REPLACEMENT NEWS

Summer 2022 - Issue 134

ANIMAL FREE RESEARCH UK

Inside:

Home Office Stats

Cancer Research

2022 Summer Students

Our Science Conference

Contents

CEO'S MESSAGE 3
LATEST NEWS 4
CANCER PROJECT 6
SUMMER STUDENTS 8
PARLIAMENTARY RECEPTION 12
SCIENCE CONFERENCE 14
COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE 16
HELPATHON 17
BUDE COMMUNITY GROUP 18
FABULOUS FUNDRAISERS 20
REMEMBER A CHARITY 22
WAYS YOU CAN HELP 23
OUR PODCAST 24

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We've been as busy as the summer's bees!

What a busy and momentous time our charity has enjoyed since the last edition of Replacment News, so much so I'm asking myself where to start!

Let's begin with our flagship World Animal Free Research Day on May 27th which was marked by an absolutely fabulous keynote speech from our brilliant patron Dame Joanna Lumley. She told a packed room of MPs, scientists and journalists at our reception in Parliament that it's high time for the government to overhaul the UK's outdated medical research system and appoint a minister to lead the country's transition to human relevant science.

Two of the increasing numbers of cross-party MPs who support our mission also spoke - Luke Pollard, MP for Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport, and Anna Firth, MP for Southend West.

Dame Joanna presented to Parliament our Eight Steps to Accelerate Human Relevant Innovation – our manifesto setting out how the UK can become a world leader in finding next generation treatments to improve the lives of patients faster – and all without animal suffering. You can read more about the events at our Parliamentary reception, on page 12.

We have also in the last few months launched our very own podcast hosted by yours truly. Called the 'Animal Free Labcast', I interview leading scientists helping to bring about a kinder, modern science. Read about this and all the details on how to listen on page 24.

In late June we - phew, finally! – held our conference at Millennium Point in Birmingham. Postponed during the lockdown Covid years, I am pleased to report we returned with a bang, with scores of scientists attending and discussing our collective desire to benefit human health by pioneering, perfecting and transitioning to modern animal free medical research. You can read about this on page 14.

As you'll see on page 17, we also announced the UK's first Helpathon - a 24-hour event to help researchers who might otherwise use animals to make the shift towards animal free methods.

I think I just have room to squeeze in a mention of our Summer Student Proramme. Thanks to you, this year we're supporting 16 of the next generation's brightest scientists to kickstart their careers with compassion. Read about our students on page 8.

Finally, before we all flop on our sun loungers for the last few weeks left of a well-earned summer holiday, on behalf of all the team, the scientists you fund and the animals you speak out for, my heartfelt thanks. It's your generosity and support that makes the good news that pack these pages!

With grateful thanks,

CARLA OWEN
Chief Executive

Latest News

Home Office Annual Statistics Released

There were

3,056,243

experiments on animals
in British laboratories in 2021

Home Office figures published in June reveal that there were over 3 million experiments on animals in Great Britain in 2021.

The figures show that the number of monkeys used in experiments is up by 17% - with 90% of these monkeys being imported from Africa and Asia.

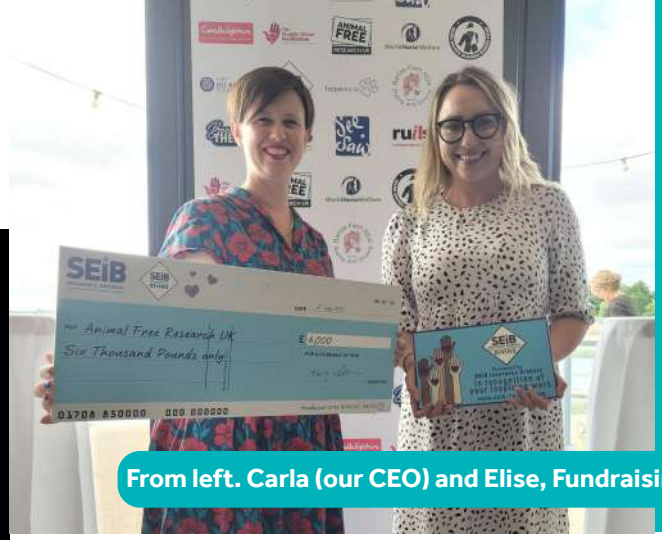
And alarmingly they also show that the number of dogs used has increased by 24% in the last decade alone.

These statistics make for distressing reading. But the increase in animal use comes at a time when the availability of human relevant methods – New Approach Methodologies (NAMs) including artificial intelligence, organ-on-a-chip and stem-cell culture, are at an all-time high, and are championed for producing more accurate results in the quest to treat illnesses including cancer and heart disease faster and better.

The UK Government must step in and take decisive action to support and accelerate the move towards human relevant innovation.

New paper calls to Modernise Medical Research

A new paper written by science and advocacy experts here at Animal Free Research UK has just been published in the journal 'Animals'. The paper calls for medical research to be modernised and summarises the strong scientific, ethical and economic case for replacing misleading animal experiments with cutting-edge, human relevant techniques, including the use of New Approach Methodologies (NAMs). The paper goes on to suggest how the UK Government can take the lead in transforming medical research.



From left. Carla (our CEO) and Elise, Fundraising Manager holding the awards!

Cheque out our SEIB Giving Award

Animal Free Research UK was recognised at the annual SEIB Giving awards in July and awarded £6,000 by SEIB insurance brokers for our cutting-edge breast cancer research at Aberdeen University.

It's a huge honour for our small charity to be recognised – and all the more humbling because the public and SEIB clients voted for us. SEIB received over 20,000 public nominations in the first round of voting for a wide range of charities.

All the finalists are doing hugely important work – from rescuing horses to helping survivors of childhood sexual abuse. It's a really tough time for the charity sector, as it is for everyone – austerity, Brexit, pandemic, war in Ukraine, cost of living crisis – these are unprecedented times which have hit our sector hard.

Generous initiatives like SEIB Giving are a beacon of hope – especially for smaller charities like ours that are doing amazing things to support our communities but that can sometimes get overlooked because we don't have the big budgets or brand recognition of the larger charities.

So I want to say a huge thank you to SEIB Giving for their leadership and generosity – and to everyone who voted for us.

The award from SEIB Giving will help to fund a new Breast Cancer research project which will use cutting-edge technology to study how breast cancer spreads.

Our project is being led by Professor Valerie Speirs at Aberdeen University. Val is an expert in this area and a founder of the UK's Breast Cancer Now Tissue Bank. Her team has already pioneered the use of cutting-edge organ-on-a-chip technology to accurately model human breast cancer.

We hope that their findings will speed up drug discovery and potential treatments for breast cancer and the spread of breast cancer. And, vitally, give hope to patients and their families – without any animals suffering.

Pioneering lab technology to understand how cancer spreads

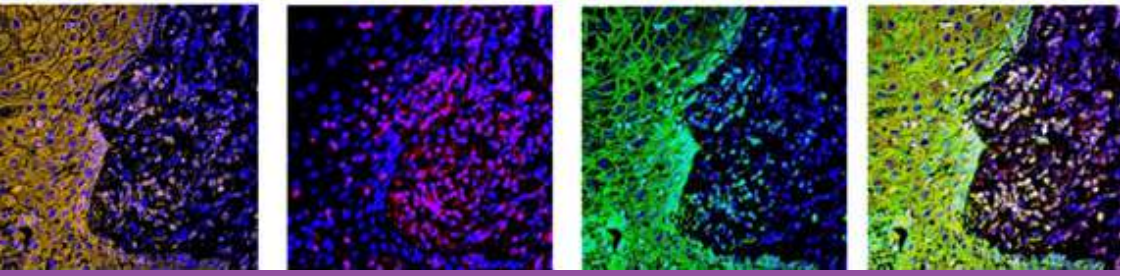
Cancer is, during this century, expected to be the leading cause of death and the most significant obstacle to increasing life expectancy in every country in the world.

Approximately 90% of cancer-related deaths are not associated with primary tumours but with secondary tumours resulting from the spread of cancer cells throughout the body. This is called the metastatic process – which is still poorly understood, mainly because researchers have difficulty modelling it in lab environments.

Over the last few years there have been over 800 academic publications reporting the use of mice in experiments for the study of metastasis, typically with the use of around 50 mice per study. The number of such studies has increased 114% over the last 5 years and continues to increase year on year.

So by 2025, we expect that the number of mice involved in these academic experiments alone will rise above 25,000 per year unless alternatives are developed.

These numbers make for alarming reading and raise a lot of ethical concern, especially knowing that more than 95% of cancer drugs that show promise in animal testing, fail in phase 1 clinical trials in humans, proving that current models of cancer metastasis are inadequate.



Imaging from a metastatic tumour

As tumour cells spread around the human body, they must learn how to survive and grow in new environments that they have not encountered before.

If we can understand the factors that enable them to do this, we can develop new drugs that interfere with these factors and prevent metastasis (tumour growth at secondary sites).

Tumours behave very differently between patients, but the tissue environment is much more consistent and thus a very promising potential drug target.

Most metastasis modelling uses large numbers of mice – even though a mouse is very different from a human, so it is therefore important to understand how this process works in humans.

To do this, at the Animal Replacement Centre of Excellence (ARC 1.0) in London, Adrian will build a mathematical model based on current understanding of the complex factors at interplay in this system and use this to predict which factors are likely to be most important.

He will then test these factors using 3D metastasis models and a new Artificial Intelligence tool in order to ascertain their effect on cancer cell survival and growth within this environment.

The 3D metastasis models can grow small human tumours which mimic the way cells move out of the tumour and metastasize. They contain hydrogels, which are highly absorbent yet maintain well defined structures.

Dr Adrian Biddle

3D hydrogel models are well established in Adrian's lab and the team have extensive experience with performing mathematical modelling techniques.

The long term outcome of this project is to, through further development of the model and engagement with Industry, develop an accurate human relevant model of the entire metastatic process which will replace the large number of mice used every year.

The word pioneering is overly used but there is no denying Adrian's work really is revolutionary, making the case for ending animals in this area of research difficult to ignore.

Our 2022 Summer Students

A new cohort of young scientists have joined our Summer Student Programme.

They will develop hands-on experience with novel research techniques, strengthening their commitment to animal free methods. They will also grow stronger advocates, enabling them to feel more comfortable challenging those outdated methods in animal experimentation.

The research world we want to see starts with these young scientists.

Student: Ryan Hoyes

Animals to be replaced: Mice, rats, dogs, horses & cats

Project title: A human tissue model for testing novel approaches to deliver chemotherapies

"The Summer Student Programme will allow me to develop key skills in bioinformatics and ultimately provide me with a greater depth on how animal free research is conducted and a better understanding in the techniques involved."

Student: Lucille Binninger

Animals to be replaced: Mice, rats & monkeys

Project title: Develop an animal free method to create human neuron-like cells to study brain development

"This studentship will allow me to gain additional laboratory experience. Most importantly it will teach me ways to overcome the use of animals and animal products in research for more humane and accurate research."

Student: Seyta Diop

Animals to be replaced: Mice, rabbits, pigs & rats

Project title: A novel fruit-based cell culture model: a standardised alternative to animal-derived systems

"The studentship will allow me to develop knowledge that can advance the industry as a whole. This will put me in good stead to implement the improved practices I learn here in future research and share this knowledge forward to my peers."

Student: Artemijs Vasjanovics

Animals to be replaced: Rats

Project title: Investigating Heart Damage Caused by Cancer and Anti-cancer Drugs

"Learning an animal free approach to research is something that doesn't get introduced to us during our studies at University, so getting hands-on experience in this programme will undoubtedly leave in the imprint on one's mind."

Student: Fengjiao Zheng

Animals to be replaced: Mice & rats

Project title: Explore animal free simulated lung fluid to develop lung toxicology models

"This project will kickstart my research career by improving my research and laboratory skills. The additonal training provided at the Summer School offers the valuable opportunity to network with like-minded people in the world of animal free research."

Student: Heidi Lloyd-Williams

Animals to be replaced: Mice & zebrafish

Project title: Optimising conditions for neurons using machine learning to study neurodevelopmental diseases

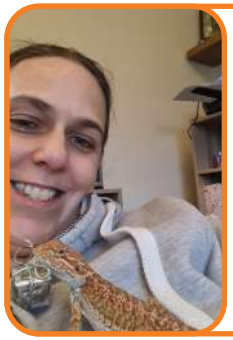
"It will be a great experience working in a lab for the summer to develop a new technology. The project will also help me understand and be part of the innovative ways we can do research without the use of animals."

Student: Michael Dummigan

Animals to be replaced: Mice, rats & zebrafish

Project title: Developing a tool to better categorise types of breast cancer for personalised treatments

"Research still relies heavily on the suffering of animals, but I will strive to never contribute to this side of the industry. I think Bioinformatic research is the way forward for not only more humane research, but more accurate and precise research."



Student: Patricia Bailey

Animals to be replaced: Mice & rats

Project title: Validating a dementia cell-based model to study inflammation

"My summer project will not only give me experience of working in a lab that is actively trying to find alternatives to animal research, but will also allow me the chance to work in a professional lab alongside qualified scientists."

Student: Pawel Pokorski

Animals to be replaced: Mice & rats

Project title: Prediction of nanomaterials (small particles) toxicity on humans in lung research

"This studentship will help me to kick-start my career as an animal free researcher. It will also highlight the importance of ethics in research which is a value that every real scientist should be familiar with."

Student: Rebecca Thornton

Animals to be replaced: Mice, rabbits, rats & sheep

Project title: Develop a tool to replace animal-derived antibodies used for neurological conditions

"In order for there to be change in the research industry, there has to be people who have the ability to question outdated methods and educate others. This project will allow me to apply and build confidence in my lab skills and learn new methods."

Student: Toba Shabaz

Animals to be replaced: Mice, rats, pigs & dogs

Project title: Development of animal free in vitro lung immune cell interactions model called ImmuPHAGE

"I hope to work in the pharmaceutical sector, earn a master's degree, and contribute to scientific progress, and this studentship will help me in moving closer to my professional goals."

Student: Rita Correia

Animals to be replaced: Mice & rats

Project title: Development of hydrogel-based scaffolds for new drug delivery systems

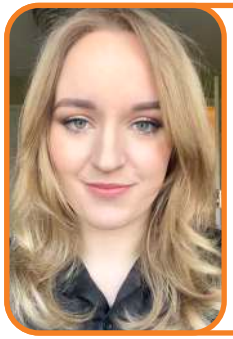
"This studentship will help me on my journey to get a PhD in this area of research, helping me continue my animal free research career, which is super important to me as I have always been an apologist for animals."

Student: William Gane

Animals to be replaced: Mice , monkeys, rats, cats & dogs

Project title: Computational analysis of the interactions between psychoactive substances and the key receptors in the brain

"By taking part in the programme, I'll be able to get first-hand experience in methods to replace animal testing, helping me to become a more ethically conscious scientist in the future."



Student: Sophie Jorgensen

Animals to be replaced: Mice, rats & rabbits

Project title: A human tissue model for testing novel approaches to deliver chemotherapies

"My chosen area of research uses an unimaginable number of animals, so being able to combine my personal values and the chance to collaborate and work with animal free researchers on this studentship is a really exciting opportunity for me."

Student: Tom Whalley

Animals to be replaced: Mice, rats, sheep, rabbits & dogs

Project title: Development of a humanised 3D model for osteoporosis research

"Sadly research using animals is the norm, with animal free testing often not offered as an alternative. This is my first experience in animal free research, and I'm excited to see that it is a possibility and does not impede successful outcomes."

A giant leap for human relevant science and Animal Free Research UK

A week might be a long time in politics – though what is certain is one day in Parliament was a giant leap for human relevant science and Animal Free Research UK. Monday, May 23rd, 2022, will burnish long in the memory.

Thanks to Labour MP Luke Pollard, we were able to host an afternoon reception during which launched our Eight Steps to Accelerate Human Relevant Innovation – a manifesto that sets out how the UK can become a world leader in finding next generation treatments to improve the lives of patients faster, and all without animal suffering.

Luke Pollard MP

The event kicked off our May Awareness Week, which culminated on World Animal Free Research Day on the May 27th.

Our star Patron, Dame Joanna Lumley gave a keynote speech endorsing the Eight Steps, and she implored the many MPs listening to lobby the Government to action all of them, including two key parts – to launch an inquiry into how the UK conducts medical research, and appoint a Minister to overhaul outdated policy.

She had the ear of us all – including journalists, who helped spread far and wide our vision of our world in which human diseases are cured faster without animal suffering.

Dozens of MPs attended the reception and they too learned more about the ground-breaking New Approach Methods – the NAMS – the organs on a chip, artificial intelligence, human cells and tissue development, data from human patients, et al

Some of the brilliant scientists we help fund, including Professor Mike Philpott and Dr Adrian Biddle from our Animal Replacement Centre of Excellence (ARC 1.0) at Queen Mary University, were also there to help explain and share their passion.

Why was this event so important and what does its immense success mean for us?

With 85% of deaths in high income countries like the UK due to diseases like heart disease, dementia and stroke, countless animals suffering in medical research, and most diseases still poorly understood and lacking adequate treatments, it has never been more urgent to accelerate human relevant research.

This is a Medical Research Emergency.

That's why we need government to overhaul the archaic rules that allow animal testing to continue.

Dame Joanna Lumley

Before we get the changes in the law, we need to change hearts and minds. And the way to do that is to show and tell so as to foster understanding and gather support.

For years, Animal Free Research UK has been lobbying our lawmakers for change. We have enjoyed some success. But on the 23rd May, we believe we made a significant cut through thanks to the scientific demonstrations and speeches, and thanks to the friendly, informative conversation during which we explained exactly what we do, how we do it and why.

The MPs who attended left filled with new knowledge, and they left the room understanding how, despite huge investment into disease research and drug development, most diseases remain poorly understood and lack adequate treatments – in large part due to the continued reliance on animals as models for human illness.

We believe we planted the seeds of change firmly in Parliament – in the hearts and minds of policymakers, who were given clear sight of our vision of a world where human diseases are cured faster without animal suffering.

Our 2022 Science Conference

28-29 June 2022

"A move towards animal free methodologies is inevitable."

"We can only go forwards. It's a quickly evolving landscape and I hope more people will adopt animal free ways of working."

"We need to be able to develop models which replicate the disease... we are finding alternatives now which work well."

"Our research needs to be human relevant."

Above are just a few snatches of the heart-warming conversations that took place during our conference in June. The energy was palpable – animal free, human relevant research is inevitable – that was the view clearly shared view of the more than 80 participants.

Across two days in Birmingham, we discussed our collective desire to benefit human health by pioneering, perfecting and transitioning to modern animal free medical research. We heard from the best in our field – veterans and early career scientists alike.

Researchers – including those whose work you help fund – showcased their innovative new approaches and human models for human diseases that will serve us all better. From in silico research which harnesses the power of big data and artificial intelligence, to in vitro research using human cells instead of animals, to engaging with the full complexity of human experience to improve human health.

Last year's summer students presented their innovative projects via poster and on the big stage, giving them invaluable experience in communicating their work, and setting them up for success as they embark on careers as animal free researchers and advocates.

Attendees had a ringside seat to history – the awarding of our first Animal Free Research UK Pioneer Medal for outstanding contribution to Dr Don Ingber, the founding director of Harvard University's Wyss Institute for Biologically Inspired Engineering. Dr Ingber, who in 2010 developed lung-on-a-chip – the first of its kind – wowed us with his powerful presentation of the numerous organ chip models he has developed since that are paving the way to a future of medical research without animals.

Dr Don Ingber
Pioneer Award Winner

Inspiring conversations between our diverse community took place on everything from engaging with decision makers and scientists currently using animals to educating young people and the potential of personalised medicine. To build on these, we launched a community of practice aimed at stimulating collaborations between medical researchers in our bid to accelerate the transition to animal free innovation.

This forum will raise awareness, deepen knowledge, drive creativity and spark passion for a science that benefits animals as well as humans.

Bringing researchers together for the first time since the pandemic reignited our collective energy for the new gold standard science. A future where human diseases are cured faster without animal suffering is, now, inevitable.

Welcome to the Animal Free Research Community of Practice

Animal Free Research UK and the Alliance for Human Relevant Science have launched a Community of Practice - including an online membership platform to bring scientists from around the world together to practice human-relevant research.

Our Community of Practice will allow like-minded researchers, early career scientists, students, industry and other stakeholders in the biomedical research wherever they are to interact on an ongoing basis.

Such a passionate network will deepen universal expertise, expand knowledge and increase problem solving capabilities.

Our Community of Practice will provide:

- Events including open houses, roundtables and Helpathons
- Resources and networking opportunities
- Collaboration on research projects
- News, papers, jobs, PhD and other opportunities

UK to stage first Helpathon to accelerate human relevant innovation

Animal Free Research UK and the Alliance for Human Relevant Science have teamed up with Dutch partners from the Transition Programme for Innovation to launch Britain's first Helpathon - an action-oriented rapid prototyping method derived from hackathons.

Helpathons are used in the Netherlands to help researchers who might otherwise undertake animal experiments to make the shift towards animal free methods.

They take place over 24 hours and invite researchers to ask a question to fellow scientists to help resolve a research issue.

The first UK Helpathon will be hosted by the Alliance for Human Relevant Science in London during the 11th and 12th October, 2022.

Carla Owen, Chair of the Alliance for Human Relevant Science and CEO of Animal Free Research UK said: "The arrival of the project in Britain will help the country's scientists transition away from animal-based medical research methods and grasp a human-relevant future."

> **"A Helpathon invites anyone to ask a question to help resolve a societal issue. We will invite medical researchers to ask how they can innovate in their research methods in an animal free way."**

Pepik Henneman , TPI Helpathon team member

Busy Bees in Bude

"The Bude community fundraising group have been busy bees again this year.

Firstly we marked World Animal Free Research Day on 27th May in style with several businesses joining in the celebrations around Bude, which culminated in Camel Creek Family Theme Park helping to raise awareness on the Saturday.

We also ran a colouring competition for the first time. Many local schools got involved, and a fabulous array of colourful Furry Five pictures were handed in for a chance to win some fantastic prizes.

Morrison's Katie Shaw and Holly Mellett were tasked with the very difficult job of choosing the winners. Individual prizes were provided by Animal Free Research UK and a hamper of gardening goodies for the winner's schools was donated by Morrisons.

This was an excellent way to get the young local community involved and we are excited to run this competition again next year.

In between our larger events Jen Codlin sells donated items online and attends car boot sales, whilst Karen Thomas sells on donated DVDs and CDs to a specialist for us.

World Animal Free Research Awareness Day marked

Local press coverage

Our BIG fundraiser this year involves an exceptional challenge by Penny Baxter. Supporters will know this name if they have followed the exploits of Nos Nom in recent years. Penny has decided to take herself from a non runner to an ultra runner just for us - that's what we call phenomenal support!

She will be running (walking & crawling!) from Bude to Exeter at the end of August to raise awareness and funds for Animal free Research UK's Animal Replacement Centre (ARC 2.0) at the University of Exeter.

Professor Lorna Harries, who leads the Animal Free Research UK team at the ARC 2.0, will be there to meet Penny as she crosses the finishing line.

Penny has lost over 3 stone and is currently running over 30 miles in her training. Her fundraising has already reached over £1,000, but we would love to help her get it to £2,000. Please show your support for Penny and donate by visiting:

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/penny-baxter

Penny Baxter

"Well where do I start. I've always wanted to do a serious challenge for this amazing charity. So in 2019 I decided to apply for the London Marathon. I didn't get picked for the 2020 marathon so I thought well what can I do? Obviously I thought doing about twice the distance would be the answer!"

So far this year we are well on our way to our next big target of £45,000!

Budeiful Bude is such a fantastic community to live, work and fundraise in, and it is my privilege to be an ambassador for Animal Free Research UK."

By Steph Jones-Giles

Animal Free Research UK Community Ambassador

FABULOUS FUNDRAISERS

Cari's flying high for a kinder science

Despite being terrified of heights, the amazing Cari did the ultimate challenge...a sky dive! And all to raise funds for Animal Free Research UK.

We are all so proud of you for conquering your fear. Your photos are incredible! And thank you so much for choosing to fundraise for us.

An incredible achievement! We cannot continue the work that we do without the grit, determination and generosity of our wonderful supporters - THANK YOU!

Becky's climb to the top

The amazing Becky and her mum completed their Snowdon Night Summit challenge all in aid of Animal Free Research UK.

Becky loves to raise money and likes a challenge - and she adores animals, so her high-altitude fundraiser was a perfect fit. It's a fantastic achievement and we all thank Becky for going so high to support Animal Free Research UK.

Emily's on the run once again

"For some reason I thought it would be a great idea to run a half marathon in aid of Animal Free Research UK. I'm VERY nervous. Although I run regularly, 6 miles is usually my limit, so I'm going to be training hard until 4th September. My aim is to do it in 2 hours 10 minutes."

After her running challenge in 2021, Emily is back and upping her game by taking on a half marathon.

We know you're going to do great Emily!

Remember a Charity Week 5-11 September

This September Animal Free Research UK is one of over 200 charities that have teamed up to raise awareness around the importance of gifts in wills.

What is Remember a Charity?

Remember A Charity works closely with partners in the legal sector, government, and private sector to raise awareness about leaving a gift in a will. Most people simply aren't aware that they can leave a gift in their will - so this campaign helps continue the important work of charities for future generations.

What does this mean for our supporters?

As a member of Remember a Charity we can offer our supporters access to the will writing advice of the Co-operative Legal Services. To contact them for free advice, please call on 0844 252 9965 and quote RACWILLS01.

They are open 8am – 8pm Monday to Friday, and 9am – 1pm on Saturdays. Will writing specialists are available to provide free advice on the phone on all matters relating to changing or drafting a will in just a matter of minutes

They are offering to write a basic single will at a discounted cost of £100. For all other types of wills, such as mirror wills, they offer the same customers 15% off the standard cost of their wills. Further information is available at: **www.cooperative.coop/legalservices**

Or maybe you want to meet with a local solicitor? You can find your local solicitor or will writer on Remember a Charity's website: **www.rememberacharity.org.uk**

To find out more please email **legacies@animalfreeresearchuk.org** or visit: **www.animalfreeresearchuk.org/leave-a-legacy**

There are many other ways you can help raise funds for us – and many won't cost you a penny!

Shop for a Kinder Science

Welcome to the Animal Free Research UK shop!

We have a range of fabulous items perfect as gifts for friends and family or as a treat for yourself.

And what's even better is that every purchase will support our vision for a kinder, compassionate science to build a brighter future for humans and for the animals.

Visit our shop - **shop.animalfreeresearchuk.org**

Make your birthday even more meaningful and set up a Facebook birthday fundraiser asking friends to donate as an alternative gift.

giftaid it

Add GiftAid to make your donations go even further! If you are a UK taxpayer, we will receive an extra 25p for every £1 donated!

amazon smile

Select us as your charity of choice and then Amazon will donate every time you shop! Head over to smile.amazon.co.uk

Animal Free Labcast

Listen now to our brand new podcast!

The Animal Free Labcast, hosted by our amazing CEO Carla, is a frank, lively exchange of ideas and experiences with leading scientists, policy makers and animal protection ambassadors - all of whom are part of the animal free innovation revolution.

Our guests cut through the noise and complexities to break down the urgent need to accelerate human relevant science and end the medical emergency - which is in large part caused by the continued reliance on animals as models for human disease research.

New episodes out every fortnight. Available wherever you get your podcasts.

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