

Autumn 2023



PAWS FOR THOUGHT

The Dog A.I.D. Newsletter



A MESSAGE FROM OUR NEW CEO

By Belinda Johnson

Welcome to our Autumn 2023 edition of “Paws For Thought”, the newsletter of Dog A.I.D. This is my first newsletter message as Dog A.I.D. CEO and I cannot tell you how delighted I am to be part of this life-changing charity. I’m joining an amazing community where I see the incredible impact of our work every day as staff work alongside our team of dedicated volunteers coaching physically Disabled people to train their own pet dog to become an Assistance Dog. I couldn’t think of a more perfect role for me, combining my passions for the work of charities and empowering people to live more independent lives, as well as a deep love for dogs!

Over the coming weeks and months, I will be meeting as many clients and volunteers as possible to find out how I can work with you to grow and develop the charity we all love.

I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to our Dog A.I.D. supporters including Natural Instinct, our partner for over 10 years, whose generous support brings you this newsletter.

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Our new Dog A.I.D. Team members!



WE'RE DELIGHTED TO INTRODUCE YOU TO OUR NEW CHAIR OF TRUSTEES, TRAINER & VOLUNTEER OFFICER AND CEO

Dog A.I.D. has been working this year to expand our staff and trustee teams to bring on board committed, enthusiastic people with the skills and experience to grow and develop the charity.

Since June, we have recruited **Paul Miles** as our new Chair of Trustees, **Jen Murray** as our Trainer and Volunteer Officer and **Belinda (Bee) Johnson** as our CEO.



Paul is a trustee with two other charities, bringing a wealth of experience to his role as Chair. In his consultancy work he is a Board advisor to a number of businesses.

In his spare time, Paul spends a lot of time with his family including 3 grandchildren, and enjoys caravanning around the U.K. with his wife Sue and Parsons Terrier, Sasha.

Jen is a fully qualified IMDT trainer and is dedicated to promoting force-free training methods and furthering her study of canine psychology.

Jen lives with her husband, 3 year old daughter and has two Basset Hounds. In her spare time, she enjoys listening to classic rock and playing bass guitar.



Bee has been working in the charity sector since 2014 and has worked in the fields of homelessness, mental health, volunteer management, higher education and strategic planning. She has also been a project manager for Pilotlight, supporting charities across the U.K.

Bee lives with her two dogs, Fred and Hannah, and enjoys watching cricket, playing golf, reading, gardening in the summer months and crafting during the winter months.



Celebrating Success!

**Congratulations to our newly qualified
partnerships**

Caroline and Casper (trained by Amy Hunkin)

Zoe-Ann and Theo (trained by Amy Hunkin)

Ffion and Vera (trained by Gareth Foulkes)

Dorothy and Poppy (trained by Susan Winters)

Suzzie and Nala (trained by Heather Stevens)

Gina and Paddy (trained by Jude McDermott)

Louise and Lottie (trained by Julie Hilliard)

Stephanie and Marley (trained by Carol Smith)

Sarah and Thor (trained by Daniel Warren-Cummings)

Susan and Drum (trained by Louise Williamson)

Liz and Lady (trained by Louise Williamson)



Celebrating Success!

Well done to our clients who have passed Level 2 assessments since June 2023

Maureen and Charlie

Sam and Oscar

Carl and Herbie

Julia and Maya

Geneve and Pluto

Alison and Poppy

Hannah and River

Ann and Honey

Carolyn and Dubi

Sandy and Sky



Celebrating Success!

Well done to our clients who have passed Level 1 assessments since June 2023

Joanne and Noodle

Ann and Luna

Peter and Goldie

Ruana and Cheeto

Kate and Sam

Abi and Dotty

Alison and Poppy

Carrie and Astrid

Heather and Butler

Nic and Esme

Michelle and Honey

Josh and Harley

Sharon and Layla

Grace and Star

Hilary and Loki

Chris and Bryn

Kay and Cooper

Kay and Buddy





Get involved!

**Become a trainer
With Dog A.I.D.**

**1 H  UR
A WEEK**

To help a disabled person train their own pet dog to become an Assistance Dog.

Registered Charity Number 1178719



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Our Dog A.I.D. Community



IT'S BEEN A BUSY SUMMER FOR OUR CLIENTS, TRAINERS AND SUPPORTERS ACROSS THE UNITED KINGDOM

Here at Dog A.I.D., we've loved hearing news from our clients, trainers and supporters of their summer activities. We've heard of fabulous fundraisers, Assistance Dogs taking to the skies, our new trainer representative training some very unusual animals and we've even made a rather famous new friend at Dog Fest! If you have any news that you'd like to share with us, please email belinda.johnson@dogaid.org.uk with your updates and pictures! We'll include as many as we can in the next newsletter.

Dog A.I.D. at Dog Fest



The Dog A.I.D. community have been out in force at Dog Fest events across the country, raising awareness of our wonderful charity. We were joined at one event by TV celebrity Michaela Strachan! (above centre) who was obviously delighted at meeting Assistance Dog Coco.

We're so grateful to supporter **Leonie Z** and her team of volunteers who brought a ray of sunshine to a very damp NE Dog Fest, raising an incredible **£500** for us! Thank you Leonie and team!



Brian and Lily take to the skies!



We were thrilled to hear from client **Brian H** who was able to take his first flight in 15 years after sustaining life-changing spinal injuries.

Brian and **Assistance Dog Lily** (pictured left) were supported by the British Airways Accessibility Team to take their flight to Newcastle, marking Disability Awareness Day.

Brian said following the flight that he now has the confidence to fly again and is planning a holiday for later in the year. Watch the video of Brian and Lily's trip here by following this link - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQLo-VgnkSA>

Kathie's so crafty!

We have many extremely talented Dog A.I.D. supporters. Client **Kathie W** is a gifted quilt maker who made three amazing quilts (one of the quilts, pictured right) for a Facebook auction to raise money for Dog A.I.D.

Kathie raised the fantastic sum of **£153** to support the delivery of Dog A.I.D.'s life-changing work - thank you Kathie! Congratulations to the winners of the three quilts - Debs L, Janice A and Chloe H.





Trainer Fran talks to the animals



Our new trainer representative, **Fran Murtaugh**, took part in a fascinating training course at Paignton Zoo where she developed her training skills and animal behaviour knowledge. The course, attended by dog trainers and zoo keepers, focused on applying positive, rewarding methods to achieve desired outcomes.

Fran worked with giraffes, lemurs and red pandas. The female red pandas were trained to sit still to allow medical scans to take place without the animals having to be sedated. Fran said, “Personally, this was one of the best experiences of my life... I learned a great deal over the three days and the practical really helped put theory into practise. It was amazing achieving the results with all species and just shows how positive training really works!”

Asha and Stanley hit the headlines

Qualified partnership **Asha S** and **Stanley** hit the headlines in the August edition of “Your Dog” magazine. Asha talked about her life with Stanley and explained his assessment and training with Dog A.I.D. Asha explained the tasks that Stanley carries out to support Asha’s independence including picking up items, helping her to take off her coat and pressing buttons on lifts and doors.

Asha said “I feel Stan has broken down a barrier and made disability less of a taboo...He’s been a lifesaver. I’ve been able to go on holiday by myself which was amazing. He’s the family pet who’s done really well for himself”.





Client Workshops



Clients in training and qualified clients have been enjoying in-person workshops in September and October where they have received additional training in task work and support from our trainer team. Thank you to everyone who has attended and worked so hard at the workshops. We're hugely grateful to the volunteer trainers and staff team who have attended and made the events possible.



DOG A.I.D. CLIENTS - WE NEED YOUR FEEDBACK!

Dog A.I.D. is currently running its client survey to get your views on a variety of subjects including training workshops, events, fundraising and communications. We want to hear from as many clients as possible so that your views inform our service development. If you have not yet completed the survey, please email belinda.johnson@dogaid.org.uk for the survey link.

The closing date for feedback is **Thursday 30th November**

Upcoming events



Client Coffee Mornings

Join us for our online client coffee morning hosted by Bee

Friday 17th November, 11am - midday

Friday 8th December, 11am - midday

To register, email belinda.johnson@dogaid.org.uk



Trainer Drop-In

We warmly invite all of our volunteer trainers to join us for our trainer drop-in for a coffee, chat and support from fellow trainers and our volunteer officer, Jen. Our new CEO, Bee, will also be attending to say hello.

Monday 6th November, 11 - 11:30am

We will be sending the link out to trainers prior to the event.



Webinar for clients and trainers - Raoudha Mairos. To register email admin@dogaid.org.uk

Canine Health & Behaviour

Invaluable tips for raising happy, healthy dogs

Dog Trainer & Behaviour Consultant, and Separation Anxiety specialist Raoudha Mairos presents invaluable advice and tips that she wishes she had known when welcoming her first dog in this brilliant webinar, which focuses on the crucial aspect of canine health, and how we can guide Pawrents toward raising happy, healthy dogs.

with Raoudha Mairos

Dog Trainer & Behaviour Consultant,
Animal Training Academy member,
Separation Anxiety specialist



Our client and trainer representatives



Our client and trainer representatives are members of the Dog A.I.D. Board of Trustees. They are existing clients or volunteer trainers within the charity; any Dog A.I.D. client or trainer can nominate themselves for election to these roles every three years. The roles of client and trainer representatives are vital ones within our charity. They represent the views of our clients and volunteer trainers on our Board and help inform our decision-making and service delivery

Our current client representatives are **Rob Moore** and **Gillian Kirkman**. Our current trainer representative is **Fran Murtaugh** who was elected to the Board in September at our AGM. The client and trainer representatives are all volunteers and we would like to thank them for their time and support of Dog A.I.D.



Rob Moore

Rob has been a client representative with Dog A.I.D. since 2019. He is part of a qualified partnership with Assistance Dog, Buster. Rob has a background in accountancy and I.T. Rob and his wife Rhiannon perform an invaluable role by being admins for our members Facebook group.

To contact Rob email:
rob.moore@dogaid.org.uk



Gillian Kirkman

Dog A.I.D. welcomed Gillian to its Board in February as client representative. Gillian and her standard poodle, Rhoda, qualified as a partnership with Dog A.I.D. in January 2023. Gillian has a background in health and social care and lives in Devon with her husband Ian, Rhoda and poodle Cotton.

To contact Gillian email:
gillian.kirkman@dogaid.org.uk



Fran Murtaugh

Fran has been one of our superstar volunteer trainers since since 2019. She is a highly experienced trainer and behaviourist who has lectured at a Canine Rehabilitation and Hydrotherapy Centre. Fran lives in Scotland with her husband and her two Belgium Shepherd Dogs.

To contact Fran, email
fran.murtaugh@dogaid.org.uk

Get involved!

Would you like to help Dog A.I.D. change lives?

Dog A.I.D. is a small charity that has a **huge** impact. We change lives by coaching physically Disabled people to train their own pet dogs as an Assistance Dog, enabling independence and increased confidence in our clients.

We are currently working with **83 clients in training** and **110 qualified partnerships** across the United Kingdom. We have **over 600 people** waiting to access our services. We receive no government funding for our charity and we are so grateful for the generosity of our supporters who help us to raise money to help to provide our vital services. **You can support us by...**



Fundraising in your community

You could fundraise by holding an event such as a quiz night with your community group or afternoon tea at your place of work. Get the kids involved by choosing Dog A.I.D. as their chosen charity for a Christmas jumper day. Dog A.I.D. can support by providing leaflets and collection tins and scheduling shout-outs on our social media. If you are fundraising on behalf of Dog A.I.D., contact belinda.johnson@dogaid.org.uk for advice and support.



Giving a donation

You can support Dog A.I.D. by making a one off donation via **Just Giving** using the link below:

<https://www.justgiving.com/dogaid>

You can support Dog A.I.D. by donating monthly by setting up a **regular giving** direct debit. Download a form to complete at <https://dogaid.org.uk/fundraise-and-donate>

Every penny makes a difference. Thank you!