Her Majesty The Queen to open Battersea's new kennels

Friday 13 March, 2015

Her Majesty The Queen will visit Battersea Dogs & Cats Home on Tuesday 17 March to officially open the charity's new state-of-the art kennels. The £4.8m new kennel development will provide a welcome home to lost, abandoned, or unwanted new arrivals at the world-famous rescue centre.

The Queen has been the Patron of Battersea since 1956 and accompanied by The Duke of Edinburgh, Her Majesty will be shown how the new canine facilities will play a vital role in supporting the dogs during their early days at Battersea, improving and speeding up their journey towards a loving new home.

Claire Horton, Chief Executive of Battersea Dogs & Cats Home says:

"We are truly thrilled Her Majesty is opening our new kennels at Battersea and sharing with us the most important day for the Home in decades. This is the biggest development in the Home's history and we're honoured to have our Royal Patron meeting some of the many animals that will benefit from these new facilities."

"The kennels, named in honour of Battersea's pioneering founder Mary Tealby, are inspired by the needs of, and our love for, our animals. Battersea has worked tirelessly to provide shelter to three million stray and unwanted dogs since first opening its doors in 1860 and our mission remains the same today as it was then – to aim to never turn away a dog or cat in need of our help."

Battersea opened its doors to 5000 dogs in 2014, providing a vital lifeline to animals made homeless through no fault of their own. From Spaniels to Staffies, Maltese to Mastiffs, the brand new Mary Tealby kennels will help Battersea continue to provide the very best in canine care to dogs when they first arrive at the charity's gates.

Battersea's new Mary Tealby kennels replace noisy and out-dated Victorian facilities that were closed in 2012 after providing a home to around one million dogs over the centuries. The new block, designed by Battersea and award-winning architects Jonathan Clark Associates and delivered by contractor Lakehouse will provide accommodation for 56 dogs. The focus is on providing a quiet, calming environment for the Home's most vulnerable dogs. Each kennel has built in speakers to play calming music and an external run area, whilst adjoining paddocks have paddling pools, climbing mounds, play equipment, and plants to awaken and interest dogs' senses.

The new kennels will help Battersea respond to an all-time high demand for its services. In the past three years, the charity has seen an 84% increase in calls from owners wanting to give up their dogs to the rescue. Accommodation issues such as eviction and downsizing are the most common reasons, and around 13 dogs arrive at the Home's three centres every single day.

-Ends-

For more information and images please contact 020 7627 9332 or email press@battersea.org.uk

Notes to editors

· On 18 May 1956 Her Majesty The Queen became the Home's Royal Patron.

· The Queen previously visited Battersea in February 1991.

- Since it was founded, Battersea has rescued, reunited and rehomed over 3.1 million dogs and cats.

· Building began on the Mary Tealby kennels in February 2014.

· The kennels, paddocks and new intake reception were 12 months in construction and cost £5.4m.

· 39 members of staff and around 10 volunteers will work in the new kennels on a daily basis.

- 44% of dogs arrive at Battersea as strays.

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- The Home received 1584 calls from owners wanting to give up their dogs in January 2015.

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