Superconnected Cities

Superfast broadband helps keep local animal charity ‘up to scratch’

The RSPCA Leeds, Wakefield and District Branch has taken an ‘impawtant’ leap into the 21st century thanks to its new, high-speed internet connection – enabling the charity to keep in touch with supporters and volunteers across the region.

Through the government’s Superconnected Cities scheme, the charity has been able to have its own dedicated superfast broadband connection installed at its new re-homing centre in East Ardsley, Wakefield. It has relocated to the new site from rented accommodation which was spread over several sites across Leeds and Wakefield.

RSPCA branch manager, Caroline Lewis-Jones, explained: “The site we’ve just moved to has been almost re-built so we had to start from scratch with everything – we had no internet connection at all. Having seen the Superconnected ads, I knew there was funding assistance out there so started looking into it.

“Each of the regional branches operates independently, so we have to raise our own funds. Our branch covers a large area, which means it can be quite hard to keep in touch with all our supporters on a regular basis. The internet is such an important fundraising and communication tool for us – we are very reliant on Facebook and other social media to update our local supporters and donors and let them know what’s happening at the centre – and the high-speed connection is going to make it so much easier.”

The charity received £800 funding through Superconnected West Yorkshire to install its dedicated fibre optic broadband connection and now benefits from faster and more reliable broadband with upload and download speeds of 22Mbps.
Mrs Lewis-Jones said: “It’s been so easy to set up the connection – the process has been really slick and efficient. Carl and the team at Superconnected Leeds and Bradford have been lovely to deal with; I’ve not had to worry about anything and whenever I’ve had a question, no matter how silly, they’ve always been really helpful.”

The RSPCA Leeds, Wakefield and District Branch employs approximately 30 permanent staff and has around 150 volunteers. The new centre at East Ardsley has brought together all the charity’s facilities under one roof, including kennels for ten dogs, 15 cat apartments and accommodation for six smaller animals. The centre also has two isolation blocks for new arrivals, which can accommodate five cats and five dogs.

Mark Durham of Superconnected Leeds Bradford commented: “High speed internet is vital for many businesses, and enabling them to access funding to improve their connectivity is really rewarding, but it’s even more satisfying when we know we’re facilitating a charity’s fundraising work so it can continue to provide support across the region.

“Although the scheme has recently been expanded, it does have a limited life and will run out within the next year, so we’re urging local businesses and charities to start their application processes now,” he continued.

The RSPCA Leeds and Wakefield branch is holding a grand opening of its new centre at Moor Knoll Lane, East Ardsley on Saturday 27 June, with all invited.

Further information about Superconnected West Yorkshire is available at www.SuperConnectedLeedsBradford.co.uk

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