



THE NSRSA

National Foundation for Retired Service Animals

Countess's new charity the NFRSA leaps to the aid of Kent retired police dog.



The National Foundation for Retired Service Animals ([NFRSA](#)) formed only in May this year has already come to the rescue of a retired police dog Keela, from Kent constabulary. Thanks to the power of social media, an online appeal launched by The Countess raised just over £5k in only 18hrs!

Shared by a leading Facebook group which has over 440k followers late on Wednesday evening, the full amount donated by hundreds of people from up & down the country - even as far as Australia - had been raised by lunchtime on Thursday.

Retired police dog Keela had served with the Kent police from the age of 6 months until her retirement over 9 years later, when she stayed by the side of her lifelong partner & handler Sam.

One evening in early August of this year, Keela was quite clearly in great pain and with Sam's 20 years dog handling experience she knew immediately that her partner was suffering from a stomach torsion, which in German shepherds is life threatening. Without immediate and early intervention Keela would almost certainly have died.

Sam, without any thought of the cost, rushed Keela to the vet where she underwent overnight emergency surgery, which she happily survived. The total vets bill originally came to just over £6k and Sam realised she was going to need some assistance & so turned to NFRSA for help.

Lady Bathurst recalls the conversation

'It was immediately clear when I spoke to Sam that she was not only in deep shock & concerned for her beloved dog, but it was dawning on her the enormity of the financial cost. And while she would have gladly re-mortgaged her house, she decided to reach out to us at the NFRSA. We made a promise on the spot that we would help her. As a charity that has only been formed for 3 months we knew this would be a challenge, but we were determined to find a way because that is what we do. We help retired service animals in their hour of need'

The best way to raise what was now £4.5k (the vet had kindly agreed to reduce the bill to reflect the extraordinary service Keela had given to the community), was to launch a special online appeal.

Lady Bathurst did so at 4pm on Wednesday, and later that evening it had already been shared by many supporters but most importantly it had been picked up by a leading Facebook page whose call to arms went out to the country's thin blue line. The response was extraordinary by midnight it had reached £1000 and by lunchtime on Thursday it had exceeded its £4.5k goal.

Keela's owner Sam was amazed at the generosity of so many people and said '...Even though she is retired, I still see Keela as my partner and protector. I feel blessed to have had her as my police dog and I am so thankful that she pulled through the operation. I am deeply grateful to the NFRSA for their help. It means everything to us both'.

Lady Bathurst Says - 'The Police Family is a close-knit community. When a colleague, whether two legged or four legged, is in trouble anywhere in the country, they, alongside people who truly care about animals, just quietly step up to the mark and help. Having raised that amount of money in less than 24hrs just goes to show the respect & love we all have for our retired service animals. Keela spent her life taking care of us & everyone has pulled together to take care of her when she needed us most, & I am so very grateful to all those who helped. It's what this is all about, community and our amazing service animals.'

RPD Keela continues to recover well at home, under the watchful eye of her devoted owner Sam, and thanks to the enormous support shown for this brave police dog, she will be able to enjoy the rest of her retirement in good health.

In addition, we are thrilled to announce acclaimed West Yorkshire photographer and animal lover [Gerry Slade](#) has collaborated with Countess Bathurst to create a beautiful calendar as part of her charity's launch.

"Gerry doesn't do just 'portraits' - he has a special gift which is to capture his subject with real emotion and atmosphere." – Lady Bathurst

This inaugural calendar will be a stunning tribute to the incredible animals helping to save lives on a daily basis. Sponsored by pet wellbeing brand, [Paws](#) Gerry hopes this launch calendar will be the first of many.

"I love to capture that special bond in a unique and beautiful way." – Gerry Slade

And it has just been announced that a stunning image by Gerry Slade has been selected as part of the Team GB entry to The World Photographic Cup. Aside from dedicating his creativity and time to this worthy project, Gerry is donating all proceeds to the NFRSA.

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www.nfrsa.org.uk

For more information, or to arrange an interview with Lady Bathurst, please contact Charlie at charlie@likemindedpr.com | 07770 961 317