

# Lincolnshire based animal charity wound up and chair disqualified after serious mismanagement

The Commission has disqualified two trustees, including the chair, and the charity has now been wound up, resulting in over £400,000 being redistributed to other charities with similar purposes in the area.

The Alternative Animal Sanctuary was set up to offer permanent care to abandoned and neglected animals across England and Wales.

The Commission opened its inquiry into the charity in March 2017 to examine serious concerns about the charity's management, including its arrangement with a fundraising agency. As part of the inquiry, the Commission appointed two Interim Managers (IMs) to review the charity's governance and operation.

The inquiry found:

- the chair ran the sanctuary on a day-to-day basis and had full autonomy over the charity's bank account, with no oversight by the other trustees
- there was a complete lack of basic financial controls and separation between the personal finances of the chair and those of the charity, which exposed the charity's funds to undue risk and resulted in significant losses to the charity
- the charity failed to manage conflicts of interest appropriately and did not have a conflicts of interest policy in place, despite its trustee board including three members of the same family
- the trustees did not keep adequate financial records and repeatedly failed to comply with their legal accounting responsibilities

The inquiry also found that the total income raised from the charity's arrangement with a fundraising agency from 2008 to 2020 was over £10 million. However, just £1.8 million was directly received by the charity, due to significantly high costs and fees of the agreement. The trustees were not clear with potential donors about how much of their donated funds would go towards the charity's purposes and failed to comply with their legal duties by not properly overseeing the arrangement, which the Commission finds to be mismanagement and/or misconduct in the administration of the charity.

The IMs determined the Alternative Animal Sanctuary should be wound up on the basis that it was not feasible or viable to address the significant

underlying issues at the charity. The charity was removed from the register of charities on 28 June 2021. Its remaining funds, totalling £407,000 were distributed to 10 different charities with similar purposes working in Lincolnshire and surrounding areas. The regulator disqualified the chair from acting as a trustee for the maximum period available of 15 years, whilst one other trustee was disqualified for 10.

Amy Spiller, Head of Investigations at the Charity Commission, said:

This case is a reminder that good governance is more than a bureaucratic detail. The trustees' conduct and the chair's clear abuse of their position at the Alternative Animal Sanctuary goes against everything we associate with charity. It is right that those responsible for wrongdoing have been disqualified from serving as trustees.

The public donate generously to charities because they want to make a difference to the causes they care about. This means that when they donate their hard-earned cash, they want to see a high proportion of it spent on the end cause. I'm glad that the charity's remaining funds have been transferred to active charities supporting the cause they were intended for.

[Read the full report of the inquiry into the Alternative Animal Sanctuary.](#)

## **Ends**

### **Notes to editors:**

The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales. Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.

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## **[Collaborative study on the application and usability of ECDIS published](#)**

News story

MAIB and DMAIB study into Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS) use from the perspective of practitioners.



Today, the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) and Danish Maritime Accident Investigation Board (DMAIB) publishes a study to generate an understanding of the practical application and usability of ECDIS and support future ECDIS design, training strategies and the development of best practices. The study followed a qualitative methodology, primarily based on semi-structured interviews with 155 ECDIS users and observation data gathered between February and July 2018 during sea voyages in European waters on 31 ships of various types.

Joint statement by Oessur Hilduberg, Head of the DMAIB and Andrew Moll, Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents, MAIB:

Investigation of groundings since 2008 have repeatedly shown that where ECDIS was the primary means of navigation it was not being used to its full potential. There was a significant mismatch between the intention of the performance standards and system designers, and the way the watchkeepers were using the system. This study set out to understand whether the findings of accident investigations could be extrapolated as representing the wider marine industry and, if so, why.

Unsurprisingly, the study found a wide spectrum of ECDIS integration and usage, and users were unanimous that the real-time positioning provided by ECDIS was a major contributor to safe navigation. However, thereafter the picture was bleak. Despite being in service for nearly two decades ECDIS could, at best, be described as being in its implementation phase. Specifically, most of the automated functions designed to alert the watchkeeper to impending dangers were not easy to use and lacked the granularity for navigation in pilotage waters. The consequent high false alarm rate eroded confidence in the automated warning, and most operators disabled the alarms or ignored alerts. To be an effective tool for safe navigation, ECDIS needs a high degree of operator input but many watchkeepers appeared to have limited understanding of the systems they were using, and in the main only used them to the extent they felt necessary. Current system shortcomings, compounded by limited bathymetry data, make safe navigation challenging and do not augur well for future automation of the navigation function.

The study does not make specific recommendations but is intended to

act as a catalyst for change. Improvements can be made at every level, from the agile setting of performance standards, through human-centred design to ensure users interface effectively with complex technological systems, down to operator training and the setting of procedures and best practice. Most importantly, if improvements are to be made, digital navigation needs to become the primary means of navigation across the industry.

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## [Animal medicine seizure notice: Product stopped at Heathrow Airport August 2021](#)

News story

Details of seizure notice served following product imported along with an animal.



The following veterinary medicine was imported with an animal into Heathrow Airport.

This was identified and detained by an Animal Health Officer and the product was subsequently seized by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate.

The animal was destined for residential premises in West Yorkshire and had been shipped from Australia. The parcel contained:

- 50 x Gabapentin Apotex 400mg capsules

This product was intended for use in a dog and is not an authorised veterinary medicine in the UK and had not been prescribed by a UK vet for use

in the animal.

The medicine was seized under Regulation 25 (Importation of unauthorised veterinary medicinal products) of the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013.

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## **Vision set out for a once-in-a-lifetime digital revolution that will fundamentally change National Highways' roads**

Other initiatives that could lead the charge on a digital revolution for roads include intelligent road materials able to repair themselves and more connected and autonomous plant.

These are some of the systems set to be rolled out as part of National Highways' Digital Roads strategy which is being outlined today on a new [Digital Roads website](#) and 'virtual learning environment'.

The web pages clearly set out the company's Digital Roads 2025 vision and how the growth of digital technology and the move to electric, connected and autonomous vehicles will fundamentally change roads in the future.

National Highways Executive Director of Strategy and Planning Elliot Shaw said:

We are at the beginning of a digital revolution on our roads network, a once-in-a-century transformation which will fundamentally change how our roads are designed, built, operated and used.

The Digital Roads journey, the strategy that will create the roads of the future, is huge. It covers every aspect of the roads infrastructure from design and construction, to how roads are operated to the changing experience for all road users.

Digital Roads will make our roads safer and greener. Improvements and maintenance will be delivered more quickly with less disruption and road users will have a far better end-to-end journey experience, with savings on time and the cost of travel.

National Highways, formerly Highways England, is laying the foundations of the Digital Roads vision with several ambitious partnerships working at the forefront of technology.

The road twinning system is being developed in collaboration with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), the EU MSCA COFUND programme, construction and engineering company Costain and the University of Cambridge. It will see drawings and static models replaced with digital versions that can identify when maintenance is needed.

The system is being developed thanks to two grants: the £8.6 million EPSRC Digital Roads Prosperity Partnership grant and the £6 million EU MSCA COFUND Future Roads Fellowships programme.

The University of Cambridge Principal Investigator of these grants Dr Ioannis Brilakis said:

It is high time the transportation infrastructure sector embraces digital transformation. We should strive to replace drawings and static 3D models with dynamic and data-rich Digital Twins, pdf documents with databases, file exchange with cloud permissions exchange, passive materials with smart materials able to sense and heal themselves and automate all manual routine maintenance. All this is possible on a data science foundation, able to generate rich, data-driven insights to help us make better decisions.

Combining 'live' data from intelligent materials in the existing road surface with a digital twinning system that visualises the road and its condition will identify when maintenance work is needed, with roads able to repair themselves using self-healing materials. This will dramatically reduce the need for time consuming and costly on-site inspections, prevent unnecessary delays to drivers and reduce the emissions generated by roadworks.

Also in use or being developed are connected and autonomous plant, off-site fabrication and modular construction methods.

An automated cone laying machine that has been developed through National Highways' innovation fund

As well as reducing disruption for drivers, these steps will reduce the associated carbon emissions by around 50 per cent and help to meet the target of zero injuries or deaths on the network by 2040.

The Digital Roads vision for the strategic road network supports the Government's ambition of 'the UK being a world leader in shaping the future of transport' and supporting Britain's growth. For example, digital design and construction could reduce scheme delivery times by up to 50 per cent.

Roads Minister Baroness Vere said:

From digital road models that can predict where maintenance is needed on the real-life road network, to self-repairing road surfaces, and automated cone laying machines, we're committed to keeping the UK at the forefront of technological developments.

I'm therefore delighted that National Highways' vision reflects this, benefitting road users for many years to come with greener, smoother, safer journeys.

How the network is operated is becoming more automated and data driven. The use of technology enables National Highways to pre-empt situations rather than just responding to them. For example, sensor technology will forecast traffic levels, weather and environmental conditions enabling us to pre-emptively prepare and respond to situations.

Communication with drivers is improving, ensuring that accurate information is available to help plan journeys through their preferred digital channels. Longer term, the deployment of connected and autonomous vehicles is expected to drastically improve traffic flow and reduce incidents by up to 90 per cent.

Ian Patey, Immediate Past-Chair of ITS (UK), said:

National Highways' vision for Digital Roads will transform road transport in the UK; harnessing technology to create greener, safer, more inclusive and more reliable mobility – the embodiment of an Intelligent Transport System.

Visitors to the new website will be able to enter a 'virtual learning environment' with additional information about how National Highways will deliver its vision and the impact on road users, employees and companies in the supply chain.

The vision for Digital Roads also goes beyond 2025 and looks forward to 2050 and beyond. Freight platooning, personalised in-vehicle messaging as well as vehicles sharing data, and decluttered roads free from signage – these are some of the ambitions for the roads of the future.

National Highways recognises that realising the vision will rely on the continued support of the supply chain and stakeholders. We are preparing to launch a Digital Roads innovation competition later in the year looking for fresh ideas and involvement.

This will be funded through the Innovation and Modernisation designated fund. For more details about the National Highways Innovation and Research strategy visit [here](#).

Visit the [Digital Roads website](#).

## General enquiries

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

## Media enquiries

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

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# [Charity Commission Annual Public Meeting 2021](#)

News story

Charity Commission Chair, Ian Karet, our CEO and other directors invite you to the Annual Public Meeting on Thursday 30th September 2021 at 2pm.



You are invited to join our Annual Public Meeting on Thursday 30 September 2021 at 2pm.

Our Chair, Ian Karet will introduce the event and highlight the important role charities have played responding to the pandemic.

The Commission's Chief Executive, Dr Helen Stephenson will deliver a keynote address, providing insight into the Commission's work. The speech will report on our delivery of support and services to charities and outline our priorities and plans as the country recovers from the pandemic.

Our Chair will then host a Q&A session with Helen Stephenson and her executive team, taking questions from the public.



Details of how to submit a question to the panel will be provided during the broadcast.

## **About this Event**

This year's meeting is a virtual event open to all members of the public and charity representatives.

We will be broadcasting live on the internet.

If you wish to join us for the event, please sign up below and we will send you a link for the live broadcast closer to the date.

[www.eventbrite.co.uk/charitycommission/APM](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/charitycommission/APM)

We will also provide access to a British Sign Language interpreter for the event. Please sign up below if you require this service.

[www.eventbrite.co.uk/charitycommission/APM/BSL](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/charitycommission/APM/BSL).

## **Date & Time**

Thursday 30 September 2021

14:00 – 15:30

Live on the [Charity Commission for England and Wales YouTube Channel](#).

If you have any questions about the event, please email [events@charitycommission.gov.uk](mailto:events@charitycommission.gov.uk).

Our [privacy notice](#) for the live broadcast of our annual public meeting can be found on GOV.UK.

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