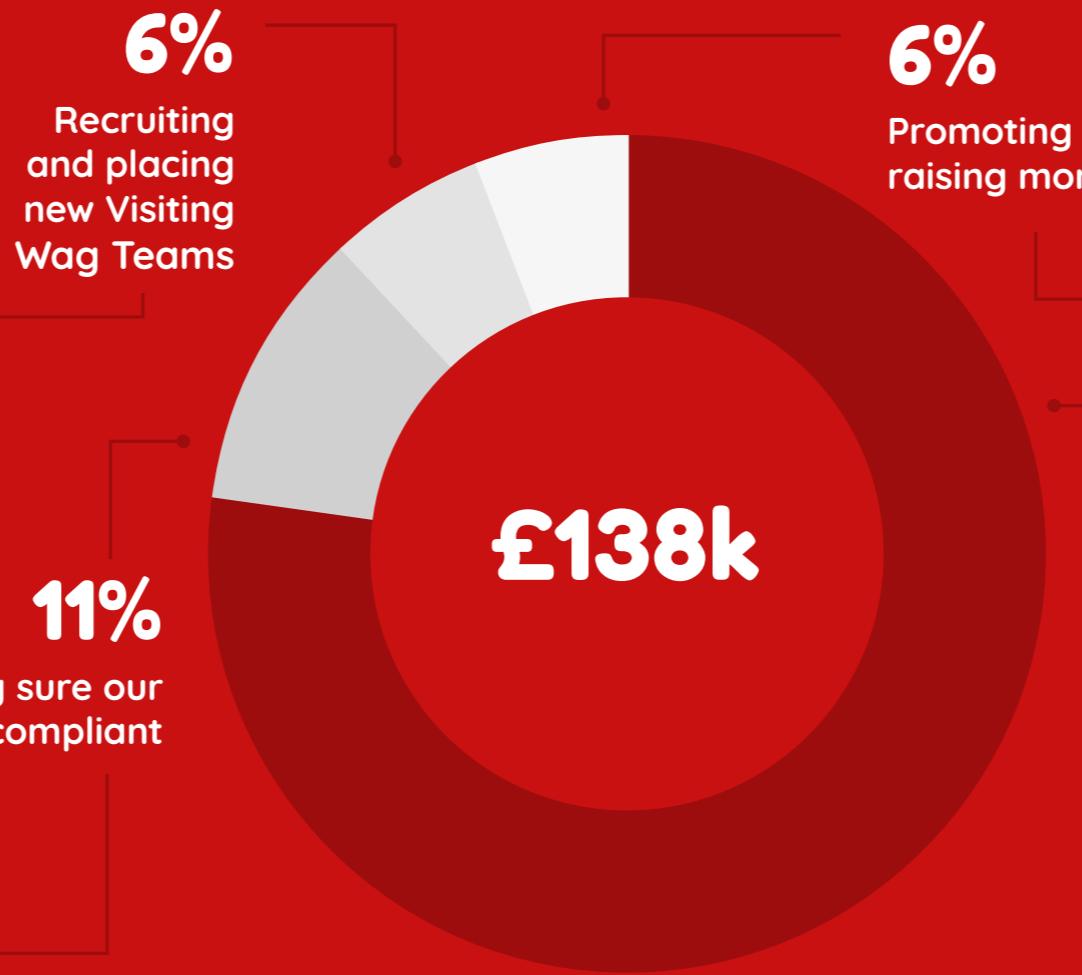
The new digital fundraising strategy has been incorporated into our systems work and is enabling a number of new digitally enabled fundraising initiatives which we hope will make the difference to our income needs into the future.

These include a regular giving scheme, Friends of Wag, and a virtual Walk for Wag, 'Walk for Wag.. Anywhere', replacing the now cancelled annual fundraiser at the Kielder Waterside.

Despite ending on a low note with Covid-19 and the temporary suspension of our services, a good year in all!

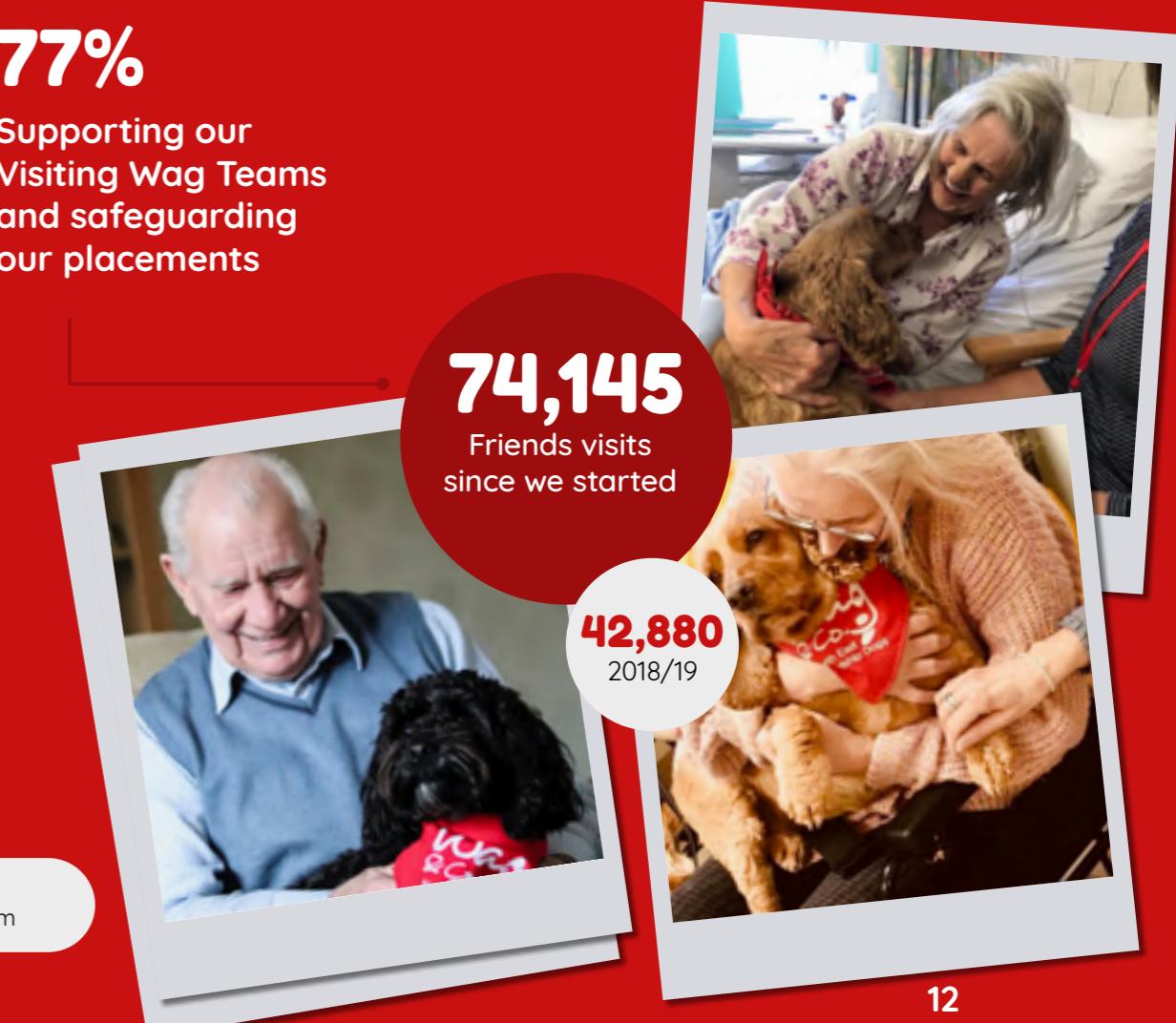
Making a difference!

What we spent in 2019/20...



...and the difference
it made!

i Each Visiting Wag Team cost us £352 in 2019/2020 We work this out by taking our total costs divided by number of Visiting Wag Teams. £138k/393 results £352 per team



Highlights of 2019/2020

We've made many special new friendships - Joan's relationship with Debi and Friendship Dog Poppy and Winnie with Friendship Dog Millie and Sharon are great examples of why what we do is so important.

Sharon & Friendship Dog Millie visit Winnie...

Since January 2020, Sharon and Friendship Dog Millie have been visiting Winnie in Newcastle.

Winnie lost her husband recently and whilst she lives with her son, he is usually at work and so she finds herself quite isolated during the day.

Winnie and her husband always had dogs but were unable to have another dog when their last one passed away as Winnie was caring for her husband.

It was very difficult for Winnie when her husband had to go into a care home, she became very depressed and whilst she was desperate to have a dog again it just wasn't possible for health reasons.

Terri Craven from Campus for Ageing and Vitality in Newcastle referred Winnie:

"It was love at first sight, Millie sat on Winnie's knee and everyone got on fantastically. I knew how much Winnie adored dogs and I knew she'd love it but I didn't realise the impact it would have until I saw the immediate connection; really lovely."





Debi & Friendship Dog Poppy visit Joan...

We received a referral on the 23rd December for Joan who is receiving round the clock palliative care in her own home in Newcastle City. Joan is completely bed ridden, has no family at all in the region and has no-one, except the nursing staff, to visit.

She has been a huge dog lover all her life but has been unable to have a dog of her own for a while now. On the 28th December, just 5 days after the initial referral, Visiting Wag Team, Debi and Poppy visited for the first time. They bonded immediately, Poppy settled happily on Joan's bed and her new friend smiled and cuddled; we have all shed tears over this story.

Poppy was quickly included on the Nurse rota which Joan can see from her bed and she and Debi have visited regularly; even after the Covid-19 lockdown when they visited in PPE to make sure Joan had access to Poppy for as long as possible.

The restrictions ultimately meant that Joan needed to move into care and whilst Debi and Poppy can no longer visit, they are in regular touch by Facetime and sending pictures and cards.

Amanda McWilliams from Home Instead Senior Care in Newcastle upon Tyne referred Joan:

"My client is bed bound receiving palliative care. Sadly Joan all too often voices her wish 'to be put to sleep' as she has no quality of life whatsoever."

After Poppy started visiting, Joan told me excitedly that 'at least she now has something to live for'. I can't tell you how emotional I felt. I hope your volunteer fully understands just how much the visits with her gorgeous dog have meant.

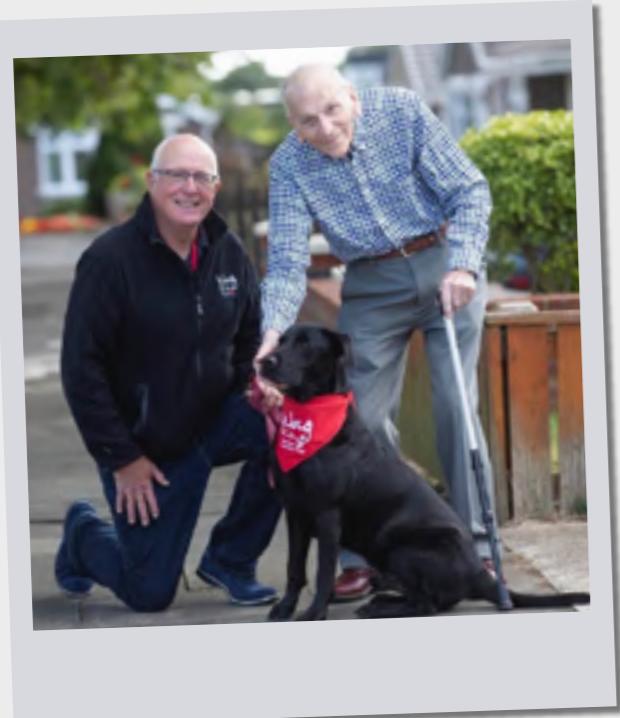
Thank you Wag & Company for all your hard work and dedication."

Wag & Company: 2019-2020

Ageing Well Conference, Healthwatch Northumberland...

One of the many highlights of our year was attending the Ageing Well Conference in Ashington in May 2019 with Visiting Wag Team, Sean & Alfie and their best friend, Mr John Robson from Cramlington. We led two workshops to tell everyone why our lovely service is so important and works so well.

As always, John explained wonderfully how the friendship of Sean & Alfie had changed his world and everyone who attended told us how moved they'd been; our learning point for next time is to provide a box of tissues for each table!



#EndLoneliness





The Duchess of Northumberland drops by for tea...

Our Patron, the Duchess of Northumberland, visited Lynn in Killingworth and her Visiting Wag Team, Gemma and Bentley, to see our work first hand and to sample an exceptional afternoon tea provided by the Corbridge Larder.



A Festival of Fundraising...

Another successful Walk for Wag raised £10,738 and a fabulous day was had by all at the Kielder Waterside.

We organised our first fundraising tandem parachute drop in Peterlee, just as scary as it sounded! Three intrepid Wag jumpers raised over £4,000! Absolutely inspirational!

And finally, Wag's own fundraising megastar and volunteer, Gillian Henderson, sold her 10,000th cake and counting.

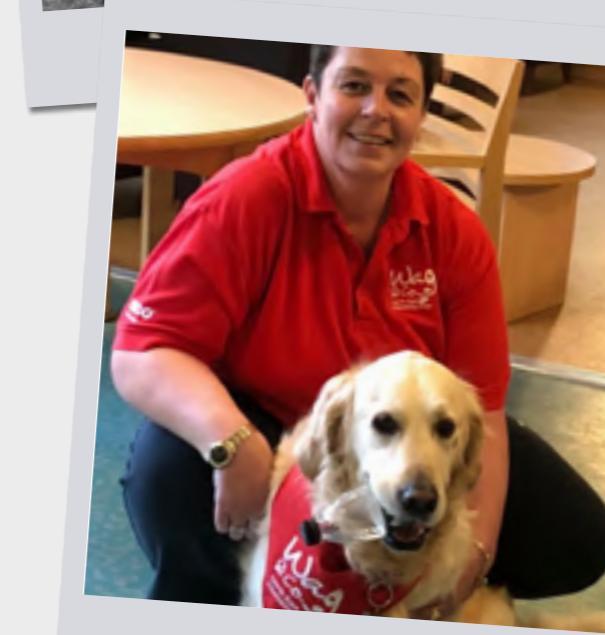
Gill visits Castleside Day Centre and the Centre for Ageing and Vitality at Newcastle General Hospital with her beautiful Golden Retriever, Friendship Dog, Holly each week.

Gill also works for the Royal Mail and every Wednesday she buys at least 150 cakes from Costco and, with their blessing, resells them every Thursday night for £1 a cake.

Gill keeps meticulous books and all the profits come to Wag & Company.

Absolutely amazingly in July 2019, she had sold her 10,000th cake to her colleague Jan and raised over £4,500 and there's no stopping her!

Thank you all for everything you're doing to enable more and more of our special Wag friends, like Gill and Holly, to improve the lives of our elderly neighbours! ❤️





Spreading comfort and joy at Christmas...

Christmas came and we were so grateful to everyone at Greggs who provided a Christmas Afternoon Tea Goody Bag for 90 of our 1:1 home placements and we also included our own very special Wag Christmas gift in each bag, a coaster with their visiting Friendship Dog Christmassified in a Christmas Hat and immortalised on a Wag Christmas Coaster!

Each of our Visiting Wag Teams personally delivered the special goody bags over the Christmas period and we were very touched to hear that one of our friends, Eddie, who is visited by Terry and Dottie, was quite overwhelmed, particularly by the personalised coaster; he explained it was his first Christmas present since his wife had died 40 years ago.

Terry & Friendship Dog Dotty visit Eddie...

Since November 2019, Terry and his dog, Dotty, have been visiting Eddie in his own home in Bishop Auckland. Eddie was very active in his younger days, he and his wife had a farm and he always had sheepdogs. He was a ski instructor, he loved to cycle and he was also a keen gardener. Eddie lost his wife some years ago and now he lives alone. He had a stroke which makes life difficult and he can't have a dog of his own any more; he really misses them and the companionship that having a dog brings.

Eddie has no family or friends to visit and he had become very isolated, but now he has Terry and Dotty who visit him every week. Eddie and Terry hit it off immediately, they have lots in common, they both love the countryside in County Durham and, of course, they both love dogs.

Terry and Dotty really enjoy their visits too and Eddie loves a chat and to sit with Dotty giving her plenty of cuddles.

At Christmas, Terry took Eddie the Greggs Christmas Goody Bag donated for all our 1:1 home placements as well as the personalised Dotty Christmas coaster, a little gift from Wag. Terry told us that Eddie was over the moon with his presents and quite overcome; he explained to Terry that he hadn't had a present since his wife died almost 40 years ago. Precious moments.



Hello to our new Friendship Dogs...

...2019/20 has been a bumper year for new recruits, a warm welcome to all of our amazing new Friends (and their humans).



Hello to our new Friendship Dogs...



Hello to our new Friendship Dogs...





Our fallen heroes...

...we bid a fond farewell to the beloved Friendship Dogs we've lost in 2019/20, we'll miss each and every one of them.





Introducing...

Tim Mallon, Finance Director

We were delighted to welcome Tim Mallon (far left) in July 2019 as our Finance Director and Trustee.

Tim is a Chartered Accountant and Chartered Tax Adviser and has held senior roles in several accounting firms over the last twenty years; 3 times as partner and once as MD and is now self employed in his own accounting and tax practice; Mallon:Tax.

Tim picked up the mantle from Suzanne Tait, Director of BW-Medical Accountants, who had also been a wonderful member of the team and is still a great Friend of Wag!

Dr Tim Nuttall, Chief Veterinary Advisor

We welcomed Dr Tim Nuttall (left), Head of Dermatology at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies in Edinburgh who joined us in August 2019 as our Chief Veterinary Advisor.

Tim took over from Tim Dobbins of Moorview Referrals who had supported Wag since the very beginning. Coincidentally another Tim!

We're so grateful to welcome more talented professionals to the team who donate their expertise to enable the charity's work. We simply couldn't do it without you!

2020/2021: Our year so far!

Covid-19

Our visiting activities continue to be suspended, our position is that until it is deemed safe for a person with reduced immunity to shake the hand of a volunteer it won't be deemed safe to shake a paw either. We completely understand the impact of this on all our elderly friends as well as our dedicated volunteers and we are all committed to keeping in touch remotely and to emerging from this situation stronger than ever when they will need us so badly. More later...



**The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service**

#EndLoneliness

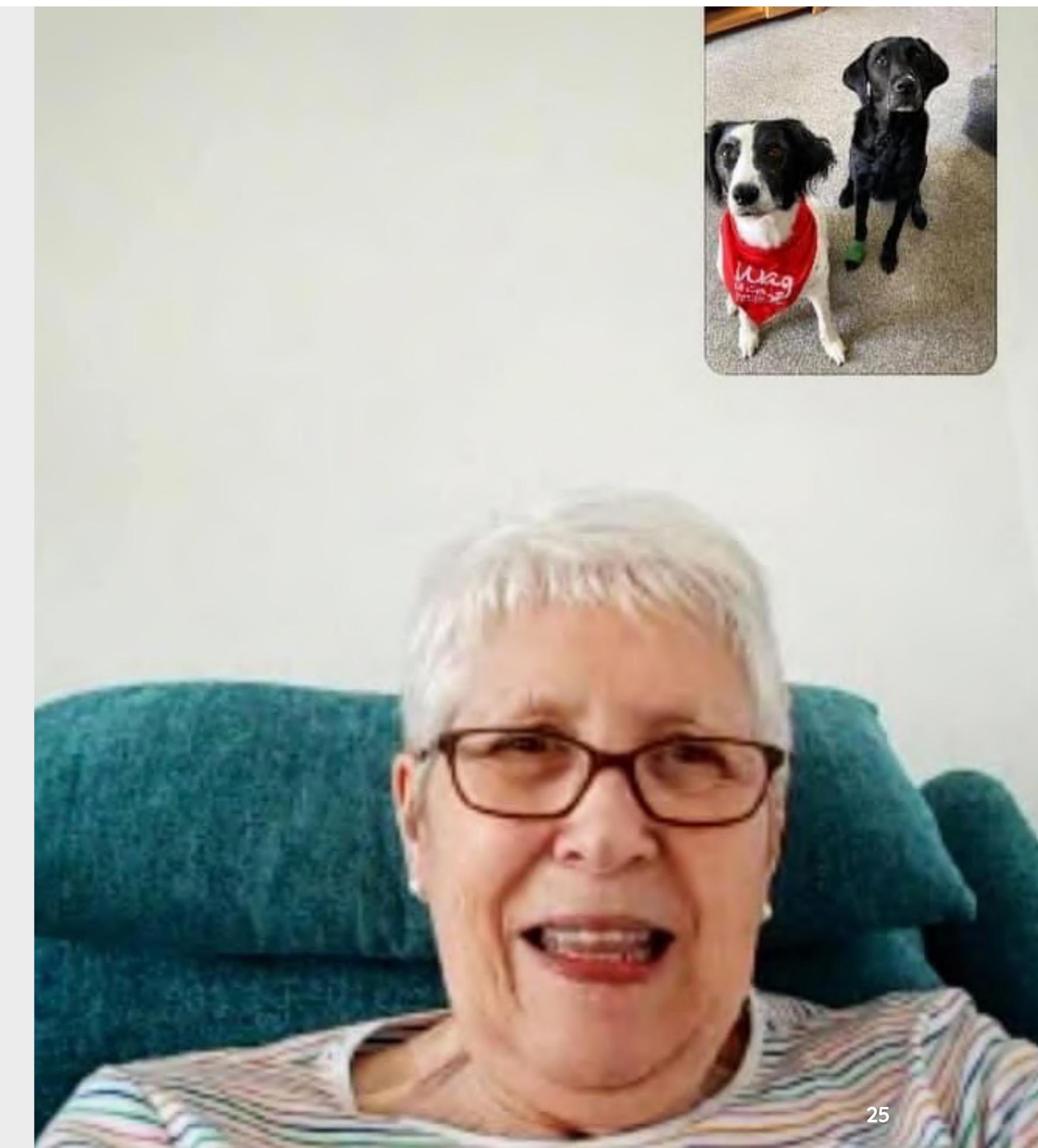
Wag & Company receives the Queen's Award for Voluntary service...

In June 2020, we were honoured to receive the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK.

Created in 2002 to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee, the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service recognises outstanding work by volunteer groups to benefit their local communities.

Founding Director of Wag & Company, Diane Morton, said

"We are absolutely delighted that the special contribution of our over 400 amazing volunteers has been honoured in this way. Every day they are all working hard to make the lives of elderly dog lovers brighter across our communities and even in these challenging times, their commitment to developing creative ways to keep in touch and to lifting spirits is really inspirational."



Covid-19

Despite this very unwelcome interruption, we have continued to process applications and at mid May, amazingly we have 407 Visiting Wag Teams, ready and waiting and all regularly keeping in touch with their elderly friends at this difficult time.

We had to suspend visiting activities for elderly dog lovers on the 16th of March; all bar one placement where the lady was already at the end of her life and we agreed with the NHS that we had to carry on.

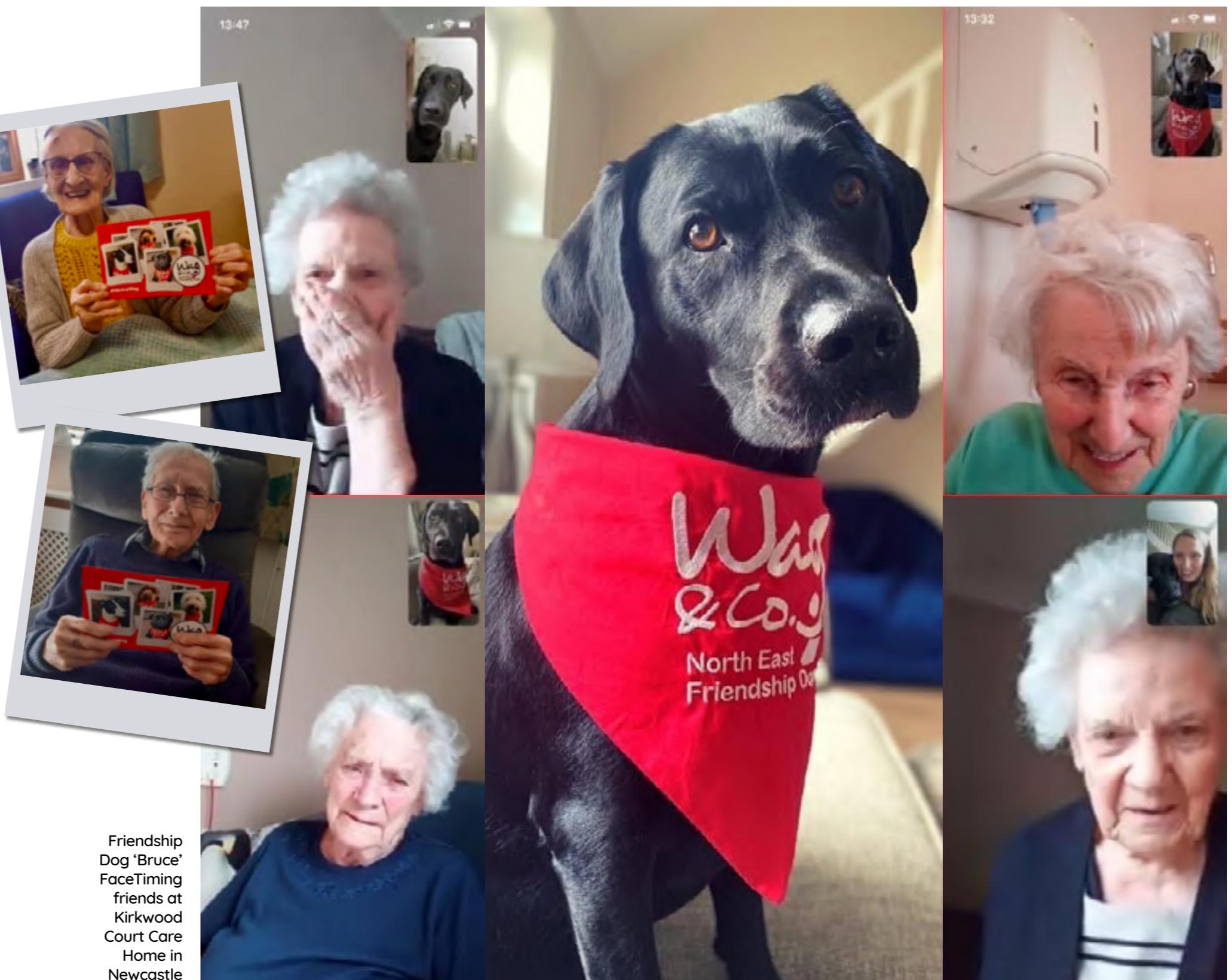
We're inspired every day by the lengths our Wag & Company volunteers are going to to keep in touch with their elderly friends; regular phone or video calls, postcards, pictures, letters, newsletters, doing shopping, gifts, sending specially commissioned art works of their friendship dogs and friendship dogs on FaceTime; truly amazing!

Our 'Wag thinking of you' postcard went to almost 2,500 friends across the region, at home or in care and they loved it! We wanted to make sure they didn't think we'd forgotten them.

But time's dragging on, particularly for those people who are alone in their own homes. So we think it's important to keep sending them little reminders that they're not forgotten, we're all thinking about them and we're coming back; soon hopefully!

As time continues to elapse, we are continuously thinking up new and interesting ways to keep people's spirits up!

Thinking of you cakes went out recently, more to follow, next month a calendar! These are sad times but these little things can really help!





Cake appeal...

Our Cake Appeal enabled us to send all our home placements a special cake treat in May to remind them that we are thinking about them all the time. We despatched some gorgeous lemon drizzle tray bakes from Artisan baker, Meg Rivers, enough for one special sweet treat each day for a week. As you can see, they were very well received.

Here's Sheila, 91, delighted with her cake and below is just a sample of the many responses we've had so far:

"It was ever so kind and really meant something special to know that someone is thinking of you in such a hard time. She couldn't believe how lucky she was to have someone that cares enough to send her a gift."

"The cake was so lovely and I felt like a child again receiving a surprise present like that, it's so nice."

"Hello, we would just like to say a big Thank you for the lovely Lemon Drizzle cake we received today. All gone now... it was lovely. Terry is looking forward to a doggie visit when all is back to normal... x Best wishes to all."

"Just wanted to say a huge thank you! Arrived today, You are all amazing. I loved her little face, it says everything, you are totally amazing people and pooches. Being a keyworker and having to leave her whilst i'm helping others knowing you are all thinking of us means the world."

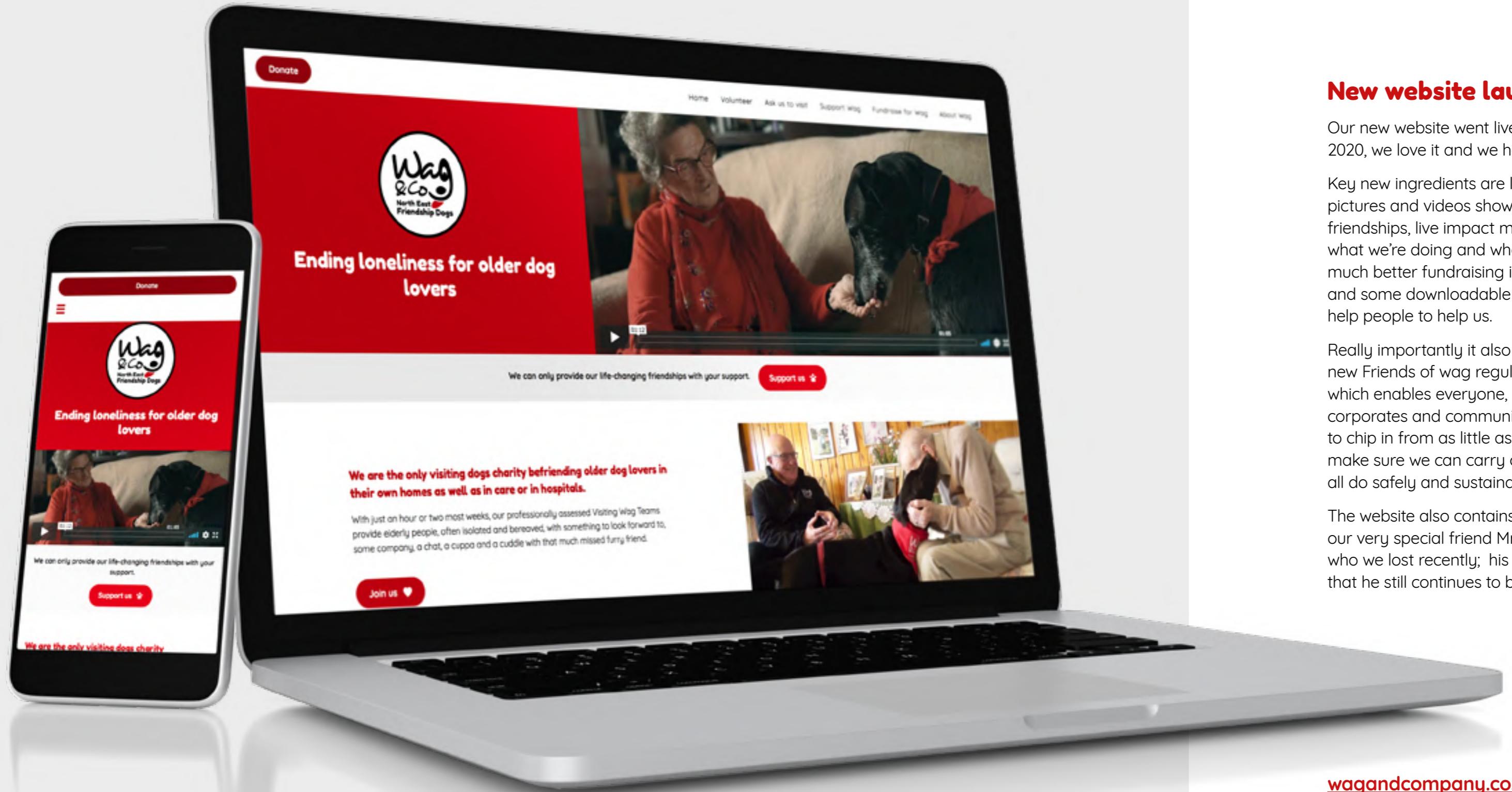
"Just to say a big thank you to you at Wag for the lovely cake I've just received, so very kind of you and thank you for the card you sent to say its because of the present situation that you can't come visiting with the dogs but I send my love to all of you and a very big thank you."

"Thank you so much on behalf of my Mum for the cake delivery. She's missing Jack and Tracey but the cake made her day, very kind of you x"

"Sincere thanks for the gorgeous lemon drizzle cake which I received yesterday. I was so overwhelmed that I burst into tears when I saw the content of the parcel. This is the nicest thing that has happened to me during this difficult time."

"Dad has received a lovely message and cake from Wag and Co by post this morning. Thank you so much for the kind thoughts and lovely gesture, it is very much appreciated. We are as well as can be and hope everyone at Wag and Co is too in these unprecedented and difficult times. We keep in touch with Emma and Lilly by text and look forward to seeing them in the non too distant future hopefully. Stay safe."

"It was so kind, life is so difficult now and I miss my dog and my lunch club and my chats. The cake was so lovely and I felt like a child again receiving a surprise present like that, so nice."



New website launched

Our new website went live on the 1st of June 2020, we love it and we hope you do too!

Key new ingredients are lots more nice pictures and videos showcasing our lovely friendships, live impact mapping, showing what we're doing and where we're doing it, much better fundraising ideas and advice and some downloadable digital assets to help people to help us.

Really importantly it also launches our new Friends of wag regular giving scheme, which enables everyone, individuals, corporates and community organisations, to chip in from as little as £5 a month to make sure we can carry on doing what we all do safely and sustainably for ever.

The website also contains some video of our very special friend Mr John Robson, who we lost recently; his family are proud that he still continues to be our PR Man ❤️

wagandcompany.co.uk

Become a Friend of Wag

Your regular gift will help us to provide life-changing friends, with two and four legs, for isolated and often bereaved older dog lovers in our communities.

By becoming a Friend of Wag and giving regularly you can help us to make sure that no older dog lover in our region misses friendship and the company of a dog.

Your support enables professionally assessed Visiting Wag Teams to safely support bereaved and isolated older dog lovers, giving them something to look forward to, a regular chat, a cuppa and a cuddle with that much missed furry friend.

As our dear friend, John Robson once said

"I have a wonderful relationship with these lovely friends now and my life has completely changed. I do get lonely living on my own and I couldn't manage a dog now. This is the best of both worlds, it's fantastic, it's like winning the Pools!"

There are three types of Friend of Wag packages, individuals can become a Friend, businesses can become Corporate Friends and Care Homes and Community Groups can become Community Friends.

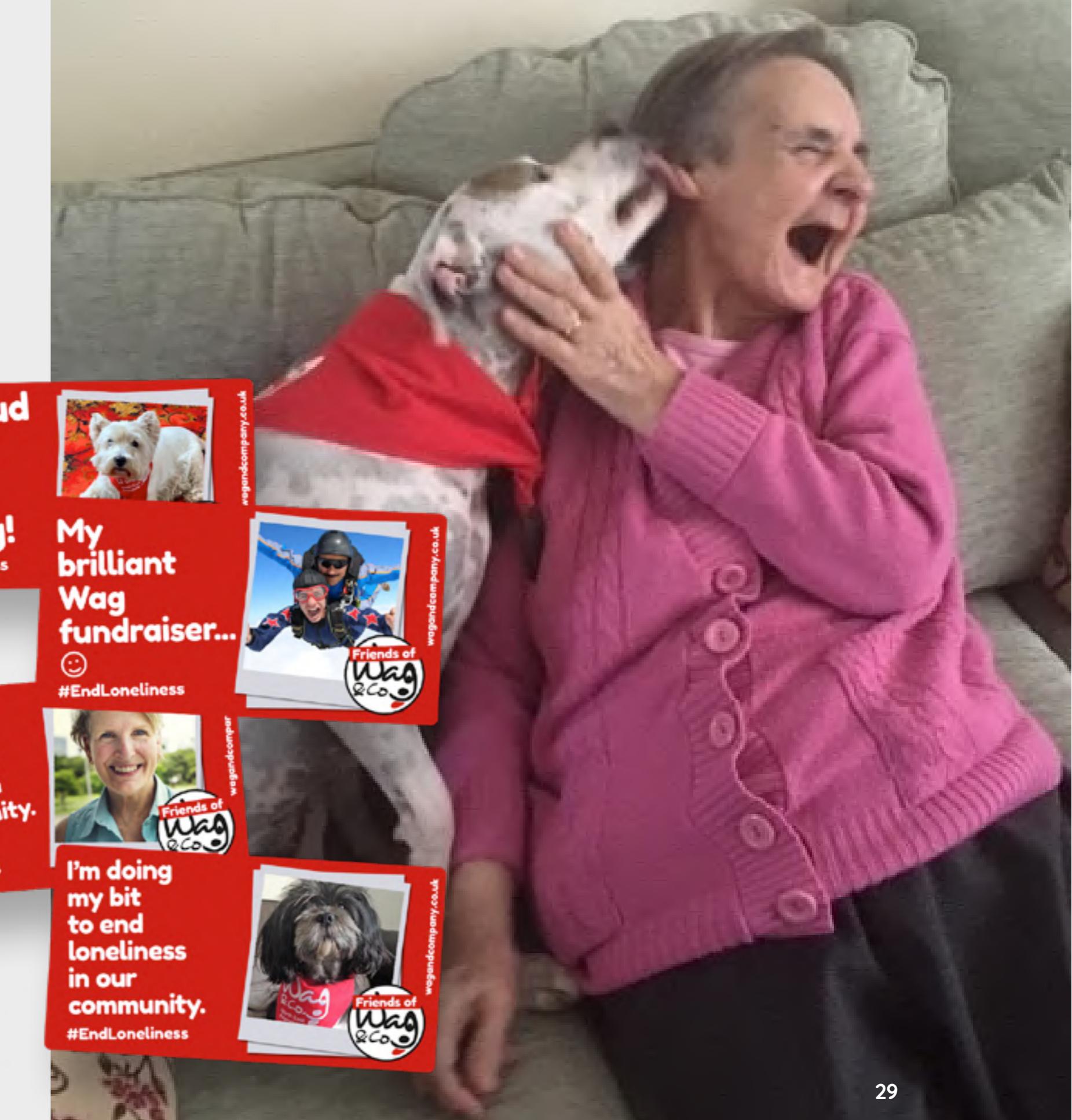
"I like to think that our small but regular donation makes an extremely worthwhile contribution in continuing to restore many more smiles of those who yearn for the irreplaceable companionship of a faithful animal."

Elaine Baldwin, Friend of Wag.

[Become a Friend of Wag...](#)



#EndLoneliness



Goodbye Walk for Wag, hello Walk for Wag... Anywhere!

Our very special fundraiser, the annual Walk for Wag from the Kielder Waterside on the 19th of September, is cancelled; another casualty of Covid-19 and the constraints around large gatherings. We are so disappointed, it's a really lovely event supported by the amazing team at Landal Kielder Waterside; it brings us all together and it also raises essential funds, an amazing £10,738 last year!

So, instead we're launching Walk for Wag... Anywhere so that we can all create our own, socially distanced, walks for Wag on the 19th of September, anywhere we like!

We might all be walking separately but we'll definitely all be together in spirit!

Registration has opened, we'd love you to join us!



#EndLoneliness



Paying tribute; we lost our dear friend, Mr John Robson, in May 2020.



Everyone who knows Wag & Company, knows our dear friend John.

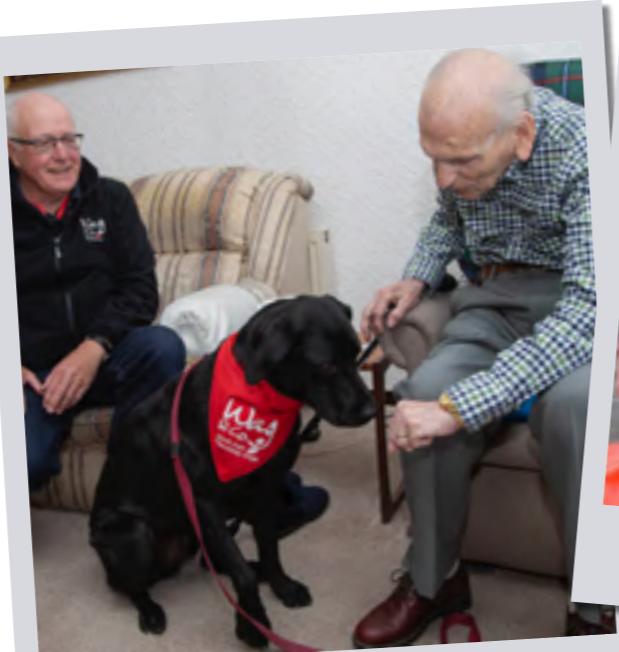
He was our biggest fan, a regular at our Kielder walk, opening our 3km walk with great flair and usually with his face painted, doing interviews, talking at conferences and on video about loneliness and the importance of Wag friends. He delighted in being called our PR Man, part of the team.

John really loved his Visiting Wag Team and best friends Sean and Friendship Dog Alfie and whilst he told everyone who'd listen how much he had benefitted greatly from their dedicated support and friendship, they benefitted too from the company of this special man.

We were so very sad to say goodbye to our lovely friend but his legacy lives on in our hearts and all over our new website where his family are proud he stays, our PR man for ever.

Sean Malone, John's best friend and a shining example of everything that's wonderful about Wag volunteers, paid his own personal tribute to John below.

"Rest in peace dearest John, we miss you dreadfully; always in our hearts and absolutely always a founding member of the Wag family."



Sean's tribute...

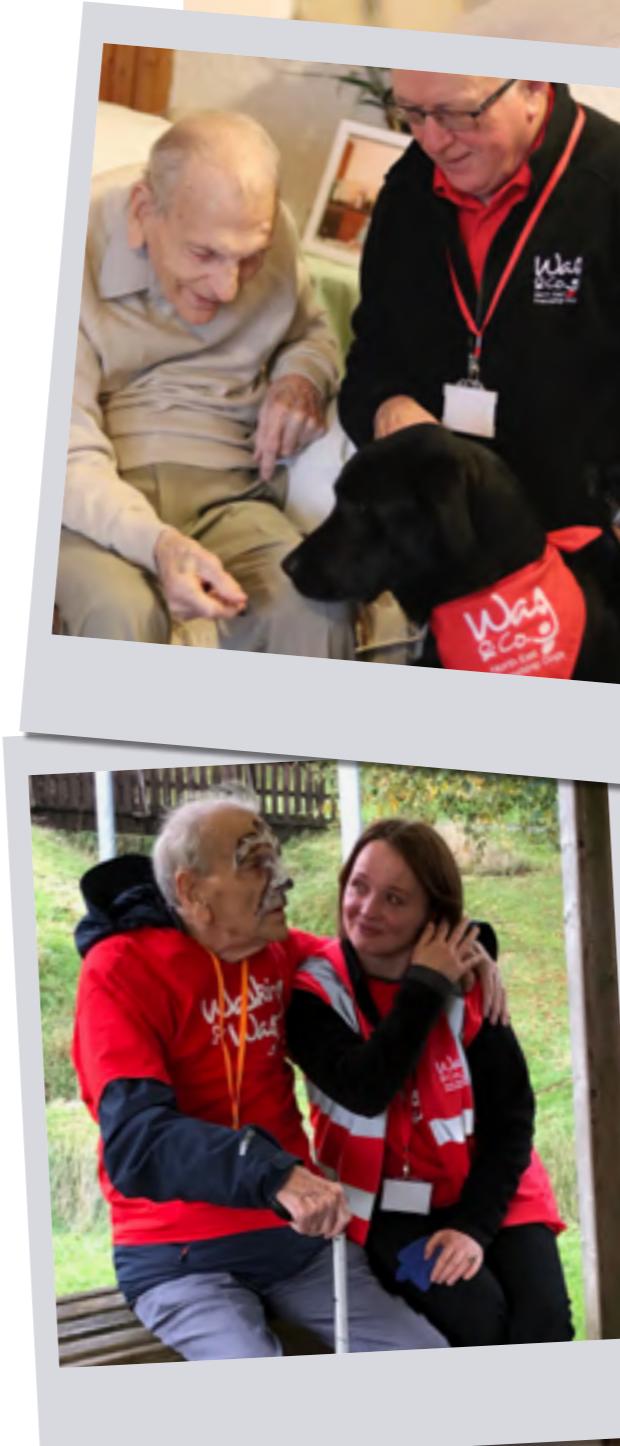
"Very occasionally, you encounter a remarkable human being; meeting John Robson was one such occasion. When Alfie and I first visited John's house he was locked in his television chair, mourning the loss of his much-loved wife Nora and feeling very depressed about his circumstances.

Very quickly, Alfie and John established an instant rapport, and after much patting, tail-wagging and excitement Alfie curled up at John's feet and went to sleep; a pattern that was to repeat itself on numerous occasions in the future. On that first visit, I persuaded John to take a walk with Alfie and I around the block.

The fresh air proved to be a real conversation trigger, and very quickly John steered the chat towards his favourite subject, politics; and we talked, and we talked and then we talked some more.

Our walks around the block graduated to trips to Blyth Beach and John's favourite café at Seaton Sluice. Eventually, John, Alfie and I became even more ambitious and we went to Cragside, Wallington Hall and the streets of Byker where John was born and bred.

John was kind, funny, well-informed, highly intelligent and had a wicked sense of humour. He loved dogs, he loved Alfie and I will miss him forever."



We call him our PR man, he memorably told the BBC: "**one of the best days of my life was the day I joined the Wag Company**". It was one of our best days too John.

Together we really can end loneliness for older dog lovers in our region. We'd love you to join us on this journey!

Our mission is to end loneliness for older dog lovers - It's doable and we're doing it - but we need to be able to meet the huge demand and recruit volunteers in large enough numbers.

We can't do it alone, we're a relatively new charity, a tiny organisation with a huge reach and all we need is a little bit of support from everyone who believes in the value of our special friendships.

Most importantly, we need volunteers, people with special dogs that can give up an hour or two most weeks for a chat, a cuppa and a furry cuddle.

[Click here to find out more.](#)

We'd love you to be our Friend, whether you're an individual, a business or a care organisation, we need your support!

[Become a Friend of Wag today!](#)

We're always looking for fundraisers to provide more friends for the elderly, and what better way to raise money than with a lovely walk.

[Register for Walk for Wag... Anywhere.](#)

#EndLoneliness



Coming up in the second half of 2020...

So many new initiatives in development, all focussed on developing new income streams to finance our special friendships into the future.

Our new e:shop will launch in September, selling amongst other things a very special range of Wag dog tags and key rings with or without engraving, Walking for Wag dog bandanas, children's T-shirts, water bottles, mugs and the 2021 calendar we will also be sending as a gift to our elderly friends.

Remembering with love will launch in the autumn enabling us all to make a donation in memory and to download a beautiful tribute for cards, social media or t shirts.

Giving the Gift of Friendship will also launch in the autumn, just in time for Christmas, so that you can gift your loved one membership of our Friends of Wag scheme and have something special to wrap up to put under the tree too.



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And finally, if you'd like to get involved
in any way, please get in touch, we'd love
to hear from you... [just click here!](#)

wagandcompany.co.uk

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