



## THE NSRSA

### National Federation of Retired Service Animals

#### Launch release

**This summer sees the launch of the National Foundation for Retired Service Animals or The [NFRSA](#), founded by The Rt. Hon. The Countess Bathurst of Cirencester Park, and former High Sheriff of Gloucestershire (2016/17). The NFRSA will help to provide a deserving and loving retirement for the UK's 2000+ and growing, ex-service dogs and horses, by assisting handlers and owners with medical and veterinary responsibilities.**

During her time as High Sheriff of Gloucestershire, Countess Bathurst was incredibly privileged to be warmly welcomed by the police, fire & rescue and prison services and given the opportunity to see these incredible service animals at work. Being a renowned animal lover - she has 5 dogs - she was fascinated to learn about the vital role they play in keeping us, the public, safe.

**Indeed, most of our key emergency sectors, with the exception of the ambulance service, utilise the help of working dogs and/or horses and the part they play is invaluable.**

The Countess discovered during her time in office that these extraordinary animals, once they reach the age of retirement, do not have the benefit of a pension, and no longer receive any financial support for their ongoing care, veterinary bills, and medical treatments. This means the entire financial responsibility for the dog or horse falls to the handler.

Even worse, meaningful insurance is almost impossible to find, and even if available, the premiums charged for retired animals is beyond the financial reach of the owners, purely because of the duties they have done.

Understandably, the relationship between a handler and their working partner is second to none and the break-up of these incredibly special relationships would be unthinkable - handlers have spent 8-10 years with their dogs and their only wish is to give them the rest and retirement they deserve.

However, due to financial pressure, this sometimes does happen and in many cases the heartbreaking decision to re-home a dog has to be taken, meaning it is removed from all it's known, and the handlers family left bereft.

It was with this in mind that The Countess Bathurst determined to ensure all these animals would be entitled to a deserving and loving retirement with the families they love, by helping meet some of that medical financial burden in their twilight years.

And so she set about creating The NFRSA, which will focus entirely on supporting all ex-service dogs and horses across our Police, Fire & Rescue, Prison, and Border Force services during their retirement by paying for veterinary treatments.

Many high-profile ambassadors including Minnie Driver, Deborah Meaden, Carol Vorderman, Nick Knowles and Patrick Robinson, to name just a few have all jumped at the chance to support this brilliant initiative.

Lady Bathurst says:

“Having spent so much time with our faithful and loyal working dogs and horses who, on a frighteningly regular basis, place their lives on the line to keep us safe, and then learning about the predicament they face in their old age, it was a completely natural reaction to want to help.

Our dogs and horses have given the majority of their lives in the service of our communities across the country and in their twilight years, I could not believe more that we should be returning the favour. I hope we can all find it in our hearts to ‘Protect Our Protectors’ and support the NFRSA so we can be there for them, just like they have for us, when they need us the most.’

Ends – August 2022



*“To be involved as an Ambassador to The NFRSA is my way of showing support to the leading role these extraordinary dogs and horses play in our everyday lives. Quite simply, they keep us safe. We should do the same for them when their work is done.” – Minnie Driver, Actress & Musician*

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