

## Michelle interviews: Stuart and Maria of Compassion Animaux Bretagne

Michelle I'm here with Stuart and Maria of Compassion Animaux Bretagne, thank you for joining me today. To start why did you decide to move to Brittany?

Maria Well, for a long time we've always had a love of France and er we we decided that Brittany was the place for us. So we came into over in 2016 and we moved to our current residence in 2016. And erm we set up our charity Compassion Animaux Bretagne in 2019 after going to a local refuge and seeing for ourselves that the conditions er were very, very different from what we'd experienced in the UK. And we felt that we had the time and the motivation to actually try and help local animals in need here in Brittany and that was the the catalyst really, was seeing that there was a need.

Michelle Ok and how many animals do you think you have helped so far Stuart?

Stuart Over the time I think we've helped in excess of 500 cats er sterilisation and release erm

Maria Operations

Stuart Operations yeah

Maria for sick injured animals, injured cats

Stuart Yeah. Rehoming erm of 250 dogs erm again sterilisation erm finding homes

Maria And we've also been proactive in helping with er exceptional cases. Erm we've we've got on our Facebook page there was Gromit erm a dog who was found on the streets of St Briec, very very thin er and after extensive tests he had the pancreatic pancreatic disease. Er so he needs life-long medication and special food and we were able to er secure, by contacting Hill's Science Food er for them to actually provide sponsorship for a year's food for him

Stuart And one of our first animals was Merlin er

Maria And Merlin

Stuart Merlin a dog who had been

Maria He'd been starved

Stuart He'd been seriously mistreated erm and we helped with his rehabilitation, operations erm

Maria And he was taken on by er a lovely couple he was our first adoption. Erm and a couple who took him in because he had been er well we can't go into the details



because it's too too distressing but erm sadly he is no longer with us but he had a wonderful few years with a very loving family

Michelle OK. What do you guys do to raise funds for this important work?

Maria Well we haven't we haven't got any premises so all our fundraising is what we do hands on, er us two, plus er some er a couple of volunteers who help which we are very grateful for. We organise events really to raise funds, we do take-out meals curries, chinese with collection points er within Central Brittany. Er cinema events we had a Rocky Horror Show event last year which was popular er lots of people came in fancy dress er we've had er

Stuart I'm still wearing mine

Maria Yes Stuart's still wearing his can't get it off him. Erm and we do er we're planning to do some quiz quiz nights with food. Erm a repas emporter in the communes to er actually try and engage and involve some more French people er because we do find er because our our media outlet is Facebook and it is in English with a lot of ex-pats support er. But more and more we are finding that we are working closely with the communes and are currently involved in a sterilisation, stray cats sterilisation er programme in Laniscat and Guerledan. And that is er working really well working with the municipal police, working with the mairies erm and really just trying to raise awareness that erm together a lot can be achieved er it doesn't just have to be two individuals it can involve a lot of people and it can achieve a lot.

Michelle Great and er what would you advise anyone who wants to adopt?

Maria Well I think people really do need to consider that they have got the capacity as in time and maybe financial resources to support any animal that they take on. And understand that it is commitment for the rest of that animal's life. Erm but really there are so many refuges, there are so many cats in need here in Brittany er there is no need to go and buy any animal. Er we are very strong in our adopt and do not shop erm ethos erm because you know you just need to go and see what a lot of these animals have been in some of the refuges for ten years or more. We once er there was a Labrador who had been in a refuge for ten years and heartbreaking to see on the door of his kennel was a picture of him as a young one year old dog, and inside the kennel was an old grey arthritic dog who had spent all his life in there. So please if anybody takes anything from our our short interview with you today is please adopt and do not shop.

Michelle And finally where can people go to find out what you are doing and when you are having fund raising events?

Maria We have a facebook page which is Compassion Animaux Bretagne. And if you are interested in er more of our fundraising events we also have a separate page erm which originally started off as our dining club where we were doing the meals to take out. But now it's it encompasses more of our other fundraising activities and events



erm so really fac social media is our tool to to get our our events and our and the animals in need as well. Erm we've always got posts of animals that are in desperate need of loving homes with responsible owners.

Michelle Ok thank you both very much

Maria Thank you

Stuart Thank you