

Press release: Terrier rescued after a ruff time on the motorway

Highways England traffic officers Nick Sivell and John Winser were called to an incident on the M23 on Tuesday after reports of a car colliding with the central reservation.

The driver, from Brighton, had to be taken to hospital, leaving Sally and the car on the hard shoulder while recovery was arranged.

Nick and John paws-ed for thought and then took it upon themselves to look after the pooch in peril.

Nick said:

If you have an emergency on the motorway and need to stop, it is always safest to leave any animals travelling with you in the car, while you and any passengers get out and behind a barrier. The driver did the right thing. Normally, we'd contact a local animal sanctuary or kennel who could look after any stranded animals, but on Tuesday there was no one who could help straight away.

Poor Sally was stressed and having a really ruff time, not only after the impact of the collision, but seeing her owner being taken away in an ambulance. We realised that the only solution to this canine conundrum was for us to look after her for a while.

Nick and John calmed the terrified terrier down and took her to Highways England's regional control centre in Godstone where she was looked after while they tried to find someone to solve their doggy dilemma.

John said:

Part of our job is being able to be adaptable and keeping an eye out for anything unusual, and we always keep our eyes and ears open, but this was certainly something we don't deal with every day.

Highways England traffic officers handled 49,000 incidents last year alone and are used to dealing with a variety of incidents and problems during their shift – and not always just with humans.

Nick and John had recently been on an animal handling course which gave them training and techniques on how to deal with a variety of stressed animals, from swans to horses, which helped them know how to comfort 15 year old Sally.

Sally made herself at home at the control centre and John and Nick got in touch with Furry Friends (a rescue centre based near Godstone), who arranged to come out and collect Sally while her owner recovered.

John continued:

Luckily the driver was okay and has been discharged from hospital. Sally was collected from Furry Friends in Coulsdon, and the driver and Sally are now reunited at home in Brighton. We are so glad this tail had a yappy ending.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.