Record 161 Rescues Apply as Grants Awarded to Tackle UK Pet Trade Crisis

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Rescues in Oxfordshire, Manchester and Kent secure funding following unprecedented demand.

A record 161 animal rescue organisations applied for support from Naturewatch Foundation's 2026 Pet Rescue Grant, highlighting the growing pressure facing charities dealing with the realities of the UK's low-welfare and illegal pet trade.

Three organisations - The One Wish Dog Foundation (in Oxfordshire/Gloucestershire), Tiny Paws MCR (in Manchester), and The Neuter Project (in Kent) - have now been awarded a share of £11,000 in funding to support urgent veterinary care, rehabilitation and rehoming.

The grant supports small organisations working directly with animals affected by the low-welfare and illegal pet trade, helping rescues to continue their vital work in a time of financial strain.

A lifeline for rescue dogs in crisis in Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire

The One Wish Dog Foundation, a foster-based rescue operating across Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire, has been awarded £6,000 to support four rescued dogs.

Founded in 2025, the charity has already taken in 36 dogs, many of them strays or urgent welfare cases. It also provides emergency foster placements for dogs whose owners are facing crisis situations, including homelessness and domestic abuse.

The funding will cover veterinary treatment for four dogs, including Tally, who requires leg surgery, and three abandoned cockapoos, Charlie, Bonnie and Ruby (pictured), believed to have been abandoned by a local puppy farm.

Founder of The One Wish Dog Foundation, Jenna Jones, said: "For dogs like Bonnie, Ruby, Charlie and Tally, who endured fear, exploitation and neglect before arriving at One Wish, this funding is truly life-changing."

The rescue will host a volunteer day on 25 April 2026 at Chipping Norton Town Hall for anyone interested in supporting its important work.

Supporting high-welfare rabbit rescue in Manchester

Tiny Paws MCR, a Manchester-based small animal rescue, has received £4,000 to support its Rabbit Refuge programme.

Since being founded in 2019, the organisation has focused on rescuing and rehabilitating rabbits and rodents, while promoting high welfare standards and responsible adoption across Greater Manchester.

The grant will help approximately 14 rabbits receive essential veterinary care, including neutering and vaccinations, before being rehomed into carefully vetted homes. The charity also provides adopters with lifelong support.

Founder, Suzi Wright, said: "Thank you so much to Naturewatch Foundation for awarding us this amazing grant!"

Volunteer vets preventing unwanted litters in Kent

The Neuter Project, based in Kent, has been awarded a £1,000 mini-grant to support its volunteer-led veterinary work.

The initiative provides free neutering services to independent rescues and sanctuaries, helping to reduce unwanted litters and ease pressure on rescue centre funds.

To date, the project has neutered over 1,600 animals and supported around 50 rescues nationwide, saving them more than £250,000 in costs.

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The funding will go towards essential consumables, enabling the team to continue offering free procedures that could help dozens of animals.

Founder, Angie Hamp, said: “This means so much to us. The money is equivalent to around two months' running cost for us. To give you an idea of how far this will go £1,000 will neuter 50 cats, 10 to 20 dogs or around 30 rabbits and guinea pigs.”

Growing pressure on local rescues

Naturewatch Foundation received a record 161 expressions of interest for this year’s grant, reflecting the increasing strain on animal rescue organisations across the country. The campaigning charity is dedicated to ending animal cruelty and improving the lives of animals through education and advocacy.

By supporting local groups in Oxfordshire, Manchester and Kent, the charity aims to deliver meaningful impact within communities, while tackling the wider issue of the low-welfare pet trade through its national campaigning. Find out more at naturewatch.org.

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About Naturewatch Foundation:

Naturewatch Foundation is a UK-based animal welfare charity dedicated to ending cruelty and improving the lives of animals through campaigning, education and advocacy. For over 30 years, the charity has led initiatives to tackle illegal and unethical practices, including puppy farming, animal experiments and wildlife crime. By working with policymakers, enforcement agencies and the public, Naturewatch Foundation strives to make the world a kinder place for animals. Visit naturewatch.org to find out more.

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