

Puppy School Annual Report 2024



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This report has been produced to summarise the key developments and achievements within Puppy School Ltd during the year 2024. It is intended as an information document and should not be reproduced or shared without express permission from Puppy School Ltd
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Review of the year

By Gwen Bailey, Founder & Director of Puppy School

A year of growth and new developments

New website working well

With our updated training and video coaching programme now providing the best training possible for new trainees, and our new website working really well for us, this was our year to begin diversifying into new areas of growth to extend our reach. With that in mind, we started the year with a renewed determination to extend our marketing reach (more later).

In the early part of the year, we finished putting the final touches to 'The Puppy Club' – an exclusive part of our new website accessible only to those people who book on our classes. This has a week-by-week section with additional info and videos on techniques they learn in class as well as The Good Puppy Pages that contain a wealth of information on training and raising a puppy. The Puppy Club gives our classes more professionalism and is a great asset for our tutors to advertise to help give them an extra edge over competitors.

Training and Behaviour Team

Early in the year, our newly created Training and Behaviour Projects Group, which we put together to create content to help even more puppies and owners and to reach new markets, got to work. We started with updating and checking the intellectual property on 80 pages of behaviour/training information from the Our Family Dog website that we were kindly offered by the owner who was closing it down. These pages of great content, including all meta tags and other SEO data that helped to make them so successful at being found on the web, went live on our website on 28th March and the number of visits to our website grew steadily for some months afterwards, and have remained high, as a result.

The team then began work on resources, such as the new Weigh-Scale video, and cpd materials for veterinary practice staff, with a view to launching our new Puppy Friendly Practice scheme next year. Targeting veterinary staff with high quality information helps both puppies whose lives might be improved as a result, and also Puppy School's reputation and standing among the profession, leading to more referrals to our classes and possibly more interested veterinary staff wishing to join us.

Infrastructure improvements

We've worked on several improvements to our infrastructure, including a new efficient email system with @puppyschool.co.uk addresses that doesn't lose emails and works properly all the time. We also had all our certificates redesigned to match our new website branding, together with top and tail designs for any videos we might make in the future to make them look more professional.

This year we updated the PS Manual, incorporating the new puppy greetings syllabus changes and making it gender-neutral by replacing he's and him's with them and they. It also incorporates the new discount offer in the Natures Menu advert at the back and this should be printed and ready by the end of December with a view to launching the new sponsors offer to PS tutors just in time for the New Year.

Branded tutor websites

We also released our brand new individual Puppy School websites for tutors. This gives an option for tutors to buy a ready-made, fully functioning website as low cost. These sites mirror the branding of the main Puppy School site and have an automatic booking function built in that is connected to the Puppy School central booking system. Purpose-built websites can be very expensive, but ours are available at a lower cost to tutors than the 'do-it-yourself' options that are so time-consuming to set up. An online presence is so essential to bookings and this new system means that tutors can quickly get started with a website presence that will start working for them instantly and very effectively.

Tailored courses and conference

2024 was a busy year for Puppy School CPD courses. We started in April with a webinar presentation 'Because You're Worth It' by industry business coach Gretta Ford which was made available to the Puppy School family free of charge. We ran two puppy-focused behaviour courses in Spring and Autumn, presented by certified behaviourist and long-standing Puppy School tutor, Nicole Harris, together with live online Q&A sessions with both Nicole and experienced long-term tutor, Claire Luscombe. At the end of June, we ran our amazing 2-day Puppy School Conference - more about that later.



Endings and new beginnings

We ran two tutor training courses, with 6 attendees in Spring and 7 attendees in Autumn, giving a total of 13 new trainees this year who will add to our numbers around the UK.

Sadly for Puppy School, we lost our longest-serving tutor, Delia Graham, who has emigrated to Australia to be with her children and their families. Delia ran Puppy School puppy classes in Leicestershire for 22 years. We are so grateful to have had Delia's expertise and friendship with us for so many years and we wish her much happiness in her new life.

Zoo training

In September, all of Puppy School's Regional Manager team (14 of us) travelled to Paignton Zoo in Torquay for an incredible two day course teaching consent-based handling skills to monkeys! This was a great team bonding exercise as well as sharpening up our training skills and we had a lovely time with some hairy and very intelligent learners as well as with excellent course leader, Jo Mason.

Puppy Greetings Upskilling

While we were all together in Torquay, we took the opportunity to do a puppy greetings upskilling practical for the Regional Managers too which was a precursor to the practicals held for regional teams across the country in the Autumn. These practicals followed on from an online upskilling session on puppy greetings for all the

Puppy School family in October run by Louise Otter, Claire Luscombe and Gwen Bailey. This has meant that everyone has had the opportunity to learn from others to further supplement their understanding of how this exercise should be run and progressed during the 6 weeks of the Puppy School course.

Also in October, Louise and Gwen presented a 'Why puppy greetings are better than puppy play' lesson at the British Veterinary Nursing Association Congress, part of our Puppy Friendly Practice initiative and to get the message out that greetings really are a better way to begin socialisation than play - this was very well received by the veterinary nurses who attended and who viewed the recording later.

New Happy Handling classes

And, finally, to end this year on a flourish, we held the first two training courses for tutors for our new additional course, Happy Handling, written and taught by Louise Otter. This course aims to teach owners how to teach consent-based handling to their dogs for routine procedures/equipment such as nail clipping, ear drops, stethoscopes, injections etc (more on p 14).

Once tutors have passed some competency testing, we will be launching the first ever consent-based handling courses for puppy owners in the UK. Both of our tutor-training courses were fully booked, and we hope these will become a very useful addition to our current Puppy School classes.

Key Puppy School Statistics

Total numbers

At the end of 2024, Puppy School comprises of 72 full tutors (including RMs) and 38 associate tutors all teaching Puppy School, Older Puppy School, Puppy University and SuperPup courses. We have 12 resting tutors/associates (those not currently active, either on maternity leave or taking a break). We have 13 provisional tutors and provisional associates currently working on their correspondence course.

New tutors and associates

We had new 7 tutors and 7 new associate tutors train with us during 2024 and we have several keen new applicants waiting to undertake their tutor training course in Autumn 2025. Congratulations to those who managed to complete their correspondence course this year and best of luck to those who are in progress of completing their training.

A big, warm Puppy School welcome to:

Sally Brown; Nikki McLeod; Angela Rainey; Sorrel Beth Puxty; Beck Wiles; Jenni Baillie; Kay Webb; Izzy Hansford; Glenda King; James Morgan; Dana Fairfield; Angelika Berndt; Paige Clark

Puppy numbers

Bookings this year were still lower than expected due to the continued 'bust' effect after the boom of puppy numbers during the pandemic. Hopefully this is coming to an end now - numbers began to pick up in the latter part of the year. We continue to be affected by the decline in the UK economy but we hope for better things next year. The number of puppies that came through our doors in 2024 was 4,858 (as of 24/11/24). This brings the total number of puppies which have passed through the hands of Puppy School tutors to approximately 111,000 during the 21 years we have been running. Helping this number of puppies and their owners towards more positive training is an incredible achievement and one that we can all be really proud to be part of. Thank you to all the amazingly professional Puppy School tutors and associates involved.

Puppy Centuries

A large number of our tutors trained over 100 puppies this year.

Huge congratulations to:

Kelly Kane, Loiuise and Neal Otter, Frankie Lees, Louise Williamson, Catherine Tomlinson, Amanda Childs, Eleanor McCall, Karen Hobbs, Tammy Dwight, Claire McKnespiey, Carole Carruth, Karen Boyce, Alice Crick, Lottie Hanks, Claire Luscombe, Cat Le Chevalier

Puppy School Top Tutors 2024

Within our wonderful hub of hard-working tutors at Puppy School, there are five tutors who stand out for training the most puppies/owners in 2024. They are:

🐾 **Kelly Kane and team** at Puppy School Lancaster – a staggering 354 puppies trained

🐾 **Louise and Neal Otter and team** at Surrey and South London Dog Training and Behaviour – 244 puppies trained

🐾 **Frankie Lees and team** at Puppy School Plymouth - 210 puppies trained

🐾 **Louise Williamson** at South Coast Dog Training – 203 puppies trained

🐾 **Catherine Tomlinson and team** in Bridgewater, Taunton and Highbridge, Somerset – 159 puppies trained

Fantastic 9th Puppy School Conference!

Learning and relaxing

Puppy School's 9th biennial conference was held this year in the beautiful Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire in June this year where there is room to stretch out and run our dogs as well as learn in a comfortable environment. It was one to remember with 82 tutors and guests and 63 dogs in attendance but with no cross words, no growls or upsets.

Our conference is an absolute highlight for many of our tutors, associates and guests alike as it's an opportunity to gather with like-minded professionals, catch up with friends, have some fun and to top up on some continued professional development while learning from some of the best experts in our field. There is never a dull moment and we were lucky to have had good weather all weekend, allowing us to train outside in lovely settings.

Amazing speakers and content

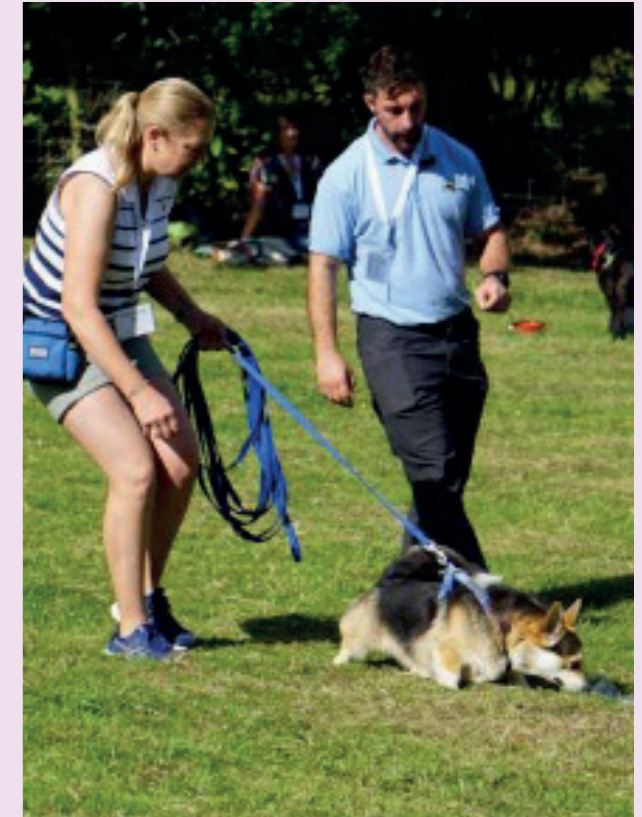
We had some brilliant speakers this year with some really interesting practical

sessions where dogs could stretch their legs and use their brains!

Our superb guest speaker line up included workshops and lectures on Lost Dog Tracking with Claire Brown from North K9, Training Anti-poaching Dogs with Sandra Raw from Worcester Dogs, UK Mantrailing from Jason Cortis, Natures Menu updates and quiz with Mel Sainsbury, ACE Freework with Sarah Fisher (although, sadly, Sarah couldn't be with us and so our own Becky Howe stepped in to brilliantly fill the slot), and a talk all about the power of personal branding from professional photographer Anastasia Jobson.

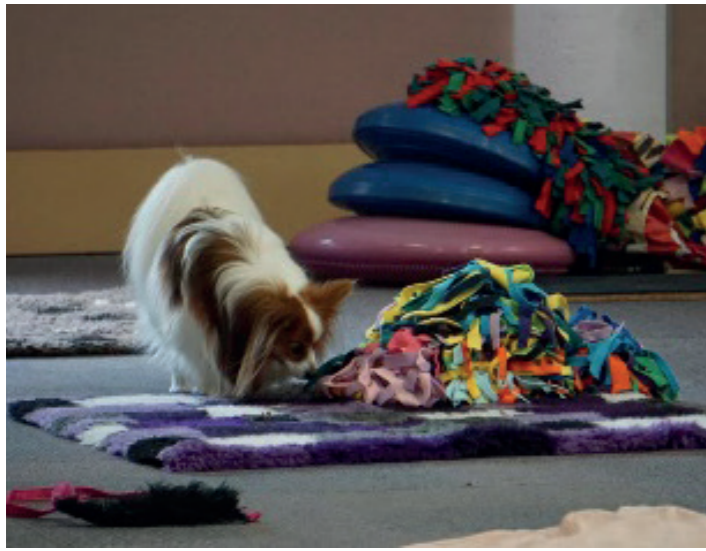
We are lucky enough to have some incredible expertise and talent within the Puppy School family, and our in-house speaker line-up included Trick Training with Louise Otter, Canicross with Cat Le Chevalier, Taking Care of Yourself with Chrissie Pargeter, and Games in the Woods to round off the weekend with Vicki Watts.

Our conferences are an excellent place for our tutors and guests to enhance



their own learning and develop their career professional development. Whether that is experiencing an introduction to something new, building upon existing skills or developing techniques that can be used within their own practice, it is what helps to make us better and keeps us up-to-date with the latest ideas and practices. All done within the framework of a safe and fun learning environment which makes it ideal for people of at all stages of their learning journey.





“We’re going to the ZOO, ZOO, ZOO …..”



Exclusive opportunity

For two days in September, Puppy School's 14 Regional Managers and Founder Gwen Bailey, headed to Paignton Zoo, Torquay to embark upon a two day of animal training working with some of the Zoo's animals. We were lucky enough, and honoured, to be given some of their monkeys to train.

Led by experienced Certified Animal Behaviourist and zoo training expert, Jo Mason (Educating Animals), together with the keepers of Paignton Zoo, we worked with Hamadrya Baboons, Diana Monkeys and Sulawesi Black Crested Macaques

preferences were an important factor for achieving success.

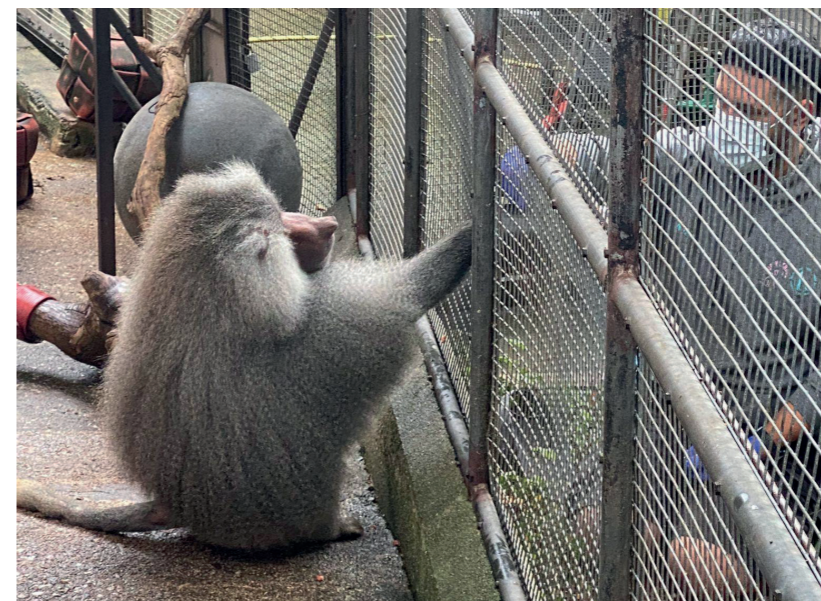
The Hamadrya Baboons, Diana Monkeys and Sulawesi Black Crested Macaques were taught various things that could be developed and used for consent-based handling, such as putting their arm through a drainpipe and holding the bar at the end to eventually be used for giving injections or taking blood draws. This type of training is also useful for keeping these intelligent animals mentally stimulated and is something that is easy for keeping to continue with once the process is started.

Fruit and nut

By using reward-based methods (and lots of peanuts, vegetables and fruit!), our team were able to shape and capture the desired behaviour that they wanted for every animal, adjusting their training plans to build success without compromising the welfare of each primate. We wrote a training plan for each animal (a legal requirement for training exotic animals) as well as notes on progress achieved, which were shared

Monkey business

Each primate species had a desired goal set by their keepers, something that could be used to enhance their welfare and wellbeing. We needed to consider, plan, assess and evaluate for each primate we were working with. Just like puppies that attend our classes, individual personalities and traits, as well as reward



Finding the perfect balance of interactive workshops where attendees can work with their own dogs if they choose, seminars and presentations to listen and learn from as well as fun games and quizzes, is always at the forefront of our minds when arranging the conference. We are already thinking ahead to 2026 and how we can make it even better! Not an easy task with feedback like “Fantastic, loved it. Loved the variety between dog training content and business support content”, “Really enjoyable, educational, and fun” and “had the best weekend and didn’t want it to end!”

Celebrating success

Our conference also gives us time to jointly celebrate our successes and this year, we had some exceptional long service awards given out, including a 20-year award going to Catherine Tomlinson, two 15-year awards going to Nicole Harris and Sam Davies, and three 10-year awards going to Debbie Taylor, Rachel Alexander, Kim Hawley and Alice Crick! That’s a combined total of 90 years of puppy training by just 7 tutors – incredible! All our tutors across the country work so hard and we took this opportunity to thank and congratulate everyone for their efforts this year.

Outside influences

This year, we opened up our conference to a few like-minded guests from outside the Puppy School family and welcomed them to share the expertise and make new contacts. It is important to forge connections and work with other professionals so this will now be something that we will do for future conferences.

Thank you

We would like to give a huge thank you to our sponsors, Natures Menu. Their continued support means we can deliver a fantastic conference at cost price every two years and we are very grateful for it. A special thank you goes Tug-E-Nuff for their continued support and for donating such wonderful thank you gifts.

We would also like to thank all our guest speakers, Claire Brown of K9 North, Sandra Raw of Worcester Dogs, Jason Cortis of Worcester Dogs & Mantrailing UK, Louise Otter of Surrey and South London Dog Training & Behaviour, Melanie Sainsbury of Natures Menu, Becky Howe of Puppy School Tiverton Dog Training, Vicki Watts of The Doghouse Fit Train Fun, Anastasia Jobson and Chrissie Pargeter of Puppy School Sussex, and, of course, Sarah Smith and Alice Crick for all their brilliant organising and planning as well as all our lovely volunteers, and, finally, all the people and dogs who attended. Thank you for making this year’s conference one of the best yet!

with the keepers at Paignton Zoo. We were all amazed at how fast they learnt when compared with dogs and how inventive they were!

This is the first time our Regional Managers have all been away together as a group and it was a huge success. Not only did we get to put our training skills and experience to good use, but we also learnt new things too as you always do when you get the chance

to work with animals other than dogs. The course was expertly guided by Jo Mason who has a lot of experience in the zoo world, and who made it fun for us too. The zoo staff were very welcoming and gave us access to other areas that the public don't usually see. We even got to feed the giraffes. To make the experience even more special, we all shared a large house and so it was a great team bonding exercise too. Overall, it was an incredible experience that we will never forget.



"It was one of the most unbelievable, emotional, educational and heartwarming time of my life..."
Amanda Childs, Regional Manager for Surrey and Wiltshire.

"...working with Baboons has been an activity that I never realised I had been craving. Knowing I will have helped to teach (Baboon) a new skill that will help improve his welfare and further enrich his life is just heartwarming."
Debbie Taylor, Regional Manager for North Wales and Mid-West.

"Being part of an experience that pushed the training skills of a group of awesome Puppy School Regional Managers to the next level has been one of the most unforgettable and humbling experiences of my life."
Chrissie Pargeter, Regional Manager for Hampshire and Sussex.



Puppy Greetings - Upskilling

By Gwen Bailey, Founder & Director of Puppy School

Greeting success

The puppy greetings exercise (to replace puppy play) that we rolled out across our tutor network early in 2023 has been working extremely well and tutors report that puppies are calmer and have much better responses to other puppies and dogs as a result – essentially it is a much better way to start a puppy's socialisation journey than by encouraging frantic puppy play in a fairly barren environment.

An upskilling programme

This Autumn, we implemented a programme designed to upskill all of those running

classes with a view to sharing the knowledge and improved techniques we've learned and accumulated since we introduced this exercise.

We shared knowledge such as just how important it is to have many (10 – 20) 'smelly' items on the floor to keep puppies calm and focused rather than have them thinking solely about the other puppy, and to keep those smells fresh and changing during the weeks of the course. Asking owners to bring in bedding from their pets as well as tutors taking in things such as horse hair or sheep's fleece or their dog's beds from home all helps to keep puppies focussed so that meetings with each other, when they occur, are polite and can easily be distracted back to sniffing after a few seconds.



Online and practical upskilling

While on our zoo trip and with all of Puppy School's Regional Managers in one place, we took the opportunity to do some practical upskilling with discussion with some of the puppies that had been through Claire Luscombe's classes. Claire kindly booked her hall and organised the puppies, allowing us to get some rare practical hands-on experience with the techniques we routinely teach to owners.

In October, we held an online zoom webinar and discussion for all of the Puppy School family. This session, led by Louise Otter, Claire Luscombe and Gwen Bailey, was an opportunity to show and discuss videos we had collected and to talk about ways to improve.

The online training was then followed up by practical courses around the regions, often with a few local regions joining together. This programme of upskilling has been invaluable in making sure all tutors are working to the same standard as well as sharing valuable insights about a new process that is proving to be so successful.


Now that we know the puppy greetings exercise is so much better for puppies than puppy play in class, we are keen to spread the word. To this end, Louise Otter and Gwen Bailey presented 'Why puppy greetings are better than puppy play' at the British Veterinary Nursing Association Congress in October, which was very well received, and there are plans for a webinar for the Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors in the new year.

From **Gwen Bailey**, Puppy School's founder, who attended the practical run by the 3 regions - Gloucestershire/Oxfordshire, West Midlands/Worcestershire and Monmouth/Mid and South Wales *"So good to see so many of the PS family at once and for a very useful purpose. There was lots of opportunity to practice with lovely puppies and to share experiences and thoughts."*

From **Becky Stickland**, PS Associate tutor in Gloucestershire: *"A wonderful evening spent to upskill my knowledge on greetings in general for puppies. We met some wonderful owners who were all so dedicated to wanting the best for their puppies. It was great to see so many of our wonderful tutors in one room, a wealth of knowledge at hand. Thank you, I feel my skills in explaining and coaching owners has improved!"*



Dates for your diary

 **1 March - 3 May 2025**

Behaviour 6 course webinars available

 **Autumn (date tbc) 2025**

Puppy Tracking with Claire Brown

 **15 April 2025**

Gretta Ford Webinar

 **7 Sept - 27 Nov 2025**

Autumn Tutor Training Course

- 6/7 Sept - In-person intro wk/end
- 9 Sept - 25 Nov - online lessons
- 1-3 Dec - In-person practical course

 **18 - 19 July 2025**

Puppy Problems? A Structured Approach
In-person, Gloucestershire

 **13-14 November 2025**

Happy Handling tutors course

 **1 Sept - 3 Nov 2025**

Behaviour 1 course webinars available

Happy Handling - new course for tutors

The first of its kind

In October and November this year, we ran the first ever tutor training courses for our brand new 6-week course for owners called Happy Handling. This course, written and taught by Louise Otter, aims to provide tutors with a course for owners to teach their dog's to accept or decline handling and is especially useful for those procedures that need trust and cooperation, such as ear/eye drops, being given an injection, having their heart listened to with a stethoscope.

Why give a dog a choice

This innovative course is based on the consent-based approach used for zoo animals and we are proud to be one of the only organisations leading the field to offer it to dog owners via our tutor network. We feel puppies and dogs will really benefit from this approach and hope to spread the word that there is an alternative to forceful methods to get routine husbandry and veterinary procedures done, thereby increasing trust and bonding between dog and owner.

Giving a dog a choice when being handled affords much more cooperation than they give when forced

to submit to procedures and can really help lower stress levels for routine husbandry or veterinary procedures. Puppy School is very proud to be at the forefront of this movement and Puppy School will become the first organisation running such classes for owners of pet dogs. Happy Handling will be a lovely course for tutors to teach as well as helping improve the dog-owner bond as well as being very beneficial for the dogs on the receiving end of the training.



Courses in the new year

The tutor courses were held in Gloucestershire and Surrey and trainees brought their own dogs for the practice sessions. Everyone attending the course went away with homework exercises and will need to show competency in all areas before they can begin running the courses. We have had rosettes made, sorted out certificates, lesson plans and notes for owners, and we hope to see our first Happy Handling courses run early in 2025.



From **Alice Crick**, PS tutor in Gloucestershire: "What a fantastic opportunity to showcase cooperative care in husbandry behaviours. I'm looking forward to hosting this course for specific professionals in the field such as local vet nurses and groomers. Thank you, Louise, it was fantastic course, really well run with lots of time for practical's as well as comprehensive notes ready to roll out with the syllabus"

From **Debbie Taulor**, RM and PS tutor in Mid Cheshire: "The Happy Handlers course has been invaluable for me. I never thought I would be able to teach my very busy spaniel how to be still! However, with Louise's help, we were able to make huge progress and I am now able to use these skills to coach my clients going forward."



From **Melanie Matthews**, PS tutor in Buckinghamshire: "This course is going to be so beneficial to the welfare of dogs, not just when they're being handled but also in other situations because owners are learning to read their dog's body language and listen to what they're saying, rather than ploughing on regardless".



Marketing and Social Media - a new beginning

A new strategy

After many years of relying on networking and any national marketing opportunity that 'came up', this year was the first time Puppy School has ventured into the world of more purposeful marketing to get our name out there and become more recognised for the incredible quality of our tutors.

Experienced insight

We employed the services of Marketing Consultant, Jane Aitken, who helped us set up the Ad words campaigns on social media, brought more strategy to our marketing, prepared a marketing toolkit for tutors and helped us with the SEO for our website. Charlie Houghton, our new Social Media Manager, also made a huge impact this year, not only making a sustained impact throughout the year via Facebook and Instagram, but also launching on LinkedIn and providing our tutors with amazing social media knowledge via her webinars.

- We've posted over 140 posts on Instagram, including 39 reels, and 115 pictures on Facebook.
- Ran 2 giveaways (3 if you include the Tug-E-Nuff collaborative one, 4 if you include the upcoming Christmas one) – a first for Puppy School
- Launched on LinkedIn – over 4,000 "impressions" so far (LinkedIn's name for "reach")
- Facebook reach is up 58% on the previous year
- Instagram reach is up 464% on last year
- Newsworthy Facebook posts regularly reach 3-4k every month

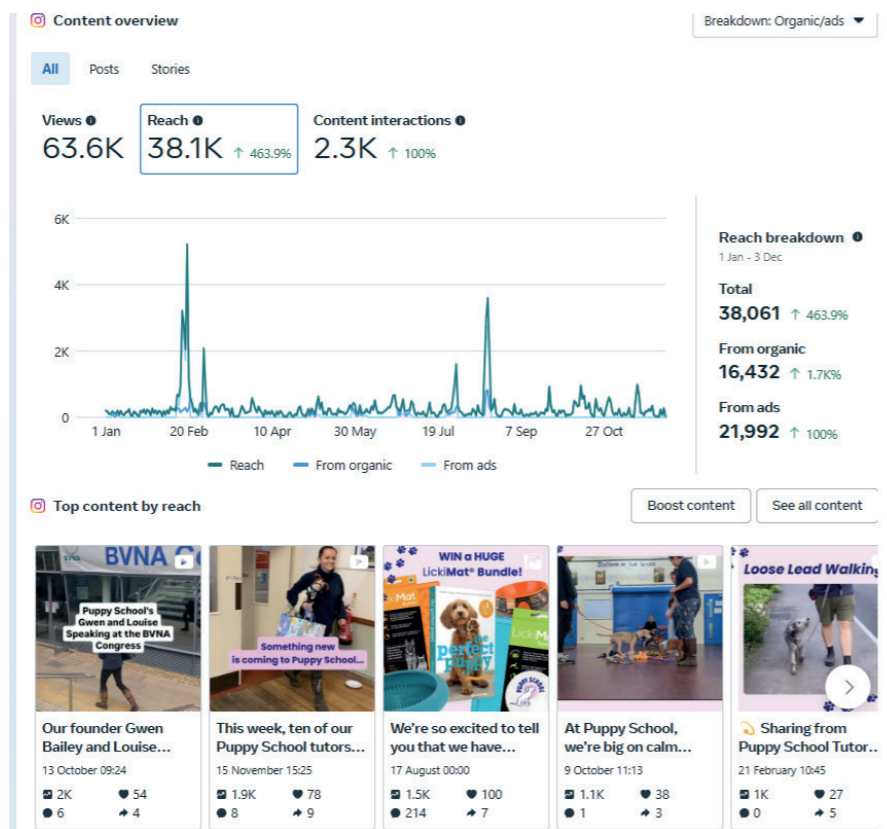
Increasing our numbers

In addition, the behaviour team and other interesting activities, such as the conference and making videos and other content for veterinary professionals, have provided much exciting news to talk about on the socials. This together with a paid advertising campaign to recruit new tutors, the release of the 80 pages of content for our website from the Our Family Dog site in March, and posting regular blogs on our website have brought a much-



needed boost to the numbers visiting our website which has been sustained throughout the year.

We know that, this year, puppy numbers around the UK are still low due to the sustained effects of the economy and the 'bust' following the 'boom' of the pandemic, but we hope, next year, these will start to diminish and, with a further sustained approach to marketing and development, our booking numbers will begin to rise.

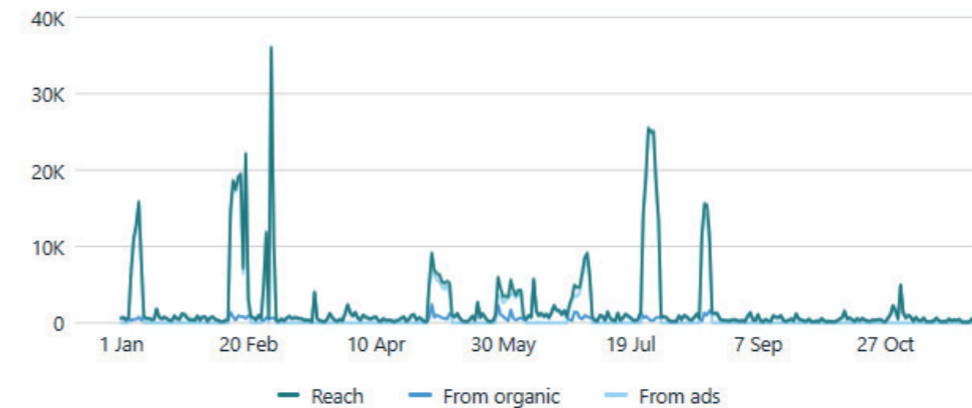


Content overview

Breakdown: Organic/ads

All Reels Videos Live Posts Stories

Views 71.2K Reach 400.4K ↑ 57.8% 3-second views 13.4K ↓ 4.1% 1-minute views 254 ↓ 58.2% Content interactions 6.1K ↓ 16.5% Watch time 3d 16h



Reach breakdown

1 Jan - 3 Dec

Total 400,369 ↑ 57.8%

From organic 66,791 ↑ 29.2%

From ads 339,215 ↑ 78.6%

Top content by reach

Boost content

See all content

Exciting times ahead plans for 2025

by Gwen Bailey, Director of Puppy School

2025 will be a year where we concentrate on growing our tutor numbers through direct targeting of likely candidates alongside further national marketing.

The launch of the first cpd course for veterinary practice staff in our Puppy Friendly Practice series is planned early next year and we will work on other projects that can help bring the work of puppy school to the attention of the public while helping to educate puppy owners everywhere.

We also hope to produce an exciting new additional course, in the style of SuperPup and Happy Handling, later in the year - more on this to follow.

In addition, we have an exciting programme of cpd courses for the Puppy School family lined up, with a webinar with Behaviourist and Business Consultant, Gretta Ford, in April, a 'Puppy Problems' live face-to-face 2 days training with puppies and their owners with 3 of Puppy School's most experienced behaviourists in July, a puppy tracking course with Claire Brown in September/October, another Happy Handling training course in November, and, of course, our regular two online behaviour course in the Spring and Autumn.

2024's Tutors Moments and Achievements



Emily Rutherford with Bailey (above), her Working Cocker Spaniel, achieved her first ever placement in Agility with 2nd and 4th place at Crufts this year.

Melanie Matthews, Puppy School tutor in Buckinghamshire reared her last litter of puppies for the Hearing Dogs for Deaf People this year with Working Cocker Spaniel Tilly (top right). This is her final litter of puppies for the organisation in March and has now retired. Tilly recently obtained two ACE scores in her first Talking Dogs Rally competition and scored 202 out of 210 in the Level 1 category and 201 out of 210 in the Level 1 Veteran category.

Gwen Bailey with rescue Vizsla, Lilli (right), passed the Grade Three Field Test (with The Gundog Club). Lilli has passed every grade with distinction. Gwen's other Vizsla Otto passed Grade 4 last year.

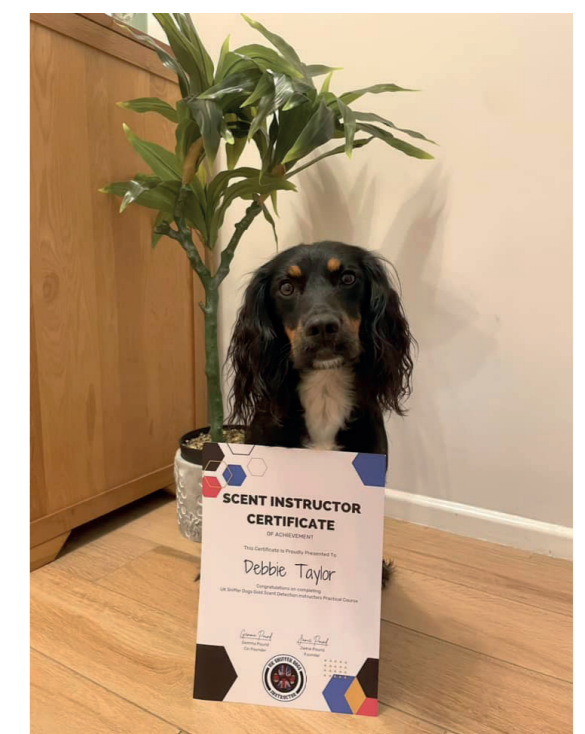
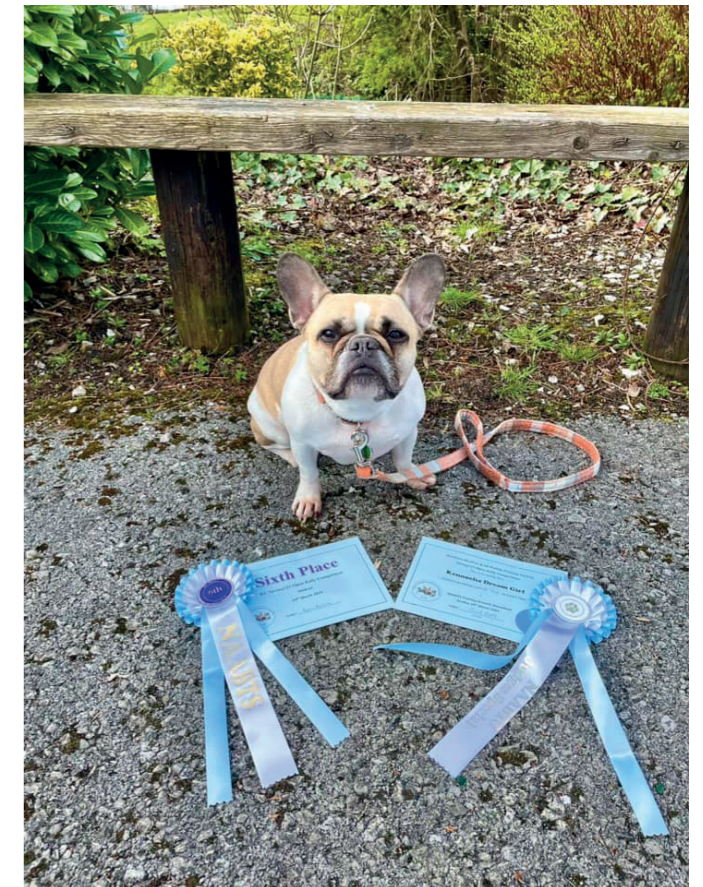


Becky Howe qualified as an Animal Centred Educator Advanced Tutor with Sarah Fisher. Vicki Watts is also now a qualified ACE trainer and now has her own venue in Somerset where she operates her classes from. Well done, Becky and Vicki.

Cheryl Holden competed her first ever Detection Dog Trials competition with cockapoo Fidget, and took second place. (The lovely Fidget, sitting very still, pictured bottom left)

Debbie Taylor's French Bulldog, Chloe (right), won out of level 1 in Rally and has been placed, 1st, 5th and 6th and Debbie are looking forward to taking part in some level 2 competitions in the new year.

Debbie's Working Cocker Spaniel, Sofie (bottom right), has achieved her Bronze and Silver Hoopers. Sofie is also now trained to UK Sniffer Dogs gold level and has been trained on four different scents, water searches and people searches.



Frankie Lees (pictured right), Registered Veterinary Nurse and Puppy School tutor, was a finalist for the BVNA (British Veterinary Nursing Association) awards this year for her article in the Vet Nursing Journal all about cognitive dysfunction syndrome in cats.

Sarah Broomfield (below) won the 'Highly Commended Dog Walker of the Year' Award at the Animal Star Awards (Southern Region).



Sarah Smith completed a Level 1 Mantrailing qualification with her Siberian Husky Milo (below with Sarah behind!) in April this year. Sarah also completed all four levels for the Association of Pet Dog Trainers Good Companion Awards with her Husky Nala (bottom left). Sarah started this course in 2023 and finished the last two levels in 2024.



Sarah Owen is pleased to announce that her Affenpinscher, Louis, (right) passed his assessment to become a certified therapy dog with Therapy Dog Training UK. Sarah has since become a trainer and an assessor for the organisation.

Sally Hammond competed in her first National Nosework Association trial at Malvern College with her Golden Retriever, Milo (below), and came away with a winner's medal. Sally and Milo started doing Scentwork online during COVID.

Imogen Haley is also pleased to announce that her French Bulldog, Albert, (bottom right) has also become a certified therapy dog with Therapy Dog Training UK.

Congratulations everyone, what a successful year!





Busy and exciting ...

By Sarah Smith, Puppy School's Operations Manager

2024 has been a busy and exciting year for Puppy School HQ and as always, I am thankful to be part of a team of incredibly hard-working people who see that priorities, new developments and the day to day running of things are delivered.

This year has seen even more exciting projects for Puppy School as well as welcoming back some firm favourites, like the conference, so a busy year for me behind the scenes. We delivered two tutor training courses this year for new trainee tutors, one starting in March and one in September. The course takes a big effort from many people in terms of the training offered due to the level of support and expertise it delivers, so a huge thank you to everyone involved.

In June, we enjoyed the Puppy School conference and celebrated meeting back up with members of the Puppy School family. The conference is always a highlight and this year's didn't disappoint – even with an unavoidable last-minute change to the line up (Sarah Fisher is back on her feet and was sorry to have not been with us). With over 80 attendees and 60 dogs, it was again a great way to learn and celebrate all things dog. I've not got too many grey hairs from it being my first one managing every aspect!

New for this year was the introduction of the Happy Handling course for tutors. Working alongside Louise Otter who developed and lead this, I organised the two tutor courses and helped ensure lesson plans and other resources were available as well as working on

the necessary infrastructure for the central booking system and Puppy School website pages. Having attended one of the courses myself with my Husky, Milo, I'm looking forward to completing my assessment videos and offering this as a course to clients.

Another new aspect for this year for tutors was the upskilling of the Puppy Greetings we offer in class. This required a co-ordinated effort to ensure online training access as well as practical access for tutors, along with updating resources (cue cards, lesson plans, handouts, manual). This meant a lot of proof-reading and formatting but thankfully everything was ready in time.

Personally, life for the Smith household has been a happy balance of household chores, recreation time and training with the dogs. Adam and I were grateful to celebrate yet another birthday year with Nanuk, our Alaskan Malamute, and we take each day at a time but love his wobbly leg greetings and eternal inner puppy attitude. Milo and I successfully passed our level one mantrailing earlier this year. Nala completed her APDT Good Companion Awards and has now achieved all four levels and Nia continues to try at being a gundog.

All in all, a busy year but so many things to celebrate and be thankful for.

What a year ...!

By Gwen Bailey-Rea, Founder & Director of Puppy School

This year has been an incredibly busy one as we begin to develop new projects and courses at Puppy School. Finishing off The Puppy Club writing as well as beginning a new marketing initiative was a good start to the year. We are now in a position to reach out further to increase our network and influence so I am very pleased to be working now with some experienced people who can take us to the next level.

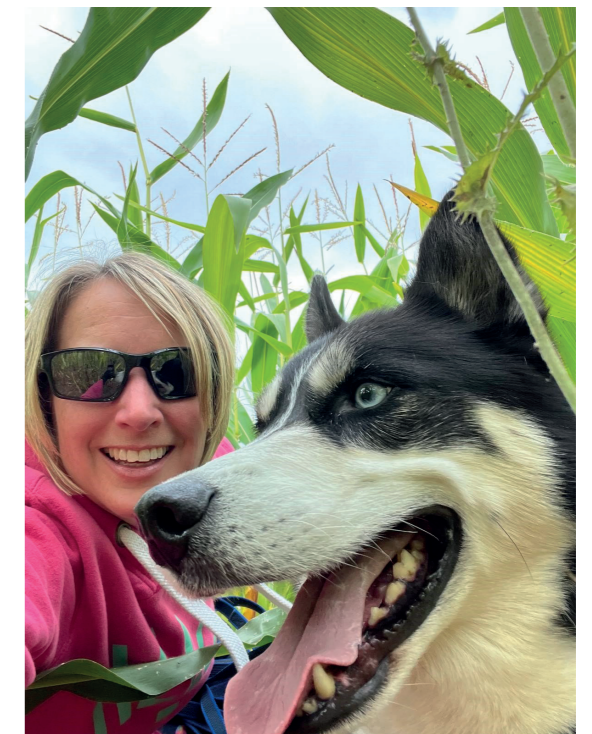
The new Behaviour and Training Team, which includes me, began well and went on to begin creating useful resources for the veterinary profession so we could begin to get engagement and promote interest in our work. Veterinary professionals are a satisfying group to reach as they are in a position to do so much with good information. It was a pleasure to help make them aware of our new puppy greetings concept at the BVNA Congress this year and this was a personal highlight for me since I know that RVNs will take that information and make really good use of it.

Other new projects took up a lot of my time but were so worthwhile. Our new branded tutor websites are now super easy to create and provide new tutors with a ready-made customisable finished product at low cost. Our puppy greeting upskilling project, with its online event, practicals around the regions, and new syllabus amends, went so well and means that our Puppy School family are now better equipped than ever to run this exercise well. And I'm so proud of our new Happy Handling course for tutors – it's great that something you've been thinking about and planning for a few years comes to fruition and I'm looking forward

to seeing the first classes being run next year. The 3rd edition of my Perfect Puppy book was published in August and it was a pleasure to be involved in some of the marketing of this.

The Puppy School Conference was an amazing weekend and I was so proud to see so many tutors, associates, guests and dogs learning and having fun. Similarly, the course at Paignton Zoo for Regional Managers was just amazing, not just because we got to go behind the scenes at the zoo and help to train monkeys, but also because we all stayed in the same house and getting together socially with people who are such lovely friends and colleagues was such a treat.

Personally, it's been a busy year with a skiing trip to Whistler in February, a weekend away near Chatsworth with the dogs for our anniversary in May, a week away in Dartmoor with the dogs for my birthday in July, and Jury Service in December (not quite as much fun!). We took some of our alpacas to show in the Spring, I went on a shearing course and managed to shear all 11 alpacas without any nicks and with less stress than when they are sheared by professionals they don't know, and we sent the fleece away for spinning. Some of them did look like many dogs did during lockdown, and they definitely had hairy armpits (!), but I'll get better next time. Our dogs and cats have had a happy year. This year Inky is 17, he's retired from hunting, and he now has 4 white whiskers.





Varied roles in 2024

By Kelly Nicholson, Puppy School's Accounts Manager and Operations Assistant

2024 is my seventh year with Puppy School and 2nd full year in my roles at HQ. It has been an amazing experience working as part of the HQ team, I am learning a lot and am enjoying the variation in tasks. QuickBooks is working really well to help produce useful figures for planning and budgeting.

It was my first time attending the Puppy School conference this year. It was a brilliant weekend with lots of excellent talks and workshops and lots of putting names to faces. Sarah and Alice worked so hard to have it all running like clockwork for us. Looking forward to the next one already.

Puppy numbers for my classes continue to be a bit low but are finally starting to pick up a little as I start to get recommendations from previous clients. Looking forward to looking for an additional hall in the New Year and start expanding services offered.

I was able to start my Compass Advanced Diploma in Applied Animal Behaviour this year although a little later than originally planned – I am finding it super interesting

although getting into the swing of studying has been a challenge.

In September I began working part-time at a local children's charity which is also a working farm. We work with young people with special educational needs who for one reason or another cannot attend school. As farm support staff we work with the young people helping them learn about how to care for the animals as well as learning how to socialise with the other young people as well as the farm staff. It's such a rewarding job, and I am really enjoying working with all the different types of animals, hoping to be able to do some training with some of them in the New Year.

Life on the Isle of Sheppey is still great, it's a much quieter life than London which suits me and the dogs perfectly. And Henry the cat has a larger hunting domain, so he is super happy too.

10th anniversary year

By Alice Crick, Puppy School's Operations Assistant

2024 marks my eighth-year at Puppy School HQ and my eleventh-year teaching as a Puppy School tutor. I received my ten years award at the conference this year, it was really lovely to receive something to commemorate such a milestone!

My work at PS continues to keep me busy, I do so love working alongside Sarah and Kelly – thank you both for all the support and joint 'team efforts' this year! My own dog training business continues to do well, a huge thanks especially to Becky Stickland who has taken on even more for us this year, I deeply appreciate everything you do Becky, thank you.

Our daughter Charlotte is coming up to two years old at the end of December this year – people say "time flies" and I honestly, I didn't believe them when we were in the slow days and nights of the newborn days but wow – yes, time has flown. Charlotte is growing up to be the loveliest little girl and we cherish her so very much.

My little dog Evie will be seven next year and we are starting to see signs of her slowing down (but not too much, she still loves a mad zoomie in the fields!) She's

just the best little companion and we couldn't ask for a sweeter little dog. I am so grateful to Evie for bringing us that little segment of calm that only a dog companion can give.

Although our time training together is few and far between these days. I still like to do odd bits of training with Evie in the evenings (if neither of us are too tired!) We are currently working through our practice for Puppy School's new Happy Handling course that we attended with Louise Otter in November. What a great course that was, a wonderful opportunity to learn more co-operative care which involves training our dogs not only to tolerate handling and husbandry procedures, but also to be an active and willing participant in these experiences. We are currently working on some muzzle training as well as bringing in the fake 'injection' whilst she's in her chin rest. It's going well and I am so pleased with her progress. I've found a Calpol syringe to work really well as my 'fake' injection. If anybody wants a few of these for Happy Handler classes – let me know, our drawer is full of them thanks to compromised immune systems that comes when you send a toddler to a childminders!



Hugely significant 2024

Charlie Houghton, Social Media Manager

2024 will always be a hugely significant year for me, as it was the year I officially started working as a dog trainer. After many years of shadowing, studying and learning, I ran my first Puppy School class in January and had my first paid 1-to-1 that month too. Leaving the Royal Navy in 2022, the well-trodden path was to join the Civil Service, or take up another very corporate job in HR or acquisition. When I told people that I wanted to become a dog trainer, it definitely got some raised eyebrows. So, to now be coming to the end of my first year where people have actually paid me to hang out with puppies, just makes my heart burst with delight – it's a dream come true.

I'm so proud to say that my business is going from strength to strength. In December 2024, my 11th Puppy School course and 2nd SuperPup course will graduate. I've also secured a permanent role as an instructor at a fantastic, well-established dog training club. I have welcomed repeat 1-to-1 clients, and I bought a van!

Alongside this, I have been incredibly honoured to join the Puppy School Operations Team as the Social

Media Manager. It's been a real pleasure to connect more with the whole network of the Puppy School family, and to showcase our amazing work to the public. One of my favourite parts of this role is helping other tutors with their business social medias, and I hope to do even more of this in 2025.

At home, the kittens turned one, and Jet (the Cocker Spaniel) has been a very biddable training buddy through all kinds of courses, mainly for my own development, but he got some fun out of it too. The club where I am now an instructor runs the Kennel Club Good Citizen Scheme, so I thought I had better give it a go myself. Hence Jet earned his Good Citizen Bronze Award this year at age 5. We also completed the beginner's gundog course at Clicker Gundog, as well as the most fascinating Levels 1 and 2 of Lost Dog Tracking with Claire Brown. We're booked in for Level 3 in 2025, and hope to become operational after that.

It's been such a rewarding year full of milestones, learning, and joy, and I'm so excited to get into my stride in 2025.



A Fulfilling 2024

By Leesa Robinson-Palmer, Fulfilment Manager

Another year on and 2024 at Puppy School has brought more of the same pleasurable tasks. I've continued to help customers and tutors, new and existing, with their enquiries, fulfil orders and organise puppy treats and it has been my pleasure to source and arrange some stylish new additions to our Puppy School uniform.

It was especially enjoyable to be able to put some faces to names at the conference we were so kindly invited to attend and again made to feel so welcome at – such fun!

Life at home is a stable hubbub. Work commitments, continuing home improvements and ever-growing boys keeps us busy albeit in a good way – looking forward to seeing what 2025 brings.



The last word...

from Regional Manager Team Leaders:

Eleanor McCall and Chrissie Pargeter



Puppy School was established in 2002 as an organisation based on a family feel. Over time we have expanded and now cover locations across the whole UK and as Regional Manager Team Leads we are proud to be part of the team working to maintain this bond across hundreds of miles. Our role is to work together with the Regional Managers and keep everyone engaged and supporting each other just as we did over two decades ago.

This year has included a huge number of exciting events and conversations from our lively monthly meetings to our in-person conference in the Forest of Dean and most notably our inspirational trip to Paignton Zoo where we were all challenged with building

trust and training primates. We each came away with a huge sense of pride for working with such an incredible team and felt honoured to have worked with such awesome animals.

As 2024 draws to a close we are excited to be planning what's next for our superb and dedicated team of managers and each and every tutor team out there.



This report has been produced to summarise the key developments and achievements within [Puppy School Ltd](#) during the year 2024. It is intended as an information document and should not be reproduced or shared without express permission from [Puppy School Ltd](#) © 2024 [Puppy School Ltd](#)

