

**ANGUILLA ANIMAL RESCUE FOUNDATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Wednesday, March 20th, 2024
5 PM - Roy's Bayside Grill, Sandy Ground**

Present: AARF Members:

Johanna Pasila
Denise Graves
Suzie Donahue
Estelle Slade
Brigid Arcand
Aveline Wilson
Elyse Gensolin
Mark Hale
Sally Hale
Carol Gilbert
MaryAnn Jarvis
Mike Jarvis
Rebecca Taillon
Carita Wallgren
Vanessa Croft

Non Members:

Rachel Hargreaves
Sara Steele Rogers
Orissa Singh
Sade Swanston

1. Welcome: Johanna Pasila

- The President of AARF and Chair of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) opened the meeting at 5:08pm and welcomed the AARF members and participants present
- The Chair recorded that the notice of the AGM was sent out on 2 February 2024 which is in accordance with the bylaws that require the notice to be sent out not less than twenty-one days or more than fifty days before the date of the meeting. A reminder with the meeting material was subsequently sent by email on 4 March 2024.

2. Acceptance of Agenda

- The Agenda was circulated to the membership on 4 March 2024 and hard copies were available at the meeting.

The motion to accept was made by Brigid and seconded by Aveline.

3. Approval of Minutes of the 2023 AGM

- The minutes of the March 2023 AGM were circulated to the membership by email last spring and are publicly available on our website. We also had a hard copy present at the meeting.

The motion to approve was made by Denise and seconded by Suzie.

4. A few words by the President

- Item four on the Agenda is a few words by the president, and I must say that I think that giving this introduction speech at the AGM has been one of my favourite parts of being the AARF President. Year after year we have more amazing results and numbers to report and more people to thank for their support. This is the day of the year when we look at everything we have achieved in the last year and get inspired to do even more in the year to come. And as you will hear when I turn it over to the other Board Members we have had another very successful year in 2023.

What I want to say before we take a closer look at what the AARF committees have been up to last year is that although I think I speak for all of us around this table – and many of you in the audience – when I say that we love the work we

do, animal rescue work is not always easy. And I think this is especially true when you are the only animal rescue organization in the country. The phones are always ringing, the inbox pinging and there are constant requests and pressure from the outside for us to do more. On the inside of AARF the dedicated volunteers work passionately and hard but often with a constant feeling of it not being enough and a wish to be able to do even more. And sometimes there are very tough decision to be made, having to accept that we cannot always do everything and help everyone.

It may not always be easy, but it is always very rewarding. As the only shelter, with the only adoption program and the only spay & neuter program on island we can very clearly see the immediate effect of the work we do. As I have addressed in previous AGM speeches I think that the greatest general success of AARF continues to be that we have a positive impact on the pet culture in Anguilla and work increasingly close with the local community and the relevant authorities – although, needless to say, there is always room for improvement.

We have a wonderful mix of volunteers. Some have been here since AARF was established more than 20 years ago and can testify to how far we have come. Others are joining every year with new energy and new ideas. We are constantly evolving, adapting and the excitement to try new things and start new projects continues to live strong. And we try to celebrate all the successes. I think this is very important. Even all the small ones.

Every dog and cat that finds a loving forever home,
every unwanted animal that is surrendered to the shelter instead of the alternative,
every new pet owner signing up for our sponsored spay & neuter program,
every successful fundraising event bringing in money for us to continue our work,
every new customer at the thrift shop,
every new member signing up,
every donation coming in,
every new follower on social media,
every reach-out from someone wanting to volunteer,
even every success in bureaucratic paperwork enabling us to keep doing what we are doing.

And for me, as the Education Chair, most of all I celebrate every time a child recognizing me from a school visit comes up to me to tell me how their pet is doing in light of things we discussed in class.

It is very meaningful work and we have a great team.

So what I want to do before I give the floor to the other Board members is to introduce them all and thank this wonderful team. This is the AARF Executive Committee, i.e. the AARF Board, 2023.

A big part of the team is also Morlens Veterinary Clinic that we work very closely with and I want to take this opportunity to thank Morlens and its staff.

On my thank you list is also the Department of Natural Resources and the Royal Anguilla Police Force. These are the authorities with the responsibility for animal welfare in Anguilla. (From the POV of significance for AARF, the DNR is the one that deals with stray animals and the police the ones that deal with any criminal issues relating to animals, such as animal cruelty.)

There is another entity I want to mention, Fly to Freedom Dog Rescue. The international rescue organization that for years have done wonders when it comes to finding homes in the US for the dogs for which we cannot find homes locally.

And part of the team is also our members, volunteers and supporters both on and off island. Thank you!

Now, this meeting today will follow the traditional pattern. We will start with the Treasurer reporting on our financial situation, then all of the standing committees of AARF will report on the work they have done in the past calendar year and then we will proceed to the election of the Board for 2024 and the revision of our bylaws, which also is on the agenda. We will have a Q&A opportunity at the end of the meeting, but as always, feel free to ask any questions you may have also during the presentations.

5. Treasurer's Report: Estelle Slade

AARF Treasurer's Report – Key Indicators Year Ending 31st December 2023

● General Donations	1 st January to 31 st December 2023 <i>1st January to 31st December 2022</i>	\$26,524.54 <i>\$12,590.97</i>
● Fund Raising	1 st January to 31 st December 2023 <i>1st January to 31st December 2023</i>	\$42,210.34 <i>\$50,081.24</i>
● Total Income	1 st January to 31 st December 2023 <i>1st January to 31st December 2022</i>	\$72,349.62 <i>\$62,356.86</i>

• Net Surplus	1 st January to 31 st December 2023 <i>1st January to 31st December 2022</i>	\$11,488.15 \$ 1,055.80
• Expenses	Average Monthly Expenses 2023	\$ 5,071.79
• Added to Designated Funds	1 st January to 31 st December 2023 <i>1st January to 31st December 2022</i>	\$96,026.92 \$77,381.02
• Spent from Designated Funds	1 st January to 31 st December 2023 <i>1st January to 31st December 2022</i>	\$61,746.85 \$87,345.49

- AARF could not operate without donations, contributions and fundraising efforts, week-in, week-out.
- The funds that AARF raises, holds and disburses are divided into two broad types, which we call, “The General Fund” and “The Designated Funds”. There are several designated funds, so called because they have each been created and initially funded by donors for a specific project or need, and they are topped up with ongoing donations from new and regular AARF supporters, either through PayPal, through our US bank account, or locally. When we receive a donation from a supporter who does not express a preference as to how they would like the money to be spent, or who has asked for it to be used for day-to-day expenses, it is placed in the general fund, which is used almost entirely on the year-round running of the AARF shelter, including veterinary fees, boarding fees, shelter maintenance and shelter management. Also put into the general fund are the proceeds of the Second Chances Thrift Store, and, usually, money raised from one-off fundraising events and campaigns. There will be times, however, when we see that one of our specific funds is running low, or we consider a need to raise more funds for a project, in which case, we may hold a campaign to raise its profile, and to add to its balance. In 2023, and running into 2024 we did exactly that for the Shelter Improvement fund, which, as you will hear in another report this afternoon, has in place a comprehensive plan for the use of those funds. I cannot give Suzie Donahue enough praise for her work on this campaign.
- Looking now at the General Fund, the amount of non-specified donations received in 2023 increased from the 2022 total, thanks largely to six generous individual donors who preferred that their gift be used for general shelter expenses. In the previous year, more private contributors asked that the money they remit be added to one of the designated funds, and of course, we act solely upon the donors’ instructions.
- In another successful fundraising year, both in terms of money and profile-raising, 2023’s sources of revenue and events included the island’s favourite thrift store, a Bingo night hosted by Roy’s, a Wine and Whiskers event hosted by a generous supporter, a Sunset Pawty hosted at the Four Seasons and our annual Superbowl event hosted by Elvis’s. We thank all our hosts for their continued support, and acknowledge the work of their staff in hosting these great events. The thrift store, and these other events, generated in excess of \$42,200. A further \$30,100 was raised through merchandise sales, membership dues, adoptions of pets, and private donations. All these collections were used for the general running of the shelter. Our fundraising total for 2023 was marginally lower than the amount raised in 2022, but that was almost entirely due to the last few months in 2022 of our successful GoFundMe campaign. This year’s total was almost entirely the result of efforts locally. It is heart-warming to see regular contributors and supporters digging ever deeper to support this special organisation, and equally heart-warming were the many small contributions from people who were moved in some way to respond to our appeals and efforts. Anguilla animal lovers, we thank you all.

- It is clear to all of us that although we now have some funds available to spend on important specific projects, regular fundraising drives are needed not only to generate funds to run the shelter, but also to raise the profile of AARF, and to spread the word about the valuable work carried out by our volunteers. The success of the fundraising events held in 2023 and 2022, despite the island's challenges has encouraged us to run several more fundraisers in 2024, including so far this year, our collaboration with Elvis' Bar and Restaurant for the Superbowl Event, and a fun Pup Quiz hosted by Topsy Turtle and sponsored by Tito's. Save the date of 11th May for our next Bingo event here at Roy's. The lynchpin of our fundraising efforts, the year-round, newly relocated Second Chances Thrift Store continues to provide us with much of the day-to-day funding needed for the shelter, whilst at the same time providing a genuine service of the supply of new and gently-used donated items to the wider community.
- Since 2013, we have paid, and continue to pay, a monthly shelter management fee to Morlens Veterinary Services. This annualised expenditure, plus some additional shelter maintenance costs represents 34% of AARF's total annual expense for 2023, with veterinary fees for the treatment of AARF animals accounting for another 62%. Thus, only around 4% of the total operating expenses of AARF in 2023 was for non-veterinary related items, and was principally spent on education, advertising and marketing, website maintenance and business licences, including the vital annual fees of maintaining our US-registered company and bank accounts. 2023 returned an operating surplus of around \$11,500, with some \$58,300 of the general fund being spent on vet fees, shelter maintenance and shelter management. It is worth noting that the average cost of our operations runs at around \$5,100 per month, and that does not include the disbursements from the special funds.
- The cost of providing care for Anguilla's animals is, of course, much greater than that that \$58,000 spent from the general fund, and it continues to be supplemented by disbursements from the spay and neuter programme, and other designated funds.
- Moving on to the designated funds – those funds set up for a specific purpose, and not part of the general running costs - in addition to the income of \$72,300 highlighted above as operating income, all of which is used towards the general running of the shelter, the cost of merchandise for resale, business expenses, etc., a further \$96,000 was donated by supporters of specific projects, such as the spay and neuter programme, the West End feeding station, the shelter improvement programme and the education programme. From those combined funds, a total of \$69,100 was disbursed in 2023, the details of which will be given in separate reports. It should also be pointed out that money put into the numerous coin boxes on show in stores and key points throughout the island, and emptied frequently, are put directly into the spay and neuter programme. Also included in the totals noted above, were the proceeds of the the 2023 Spay and Neuter Matching campaign, which generated \$12,400 in this reporting year.

- It can therefore be summarized that a total of \$127,100 was spent in the calendar year 2023 directly on the treatment and care of Anguilla's rescue animals, all thanks to, and on behalf of, the generous support of Anguilla's friends and supporters, and of course, my tireless colleagues on this board. My report demonstrates how much we need; their reports will demonstrate how much we care.

U.S. Director

Together with Suzie Donahue I'm the U.S. Director for the Anguilla Animal Rescue Foundation (aka AARC), which is incorporated in Florida in the United States. Its corporate address is in Nevada.

AARC exists to provide non-profit services and abilities in the USA. By being a recognized U.S. non-profit, AARC can accept donations from US citizens or their proxies that are usually tax-deductible (where applicable by US tax law, by individual).

AARC has a U.S. bank and is recognized by various charities who know we are a non-profit. These include PayPal, PayPal Giving Fund, corporate matching funds and more. For events held on Anguilla, AARC is registered with Stripe and RSVPify to help with fundraising functions.

AARC and AARF want to thank everyone who has sent us donations using checks PayPal, corporate matching and giving funds and other granting services.

Thank you very much for your donations!

It is recorded that we have had a few positions within the Executive Committee that have changed during the year.

According to the bylaws it is the membership that appoints the Executive Committee at the AGM and the term runs from one AGM to the next. If a vacancy occurs during the term it may be filled by the Executive Committee and shall be for the unexpired balance of the term. We have had a few of these during last year and I therefore wish to record that:

- **In the Adoptions Committee Vanessa Croft was the Chair until June, and Fiftin Greggio as of June to the end of the year.**
- **In the Shelter Committee Vanessa Croft was a co-chair until June, together with Suzie Donahue and Johanna Pasila.**
- **As a consequence of Vanessa leaving the Board Aveline Wilson was appointed Member at Large in Vanessa's place in June.**

- **The Secretary of the Board was Natalie Hawkins-Peffer until August, and Elyse Gensolin as of September.**

6. Committee Reports

○ 6.1 Shelter: Suzie Donahue & Johanna Pasila

The Shelter Committee manages the AARF shelter and works closely with the adoptions chair and with Morlens Veterinary Clinic, in which facilities the shelter is located in Sandy Hill. Suzie and I have been co-chairing this committee, and I will give the report.

One of the challenges for many years now has been that the shelter is open six days a week to welcome volunteers and visitors, but AARF has not had the human resources to have continuous presence on all days of the week. In the beginning of the year we had Fiftin and Jordyn, two dedicated volunteers coming in a few days a week each, but we have continued to rely a lot on Morlens, from which we buy veterinary services and that manages the feeding, cleaning and walking of the animals to also represent AARF with visitors and adopters. The whole staff at Morlens is wonderful to work with and take well care of our shelter animals.

I want to take this opportunity to thank each and every staff member of Morlens for all the hard work they do. Not only for AARF, but for the animals on the island in general. The veterinarians Dr. Garry Swanston, Dr. Sade Swanston and Dr. Orissa Singh and the staff members Aarmani, Andrew, Carlos, Dawn and Emil.

In particular Aarmani Connor has done an amazing job representing AARF welcoming shelter visitors, and during 2023 she was assuming more and more responsibility for handling the adoptions. In the fall an idea started taking form to have Aarmani be even more involved in the shelter and adoptions work and in October we started a trial period of Aarmani as the AARF Shelter Manager. As is evident the trial was a success, and as of the beginning of this year Aarmani, in addition to her work at Morlens, is the official AARF Shelter Manager. She is also the one that since last summer has been creating all our shelter and adoptions related social media content for which we continue to receive very good feedback.

At the shelter we always welcome visitors when we are open and we encourage them to spend time with the cats and dogs to help socialize them. Further to the drop-in volunteers we also run different kinds of volunteer programs. In 2023 we did not have a junior volunteer program as we have had in recent years, but we had some other programs. For example, for the second year we welcomed the Animal Advocates from Omololu International School – which program you will hear more about under Education – and at the end of the year we started a

collaboration with the students from Albena Lake-Hodge Comprehensive School Special Educational Needs Unit as part of their program to introduce the students to different future work environments.

The largest program we run at the shelter is still the Med Student Sunday Shift program. For five years now we have had the medical students from St. James School of Medicine come in every Sunday when the shelter and clinic are closed. For an hour or two they play with the puppies and kittens and the bigger dogs get long walks. The program runs seamlessly from year to year with the AARF contact - the so called shift leader - finding a new replacement to take over before finishing school and leaving the island. In 2023 Mackenzie Landers started off as the shift leader, and in the fall Destiny Harris took over. This year we actually felt compelled to increase the cap of the number of students that can volunteer each Sunday from 8 to 10 because of the growing interest. I want to extend a big thank you to all the medical students for everything they do. Not only volunteering on Sundays, but also helping out with transportations for FTFDR and EOPR (a rescue organization in Canada that we have been working with) and fostering and other events and matters where extra hands are often needed.

As Johanna shared, we have had a positive and well organized year working with our veterinarians Dr Sade and Dr Gary Swanston, and Dr Orissa Singh, as well as the staff at Morlens – Aarmani, Andrew, Carlos, Dawn & Emil. A huge thank you to each and every one of these folks who care for our shelter guests with love and compassion. It's not always easy.

We also had a successful Paws for a Cause raffle in January, making almost 6K to be slated for shelter improvements.

Additionally, the Mango Fund, and the West End Fund both assist in caring for dogs and cats in need and we are thankful for your support of these designated funds.

○ **6.2 Adoptions: Suzie Donahue**

As many measure success by numbers, we are pleased to report that in 2023 AARF had a total of 290 adoptions that included 197 dogs/puppies and 93 cats/kittens. Of that number 94 puppies and adult dogs were adopted from AARF by our rescue partner Fly to Freedom.

The simple fact is that there are not enough homes in Anguilla for all the puppies and kittens that come to the shelter. We are grateful to the organizations that we are blessed to work with including not only Fly to Freedom, but also East Ontario Potcake Rescue, that transports and finds homes in Canada as well as Anguilla

Freedom Flyer Dog Rescue who has once again stepped up their rescue efforts.

With Aarmani as our shelter manager we have been able to continue, upgrade & increase our postings on social media Facebook & Instagram. Puppies and kittens available for adoption are posted and updates are current. We also continue to offer low cost adoption fees of \$25 that includes two veterinary exams, initial vaccination, deworming and free spay/neuter surgery.

○ **6.3 Spay-Neuter: Suzie Donahue**

In 2023 AARF sponsored 505 surgeries that included 185 dog spays, 67 dog neuters, 146 cat spays and 107 cat neuters at a cost of approximately \$52,000.

This week as we begin our 21st year of offering free spay/neuter programs, this one ending on April 30th, we are hopeful that the community interest in controlling the unwanted litters of puppies and kittens will continue and we will have a very successful campaign. Please join us in encouraging your friends, neighbors and other pet owners to participate by calling Morlens for a required appointment at 497- 4600.

Over the past 20 years with AARF's education program, as well as social media publicity, we have seen an increase in the number of surgeries each year, however the problem continues. As we did in 2023, we plan to offer 3 free events throughout the year, lasting a total of 4.5 months, as well as continuing our low-cost program. The fees for requested low cost surgeries are \$10 for cats/ \$25 for a dog neuter and \$30 for a dog spay.

We also continue to rely on our first AARF president and retired veterinarian, Dr Patrick Vanterpool who assists AARF in educating, often convincing and frequently providing transportation for surgeries as well as surrenders to the AARF shelter. Dr Vanterpool was responsible for picking up and returning 30% of the completed surgeries in 2023. We are grateful for his continued support.

Thank you to all of you that have continued to donate to this program for the past 20 years with your gifts. We are especially grateful to those that give generous yearly donations Becky and Stuart, Pam and Tom, Sara and the Tofu Fund and to those that continue with their monthly pay pal support.

We also thank those businesses that have our donation boxes available and to those of you that contribute your extra change. To "Frank, Jim and Friends" who play for spay/neuter donations at various restaurants while they are here and to Rick who continues to monitor and collect the funds from our donation box locations.

As Helen Keller said “Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much”! Our “together” includes our veterinarians and staff at Morlens, Dr Patrick Vanterpool, our kind and generous donors, and the participants of our spay/neuter program. Thank you all – we are making a difference!

○ **6.4 Policies & Procedure: Denise Graves**

The Policies and Procedures Committee develops policies and procedures to assist our organization in executing its duties in an ethical and legal manner. We ensure everyone is following the same rules and procedures and that these rules are updated as needed.

Early in 2023 we formed the Policies and Procedures subcommittee consisting of Brigid Arcand, Suzie Donahue and myself, as we felt there was a need to review the by-laws in depth. Upon lengthy review and discussion, we realized there were some redundancies, some items needed further clarification and others which did not meet the intention of bylaws. These ‘moving parts’ that may change from time to time, were removed and a Policies and Procedures document was created and will be stored on the internal AARF shared drive. These procedural documents were created by committee chairpersons and stand alone board member positions such as treasurer. All of these documents were submitted and approved by the P&P subcommittee. Subsequent changes will follow this same route for approval. These procedures will serve as How To Perform the position for new members or existing board members who change roles. The revised bylaws have been approved by the board and have been circulated to the general membership for approval at the AGM.

Additionally, the same subcommittee, worked hand in hand with Counsel Limited to apply for AARF’s Not For Profit Organization status required by Anguilla’s Financial Services Commission. Approval has been granted.

Plans for 2024 are to continue to review all documents as required and to continue following rulings of the government bodies.

○ **6.5 Membership: Aveline Wilson**

New Membership structure.

This year we are excited to introduce a new membership structure which we hope will show you how we are working for the benefit of the cats and dogs of Anguilla. Your commitment to AARF is very important for the animals and benefits our programs like the Spay & Neuter program, the Education program and the Adoption and Fostering programs. We hope this new membership structure will demonstrate our appreciation of the support that has been forthcoming from people, businesses, foundations, and corporations. We could not do this without you!

1. **Members/Subscriber (10 \$ Adults, 25 \$ Family)**
 - a. A newsletter
 - b. Access to exclusive members-only merchandise
2. **Donors (25 - 500\$)**
 - a. As above
 - b. A list on the website for those who wish to have their names known.
 - c. Advance notice of events, especially limited number events.
 - d. For Businesses, Corporations or Foundation Donors, this would include a Letter sized certificate of support for AARF that could be displayed.
3. **Community Gifts (501 - 1500\$)**
 - a. As above
 - b. For larger Business, Corporation or Foundation Community gift we would have their Logos on the website.
 - c. They would be able to use our Logo on their website as advertising of good works.
4. **Leadership Gifts (above 1501\$)**
 - a. All of above
 - b. Have a Biannual Thank You event. A Private event at the house of a Board Member for only Leadership Level and above.
 - c. Private tours of the shelter with a board member and a short appointment to speak to whoever runs the area of most interest to them.

Exclusive Merchandise.

This is still being investigated as one or two ideas have not worked out.

So far we are thinking:

- Pens, pen-notebook set
- Travel mugs, tumblers and coffee mugs,
- Key chains
- Luggage tags
- Jute or cotton tote/beach bags

All items to be as ecologically friendly as possible, featuring natural materials.

Kids Club

Benefits for all levels

- A membership card.
- A sticker for their notebook

Benefits – Junior Level. (up to age 12)

- Access to the shelter
- Reading to the puppies (they have to have a notebook (we will put a sticker on the front)
 - can have stickers for number of books read and go up in rank through the colours Red, Orange, Yellow, Green and Blue – 5 books in each)
 - We mark the books read in their notebook with small round stickers in the ranked colours which we can emboss.
 - Once they have read the 25 books, they will get an engraved dog tag (if we get the machine) or a t-shirt.
 - There is no time limitation, but they have to have current membership to complete the challenge.
 - Books can be teacher recommended (as part of homework) or self selected.
 - Meeting the puppies
 - Meeting the kittens
 - Someone mentioned Birthday Parties (very limited numbers – supervised and paid)

Benefits Senior Level. (Age 12 to 17)

- Access to the shelter
- A program of volunteer hours at the shelter
 - This may include helping the Med students on a Sunday to walk the dogs.
 - Supervising the younger kids reading to the puppies
 - Perhaps help cleaning the cages or communal animal areas.
- The volunteers keep track of their hours – signed off by staff/adult volunteers. If they get a certain number of hours we give them a certificate for 50 hours, 100 hours and 150 hours. This certificate is awarded for the number of hours and the completion of a two page essay detailing their experience. This is official and allows them to use AARF as a reference if needed.
- As steps the first 5 hours they get a red coloured disk – (same range as the Juniors) then 10 hours (orange), 15 hours (yellow), 30 hours (green), to 50 hours (blue and certificate).
- An additional award for each 50 hours could be allowed to shadow the vet or a morning – or something along those lines, depending on what the Vet in question thinks of the idea.
- And they can get a set of Dog Tags (again if we get the engraving machine).

This would be our starting point. Activities can be added to or removed as we find what works and what doesn't.

We should have a flyer made up once details are finalized so that we can give them out at the school educational visits. Membership for kids can be done at either the Shelter or the Thrift store.

○ **6.6 Education: Johanna Pasila**

The Education Committee promotes responsible pet ownership and welfare of animals in Anguilla in line with the objectives of AARF. The aim is to interact with the community and provide helpful information and guidance about how best to care for our pets and the animals around us – with or without homes.

The work includes everything from providing pamphlets and brochures at the shelter and clinic; writing articles for the newspaper and social media; to school visits and other forms of interaction with the community. Such as attending events either to raise awareness for AARF and the work we do or to hold lectures or Q&A sessions. What was interesting to notice this past year is that there seems to be an increasing demand for the latter – information sessions aimed at adults and not only children, which is something we are now brainstorming around for the year ahead of us. Ideally in collaboration with the vets at Morlens.

I want to take this opportunity to thank The Anguillian for their continued support of AARF by letting us run our educational columns free of charge in the weekly newspaper. And I want to thank Ron's Sign Shop for being so wonderfully generous that they have let our Billboards from 2022 stay up for a whole extra year at no cost. Those Billboards continue to provoke needed debate on the animal culture in Anguilla and have in general generate overwhelmingly positive feedback.

The annual school visits have for long been the big yearly undertaking of the committee. Our program strives to talk to all 4th graders in Anguilla every year, this way slowly working our way through all the students - the future pet owners - of the island. This year we visited a total of ten 4th grade classes, which is all the 4th grades of the six public primary schools in Anguilla, plus the international school Omololu. And as always, we were also invited to speak to some of the other classes of some of the schools.

The visits have been a great success. As per an established and functioning concept we talk to one class at the time (usually around 20 students) so that the class can be interactive and there is time to answer all questions. I bring with me a puppy from the shelter that is currently available for adoption, or a kitten – which I did for the first time this year to try to push cat adoptions a little extra. The session takes about an hour and focuses on why an organization like AARF is needed, the work we do and responsible pet care. Like last year I am again happy to report that the general knowledge among the 4th graders on the areas we focus on has improved.

At the request of the Department of Natural Resources I have this year focused extra on the definition of a stray animal and encouraged everyone to have collars

on their pets to ease the work of the DNR in telling which cats - and dogs especially - are strays and which are free roaming pets, as that is the entity in Anguilla that deals with the stray animals.

Another program worth mentioning is the Animal Advocates. For the second year in a row the 7th and 8th grade students at Omololu International School had an extracurricular course at school called the Animal Advocates and arranged by Vanessa Croft. In September I visited the class and talked about AARF's work and on a number of Fridays in October and November the students visited the shelter to learn about shelter volunteering and socialize our shelter animals. This is a really cool course for older children and something that we have now mentioned in the other schools we visit, hoping that other teachers would get inspired to do something similar.

- **6.7 Fundraising Events: Josefin Maestriperi**

2023 has been a great year for AARF fundraising through events considering the global economic climate. We have had a wide variety of events, accommodating every supporter, which is a goal we are planning to achieve this year as well. We have also ventured out to new establishments to host requested favorites such as our Bow Wow Trivia. The First event of 2023 was the Super Bowl Party at Elvis - with thanks to our terrific supporters Brett and Elvis at Elvis's Beach Bar. Later on in the year we had Bingo events, which exceeded our expectations with attendees as well as a wine tasting just before low season at the beautiful Round Rock Estate. Hopefully we will be able to exceed the profits from last year this year, especially as we are already registered to attend the Aurora Marketplace this Saturday as well as Festival Del Mar, which is a fantastic opportunity to gain more exposure for events to come!

- **6.8 Fundraising, Second Chances Thrift Shop: Brigid Arcand**

Second Chances Thrift Shop in the Farrington was open for three mornings a week for the year 2023. Due to a terrific and dedicated volunteer staff, this fundraising arm of AARF runs very smoothly. As a result, donations and sales have increased, as has the awareness of our mission to raise funds for the shelter of cats and dogs in Anguilla.

We have since relocated the shop to the Valley, where our location has us poised to bring in greater revenues for AARF. We also have the space to sell AARF Merchandise and have been doing so since our opening in February. We have garnered enough attention to open five days a week, as opposed to three. Please stop on by if you haven't done so already.

If you are not aware, we have a Facebook page and an Instagram page, managed and handled by our volunteers. Please look for us on social media and like and share our posts.

AARF merchandise is also available for sale at the AARF Shelter located at Morlens Veterinary Clinic, as well as at SeaSpray Boutique at the roundabout above Sandy Ground. Pam Miller at SeaSpray is instrumental in selling our hats, t-shirts, bumper stickers and more. Thank you to Pam for helping spread the word about AARF.

Once again, I'd like to throw a big happy shout out to all of our volunteers for their hard work and dedication to making the shop an ongoing success. Their creativity, generous enthusiasm and positive attitudes make the shop fun and innovative, despite our limitations, and keep the shoppers coming in the door.

Also, another thank you is due to the community that keeps us in donations, business, and laughter.

○ **6.9 Communications: Mark Baumwell**

Webmaster/IT services

The new web site at www.aarf.ai has information, bios, stories and other content.

I modify the site as needed and perform IT related things such the site's domain infrastructure, custom AARF emails, and more.

Our social media pages are run by very dedicated AARF and Morlens people. They do such great work by publishing excellent materials on a regular and timely basis.

Questions or comments.? Email us at aarinfo@aarf.ai

Communications

The Communications Chair oversees AARF's public face to the world as we communicate on social media, our web site, emails and printed materials. But we have many communications portals and we have many contributors who autonomously have the voice of AARF

Social media platforms include:

Two Facebook pages.

- The main AARF page: "aarfanguilla"
- Our Second Chances thrift shop: "aarfthriftshop"

Three Instagram pages:

- Our adoptions page at "aarfadoptions". It's a vital page because it has up to date photos and details on pets available for adoption.
- The mainstream Instagram page at "aarfanguilla"
- Not to be left out, Second Chances has an account too at "aarfthriftshop"

We have a mailing list powered by MailChimp. It has news and stories. Email us at aarinfo@aarf.ai to get added to the list.

We have other public communications

- Printed materials of all kinds
- Public events
- School visits
- And more

7. Election of the Officers and Members of the Executive Committee

I note that the AARF bylaws provide that the membership shall at each AGM elect the members of the Executive Committee (i.e. the AARF Board), which shall be responsible for the management of the affairs of AARF until the next AGM.

Members in good standing can submit their nominations before the AGM. The deadline set for nominations for the 2024 Executive Committee was 1 March 2024, and the nominations received were the following:

President: Brigid Arcand (new)

Vice President: Josefin Maestriperi (new)

Secretary: Kelly Clark (new)

Treasurer: Estelle Slade

At-Large (2): Aveline Wilson & Elyse Gensolin (new)

Directors: Suzie Donahue & Denise Graves (permanent position)

US Directors: Suzie Donahue & Mark Baumwell (permanent position)

It was recorded that all nominees have accepted their nominations and to our knowledge meet the required qualifications in the bylaws.

It was recorded that there were no objections to the election of the candidates as nominated.

It was recorded that the Officers and the Executive Committee were unanimously elected by the meeting.

It was also noted that as per the bylaws the past president will serve as an ex officio member of the Board in the following year.

8. Other Business

- **Appointment of the Chairs of the Standing Committees**

The AGM having now elected the Executive Committee for 2024 the new President can appoint the Chairs of the nine Standing Committees, to be approved by the newly elected Executive Committee. As the bylaws allow for it, we usually do this during the AGM.

- Policy and Procedures: Denise Graves
- Membership: Aveline Wilson
- Education: Elyse Gensolin
- Communications: Mark Baumwell
- [Adoption: NO CANDIDATE]
- Fundraising Events: Josefin Maestriperi
- Shelter: Suzie Donahue and Johanna Pasila
- Spay and Neuter: Suzie Donahue
- AARF Thrift Shop, Second Chances: Brigid Arcand

It is recorded that the Executive Committee approved the President's appointment of the Chairs for the Standing Committees.

It is also recorded that the Standing Committee Chairs left the Adoption Chair open.

○ **Approval of the revised Bylaws**

As Denise reported under Policies & Procedure, we have worked on revising the AARF bylaws and in the January meeting of the Executive Committee the Board unanimously approved the revised bylaws. As Denise reported the changes are non-controversial as the aim was merely to sanitize the bylaws and align them with current practice.

Now as per the bylaws a resolution to make, alter or rescind the bylaws of AARF shall be made by the Executive Committee, and the revised Bylaws are then brought to a General Meeting of the membership for approval.

The draft of the revised bylaws was circulated to the membership with the Notice for the AGM and with the subsequent reminder and a hard copy is available here at the meeting.

It was recorded that the revised bylaws were approved by the meeting and will be in force as of now. The move to accept was made by Denise Graves and seconded by Brigid Arcand.

9. Question & Answer Session

There was a question about the billboards and if they could move to new locations. This question having been discussed over the year, it was made known that the billboards are stationary and the artwork is still good enough to leave as they are, where they are.

There was a question about the New Membership structure. It was asked whether the membership was strictly cash donation based or in kind. "Either" was the answer given.

It was asked whether a third international organization (like Fly To Freedom) had been introduced over the year to which Suzie Donahue assured that we have not introduced any new partnerships and continue to work with the international organizations mentioned in Suzie's Adoptions report.

10. Adjournment

The Meeting was adjourned at 6:30pm .