REPLACEMENT NEWS

Winter - Issue 143

Breast Cancer Research Special

Discover the latest developments and the inspiring work pushing the boundaries of cancer research.

ANIMAL FREE RESEARCH UK

Inside:

Home Office stats
Our fabulous fundraisers
Unmasking Breast Cancer
Supporter's Choice Award

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Reflecting on 2024: A year of progress and determination

As we near the end of another year, we reflect on the remarkable journey we've taken together in 2024. Your encouragement and dedication have been the driving force behind our accomplishments. However, it's been a challenging year for fundraising, and the road ahead is tough. With rising costs and increased demand for support, your generosity is more important than ever, so thank you for standing with us to create a world where animals and humans lead healthy, happy lives, free from suffering.

The latest Home Office annual statistics on scientific experiments involving living animals in Great Britain sadly reveal a continued reliance on outdated methods. This fuels our commitment to push for a future rooted in modern, animal-free research. Behind every number is an animal. reminding us why the work we do is so essential. You can read more on page 6.

However there is hope! We're excited to announce new strides in animal-free breast cancer research. Thanks to your support, we are funding innovative projects that use human-specific technologies to study and fight this devastating disease. Read more about these projects from page 10.

This autumn also saw important developments on the political stage. Our Public Affairs team has been at the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat Party Conferences, gaining crucial support for transitioning to animal-free, human-specific medical research. You can learn more about the impact they are making on page 18.

Additionally, we're thrilled to announce the launch of our Supporter's Choice Award recognising excellence in animal-free research, and we need YOU to help us decide which groundbreaking project deserves to win. Check out the nominees and how to vote on page 20.

Our incredible group in Bude have also been hard at work this year, fundraising with dedication and courage. Hear more from our Bude community fundraiser, Steph, about their fantastic achievements on page 22.

Of course, none of these achievements would be possible without the kindness and generosity of supporters like you. Your support is more crucial than ever in helping us accelerate the replacement of animals in laboratories.

There's still a way to go, but I'm utterly convinced that if we all work together, we will arrive at our destination sooner: a world where animals and humans lead healthy, happy lives, free from suffering. And it can't arrive soon enough.

With grateful thanks,

Carla Owen, *Chief Executive*

Latest News

Private Members' Bill Ballot results

A huge thank you to everyone who emailed their MP to ask them to consider Herbie's Law in the Private Members' Bill ballot. The ballot has taken place, and 20 MPs' names have now been drawn. The top seven of these will have the best chance of seeing their bill debated in Parliament. Although we know it's a long road, this is an incredible opportunity to bring Herbie's Law one step closer to becoming a reality.

Our Public Affairs team has been hard at work, reaching out to all 20 MPs, ensuring they understand the urgency and importance of Herbie's Law. We've provided them with everything they need to champion this critical cause, and we remain optimistic that one of these MPs could soon be the one to introduce our bill to Parliament.

Herbie's Law has the potential to save millions of animals from suffering in labs while promoting human-specific, effective research methods that will benefit everyone.

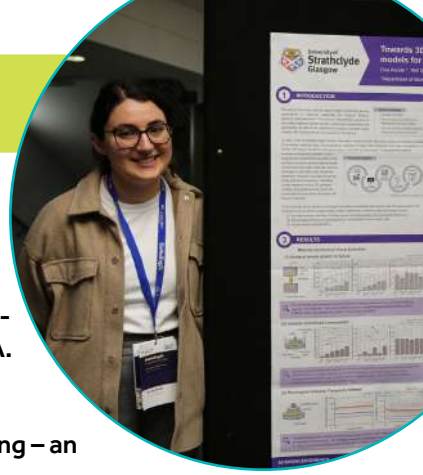
We will find out in October, so should one of these MPs choose to support Herbie's Law, we'll let you know.

Showcasing the future: Dr. Modi presents our soon to launch database

Showcasing our pioneering Recombinant Antibodies and Mimetics Database, our Science Manager, Dr Stephanie Modi, presented at the The Humane Research Trust's conference at the Manchester Institute of Biotechnology.

Our soon to be launched database is a vital resource helping researchers transition away from animal-derived antibodies and embrace cutting-edge, human-specific science.

Celebrating Innovation: Lisa Asciak wins best poster prize for animal-free research



We're thrilled to announce that Lisa Asciak at the University of Strathclyde won the best poster prize in 'Supporting the Replacement of Animals in Science' at the recent The BioMedEng Association Conference at Queen Mary University of London. The prize was co-sponsored by Animal Free Research UK and the RSPCA.

Lisa's groundbreaking work focuses on developing 3D-printed synthetic kidney models for surgical training – an innovative step towards animal-free medical research.

"Winning this award will certainly help move this project forward by exploring other 3D-printable, animal-free materials to better mimic the complexity of human organs, while also providing an opportunity to further demonstrate how advancements in 3D-printing technologies play a crucial role in creating a future where no animals suffer for science."

Let's celebrate Lisa's incredible achievement and the future of animal-free innovation!

Recognizing trailblazers: The Pioneer Awards are here!

We're thrilled to announce the launch of the 3rd Pioneer Awards, which celebrates the outstanding contribution of trailblazing scientists who conduct research without using animals.

The Pioneer Award will be awarded to the winner for their contribution in helping to make animal-free the gold standard in UK laboratories. While the Early Career Scientist Award celebrates and promotes the next generation of inspiring scientists and have shown proof of a strong commitment to building their career around animal-free research.

The winners will be entitled to call themselves Pioneers and will deliver a keynote speech at our science conference in March 2025.

New to 2024 we've launched our Supporter's Choice Award where we need YOU to help us decide which groundbreaking, animal-free research project deserves to win. Found out more details on how you can vote for your favourite on page 20.

2.68 million

animal experiments in British labs in 2023

In September, the Home Office released its annual statistics on scientific experiments involving living animals in Great Britain for 2023. Despite a slight decrease in the number of experiments, a staggering 2,681,686 experiments using animals were conducted in British laboratories this year—a disappointing 3% reduction from 2022.

Of these experiments:

- Over half (52.4%) were carried out for basic research (curiosity-driven research to gain basic knowledge). And a quarter (25.1%) were for applied research (the study of human diseases and the development of treatments)
- Neither of these research types have a regulatory requirement to use animals.
- Only 20.8% were mandated for regulatory purposes, challenging the notion that most animal experiments are necessary for ompliance.

Among the 2,681,686 experiments there were:

- 1,926,079 experiments on mice: 2% rise
- 11,409 experiments on Horses: 39% rise
- 63 experiments on Cats: 38% fall
- 3,770 experiments on Dogs: 9% fall
- 2,169 experiments on Monkeys: 1% fall
- 8,936 experiments on Rabbits: 1% rise

While these statistics reveal small progress, they also underscore the urgent need for change. We must push for Herbie's Law, advocating for legislation that encourages scientists to transition away from animal-based research in favor of human-specific technologies. The future is promising, with new approach methodologies (NAMs) gaining traction. Together, we can work towards a world where no animal suffers in the name of science.

Find out more about Herbie's Law and how you can get involved by visiting animalfreeresearchuk/herbies-law

Animal welfare breaches in British labs on the rise

The report into animal welfare breaches in British labs was published by the Animals in Science Regulation Unit (ASRU), which is responsible for regulating experiments on animals in Britain. It reported on the Unit's work in 2022, which included dealing with cases of 'non-compliance' with the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.

In 2022, there were 175 cases of 'non-compliances' confirmed. The report shows that since 2018 there has been a significant increase in these incidents with 28 in 2018, 112 in 2019, 86 in 2020 and 122 in 2021. Shockingly, these breaches were mostly dealt with by measures such as 'letters of reprimand' or inspector advice. In 2022, no licences were suspended and only one case was dealt with by retraining.

In total, 13 cases—representing 7% of all non-compliance incidents—were linked to the failure to provide adequate food and water, adversely impacting the welfare of 64 mice and rats. Tragically, at least 12 mice died or were killed due to this negligence, with one case reporting a mouse left without food or water for 5-6 days.

Among the most shocking instances, 20 mice underwent experiments without anaesthesia, and 3,572 mice were denied necessary pain relief post-experiment. Other violations included the use of pregnant mice without proper authorisation and the administration of substances at unapproved doses.

Failures in animal care were widespread, with 65 reported cases. A rabbit was injured and subsequently euthanised due to an escape, while 198 fish perished from rising water temperatures linked to equipment malfunctions. Poor care resulted in 15 mice drowning after their cage flooded due to a malfunctioning watering system.

We are repeatedly told that animal experiments in Great Britain are tightly regulated, but the current system is failing to protect animals from the most appalling suffering due to serious mistakes being made in laboratories.

The Government must take urgent action to support scientists in moving away from animal experiments. Together, we can ensure that these failures become a thing of the past.

Breast cancer:

One woman diagnosed in the UK every 10 minutes

Breast cancer remains a global health crisis. Despite decades of research, it continues to be the most common cancer in women worldwide, with 1 in 7 women and 1 in 870 men receiving a diagnosis in their lifetime.

According to the World Health Organization, more than 2.3 million women were diagnosed with breast cancer in 2020, and it led to the deaths of 685,000 people that same year. Every death is a tragedy – though humans are not the only victims.

Many more animals have died in humankind's drive for victory against breast cancer, even though 95% of new cancer drugs that look promising in animal tests fail in human trials because they are unsafe or do not work in humans.

They fail because experiments on animals are fundamentally flawed. Animals can never fully mimic the genetic, biological, and environmental factors that contribute to human breast cancer.

Why then, in Britain alone, were there 186,415 animal experiments for cancer research in 2023 – a 2.4% increase from 2022.

Despite millions of animal experiments and billions being spent over the decades on research to find treatments and cures, a cancer remedy remains as elusive as ever.

Treatments like surgery, radiation, chemotherapy, and hormone therapies have saved lives, but they are not a solution for everyone, and they often come with significant physical and emotional burdens. For those with advanced breast cancer, the reality is that current treatments might only extend life for a few months or years, rather than offering a cure. This bleak outlook underscores the urgent need for innovative approaches to understanding and treating breast cancer.

2.3 million

Women and men diagnosed with breast cancer worldwide in 2022

1 in 7

Women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime

95%

The failure rate for new cancer drugs in human clinical trials

186,415

Animal experiments for cancer research in Britain in 2023

How animal-free research Is transforming breast cancer treatment

Animal-free research offers a more effective way forward. By embracing human-specific methods, we can not only reduce the suffering of animals in labs but also accelerate the discovery of better treatments for breast cancer patients. The future lies in innovation—moving beyond the old, ineffective animal research methods and investing in cutting-edge technologies that will bring us closer to a cure.

With animal-free research leading the way, we can offer real hope to millions affected by breast cancer and work towards a future where this devastating disease is no longer a death sentence.

Technologies like 3D cell cultures, organ-on-a-chip systems, and advanced computer models allow researchers to study breast cancer in environments that mimic human conditions more accurately than animal models ever could.

Over the next few pages, we'll dive deeper into the exciting animal-free research projects that, thanks to your support, we're funding and the scientists who are driving change.

Together, we can push the boundaries of science and help create a future where breast cancer is not just treated, but cured—without the use of animals.

Using human cells to unlock the secrets of triple negative breast cancer

Dr Cinzia Allegrucci at the University of Nottingham is developing a new animal-free human-cell based model to study triple negative breast cancer (TNBC) - a rare but aggressive form of breast cancer.

Dr Cinzia Allegrucci

Animals to be replaced: Mice

Triple negative breast cancer (TNBC) is a rare but aggressive type of breast cancer, accounting for around 15% of cases. This cancer type is most commonly seen in women under 40, but it can also develop in men.

A lack of treatments

As TNBC generally occurs in younger women who are below the age for regular breast screening, tumours are often not discovered until they have progressed and metastasised (spread to other parts of the body), making treatment more difficult. If caught in its early stages, TNBC can often be successfully treated using surgery and radiotherapy. However, if TNBC is diagnosed later after it has already metastasised, treatment is much more difficult, and the survival rate is much lower.

Common treatments for less aggressive types of breast cancer, such as hormone therapy, are not suitable so alternatives including surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy and **immunotherapies** are used instead but aren't always successful. TNBC grows and spreads very quicky and often recurs after treatment, so new treatments are needed to improve the prognosis for TNBC patients who are diagnosed at a late stage, when less options are available.

Replacing the 'gold standard'

Most breast cancer research is carried out using either genetically modified mice, or mice that have had cells with cancer-specific mutations injected into them, causing them to grow tumours. This is the 'gold standard' practice and hundreds of thousands of animals are used each year, but while these mice can model some aspects of human cancer, the results often do not directly translate into findings for humans.

Please support Cinzia's project today.

Your donation fuels cutting-edge, humane science

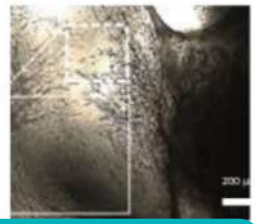
SCAN ME

Transitioning to animal-free methods

Dr Cinzia Allegrucci at the University of Nottingham has developed a new human cell-based model of TNBC, using 3D 'cell balls' called organoids. These organoids are generated from human induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs – special cells that can be 'reprogrammed' to turn into any cell type) which have been given TNBC-specific mutations using gene editing technology.

These organoids closely resemble human breast tissue and show the characteristic features of TNBC, including increased and uncontrolled cell growth.

Normal organoid



TNBC organoid

This organoid model offers several advantages over traditional animal experiments. Firstly, it provides a more accurate representation of human TNBC, allowing researchers to study the disease's early stages and progression in a human-specific context. Secondly, it enables the testing of new treatments specifically designed for TNBC. This approach not only improves the relevance of the research to human patients but can also replace animal testing, potentially speeding up the development of safe and effective treatments.

Dr Allegrucci has successfully replaced mice in her work by developing her organoid model.

An animal-free success story

Dr Allegrucci's lab previously used around 50 mice per year to carry out TNBC research, but over the past few years she has successfully replaced mice in her work by developing her organoid model.

Common methods to grow organoids involve the use of matrices (scaffolds that support the cells as they grow), usually Matrigel (a product derived from mouse tumours). At least one mouse is used to create just two tubes of Matrigel, and Dr Allegrucci estimates that her cancer unit and lab use around 100 tubes of Matrigel per year. In this project, Cinzia will develop new animal-free synthetic matrices to replace Matrigel in her work, saving the lives of at least 50 mice per year, while many more mice could be saved if others also begin to use her animal-free methods.

Cinzia is keen to widely share her methods and resources to encourage others to adopt these animal-free techniques. She will achieve this by engaging with researchers, patients, the public and pharmaceutical companies, while also training the next generation of young scientists to champion animal-free approaches.

> **“I want to advance our understanding of TNBC so we can develop better treatments—ones that can give these people a better chance**

Can you tell us a bit about your background and what inspired you to pursue cancer research?

I trained as a pharmaceutical chemist and I'm also registered as a pharmacist. My interest has always been in improving healthcare through drug discovery and developing new treatments for patients. After completing my PhD in biochemistry in Italy, I became passionate about stem cell research and new technologies. At that time, the UK was one of the best places, alongside the US, to explore this type of research, so I moved here to pursue it.

As I continued working in this field, I became more interested in cancer research. Cancer is such an awful disease that, despite all the advances, we still struggle to overcome. On a personal level, I think we've all been touched by cancer in some way, and that drives my motivation to help patients and make progress in this area.

> **“The new generation of scientists should embrace alternatives to animal research from the start.**

What challenges do you see in current cancer research methods?

I've always had an appreciation for the effort that goes into developing new drugs, but I started to realise that the current methods are very limited. In cancer research, there's a stereotypical pipeline: you use cell lines, and eventually, you're expected to move to in vivo models, which often means animal research. I've always found this to be a bottleneck. Many times, I felt that some research didn't need that next step, as the use of animals didn't bring significant change or progress. I never enjoyed those experiments, and I often argued that alternative methods were not only possible but more effective.

Why are you so passionate about researching triple negative breast cancer (TNBC)?

Triple negative breast cancer is a particularly aggressive form of cancer that we haven't made enough progress in treating. What motivates me is the interaction I have with patients through our work at the University of Nottingham Breast Cancer Research Centre. We meet people at outreach events, and many of them are incredibly young.

It's heartbreaking to meet young mothers with children who are fighting this terrible disease. They're so full of hope that they will be cured or that the cancer will never come back. Unfortunately, for many, especially those in advanced stages, that's not always the reality. My motivation is to advance our understanding of TNBC so we can develop better treatments—ones that can give these people a better chance. Even if we can't cure it, perhaps we can help prolong their lives so they can see their children grow up.

Why do you believe we need a step change and culture change in scientific research?

I believe we should be driving a culture change because the new generation of scientists should embrace alternatives to animal research from the start. They shouldn't have to go through the traditional process of experiments, especially given the limitations and the difficult personal choices involved. Many people, including myself, care about animals—not just pets, but all animals—and being part of this field gives you a different perspective on animal welfare.

> **“I think we've all been touched by cancer in some way, and that drives my motivation to help patients and make progress in this area.**

What do you think is crucial for new scientists to understand early on in their careers?

It's really important for new scientists to be trained from the beginning to understand that animal-free research is not only possible but viable. Even if they go into industry, they should lead with alternatives to animal testing. They should also collaborate more with universities to ensure that new research can be easily translated into practical and industrial applications.

What are some of the challenges in transitioning to animal-free research?

One of the biggest challenges is the bottleneck that occurs when developing new methods. Even if a new technology is created, making it translatable and applicable in a real-world setting is difficult. Everything needs to be scaled up and must be absolutely reproducible to work in larger industrial or clinical environments.

Pioneering the future:
Developing bone-on-a-chip to study the spread of breast cancer

Professor Gwendolen Reilly at the University of Sheffield is using an organ-on-chip model of mature human bone with immune cells to study how breast cancer metastasises (spreads) to the bone and which patients are most likely to be affected.

Prof Gwendolen Reilly

Animals to be replaced: Mice

The spread of breast cancer

If breast cancer is diagnosed in its early stages, when the tumour is confined to the breast, in many cases treatment is successful, and patients can be cured. However, if the cancer has progressed and spread (metastasised) out of the breast into the bones or organs, the disease becomes much more difficult to treat and survival rates drop significantly.

Bone metastasis

Cancer spread occurs very early in breast cancer development, with tumour cells sometimes already present in the bone marrow by the time the primary breast tumour is diagnosed. After the lymph nodes, the bones are the second most common site of breast cancer metastasis, occurring in around 70% of patients, but it can also spread to the lungs, liver and brain. Breast cancer can spread to any type of bone, but it commonly develop in the ribs, spine, pelvis and the long bones of the arms and legs.

The immune system is thought to play a role in the spread of breast cancer, but the exact mechanisms are not fully understood. Therefore, it is crucial for us to study the relationship between cancer cells, bone cells and the immune system to better understand the process of cancer spread.

An unacceptable failure rate

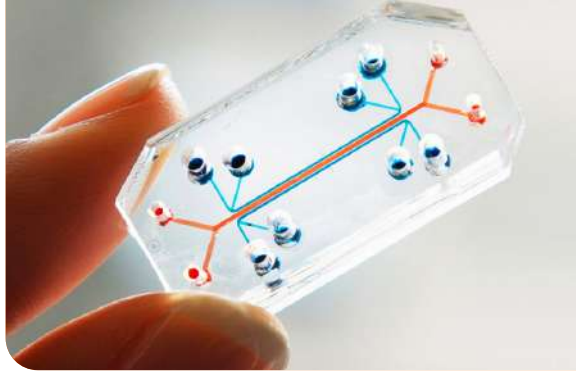
Cancer treatments have the lowest drug success rate of any disease area, with only 5.1% of drugs entering human clinical trials being approved by the FDA.

Part of the reason for these failures is the use of animal experiments. Mice are commonly used to study cancer, where they either have genetic mutations or have cancer cells injected into them to cause a tumour to develop. The mice are then observed to see if cancer spreads in the bone, which causes pain and discomfort before the mice are killed to study their tissues. Drugs may be given to see if they can stop the cancer from metastasising, but important differences in our genetics, anatomy and immune systems means that these results can't always accurately predict how safe and effective a drug is likely to be for humans, even if the drug seems promising in animal experiments.

Bone is second most common site for metastasis, occurring in 70% of patients

Bone-on-a-chip to study the spread of breast cancer

Professor Gwendolen Reilly at the University of Sheffield has developed a new organ-on-chip model of mature human bone, which also contains immune cells, to study the spread of human breast cancer. The breast cancer, bone and immune cells in the chip model allow Professor Reilly to observe the cancer cells as they move towards the bone cells, replicating the process of how cancer spreads



while examining how the immune cells contribute to this process. The cancer cells will be fluorescently tagged so that their movement throughout the chip can be monitored, helping to determine if they are more or less active in the presence of the immune cells.

Importantly, the immune cells in the chip can mimic the immune responses found in a human, which are different to those in mice. This means that new treatments can be tested using the chip to accurately establish how safe and effective these treatments could be for humans.

Future prospects

This innovative bone-on-a-chip model is a step towards a brighter future for both patients and animals, unravelling the complicated process of breast cancer and improving our understanding of the immune system's involvement. If widely used, this model could replace the hundreds of thousands of mice used in breast cancer research each year by providing a complex, human-relevant platform to safely test new drugs. While currently optimised for breast cancer, the chip could also be used to study other cancer types including prostate cancer and multiple myeloma.

Support Gwendonlen's project today.

Your donation fuels cutting-edge, humane science

SCAN ME

Revolutionising the study of breast cancer

Dr Jennifer Ashworth at the University of Nottingham, with the university's spin-out company, PeptiMatrix, has developed a customisable scaffold for growing cancer cells in 3D, closely replicating the environment in breast cancer. This innovative product could revolutionise how we study cancer, improving outcomes for patients while reducing the number of animals used in this area of research.

Dr Jennifer Ashworth

Animals to be replaced: Mice

Cells can be grown in 3D to create 'cell balls' called organoids: miniature replicas of human organs, tumours or other diseases that can be used to study cell behaviour and test new drugs. Organoids are grown in the lab with the support of a scaffold which helps them to develop in a similar way to their usual arrangement in the body. There are many different types of scaffolds available, but as recent research has shown that the environment surrounding cancer cells plays an important role in how tumours develop, creating a scaffold which is as similar as possible to the human environment is crucial to getting the most out of a cell-based model.

The challenge of cancer's changing environment

The extracellular matrix (ECM) is a complex network of proteins and other molecules that provides structural and biochemical support to cells. Changes in the ECM during cancer development have an important influence on how the cells grow, spread and respond to treatments. Replicating these changes in 3D cell culture is essential for understanding cancer growth and developing effective treatments, but current methods often fall short.

Problems with scaffolds

One of the most commonly used scaffolds is Matrigel, a widely used product derived from mouse tumours.

Please support Jennifer's project today.

Your donation fuels cutting-edge, humane science

SCAN ME

It is estimated that an average large research facility could use over 200 vials of Matrigel per year, and this number is increasing rapidly. At least one mouse is used to make just two small tubes of Matrigel, meaning hundreds of thousands of mice are required to fulfil this demand each year. Matrigel is used extensively worldwide, even though it suffers from well-known issues, so there is a clear need to develop reliable, animal-free alternatives to this product.

An animal-free alternative

Dr Jennifer Ashworth and her team at the University of Nottingham have developed a new animal-free material, called a peptide gel, to help solve this problem.

Unlike Matrigel and other scaffolds, peptide gels can be tailor-made to replicate the specific ECM conditions found in different diseases, including breast cancer. By using a peptide gel to mimic the environment found at different breast cancer stages, Dr Ashworth can 'trick' the organoids into behaving in the same way they would in the body, allowing her to test drugs and predict the most effective way to treat breast cancer in patients.

Matrigel. a product derived from mouse tumours, is used extensively worldwide, even though it suffers from well-known issues, so there is a clear need to develop reliable, animal-free alternatives to this product.

This could lead to around 2,500 mice being replaced, with the potential for thousands more as the methods become more widely used.

Sharing knowledge and reducing animal use

As well as providing a more ethical alternative, peptide gels could transform the future of cell-based cancer research, with benefits for both humans and animals. This technology not only addresses the ethical concerns and flaws associated with animal experiments but can also improve the accuracy and relevance of cell-based research, paving the way for more effective treatments and better patient outcomes in future.

Peptide gels can be used by any lab, without the need for specialist expertise or equipment. Dr Ashworth will publish her methods to increase interest and encourage others to use this technology, initially in breast cancer research but with future applications to other diseases.

In addition, Dr Ashworth and her team aim to replace Matrigel with their peptide gel alternative in 5% of labs within 2 years, increasing to 25% in 5 years. This could lead to around 2,500 mice being replaced, with the potential for thousands more as the methods become more widely used.

Driving change across the political spectrum

It's been a busy and exciting few weeks as our team has been on the road, meeting MPs, peers, and ministers across the political spectrum to drive forward the conversation on animal-free research.

Herbie's angels at the Labour Party Conference

Isobel (Public Affairs Director), Darcie (Public Affairs Officer) and Gemma (Science Officer) – fondly known as Herbie's Angels – have been championing Herbie's Law at the Labour Party Conference and will be attending the Conservative Conference as this newsletter goes to print. Our stand at Labour was buzzing with activity as MPs and Ministers, both new and familiar, stopped by to show their support. It's been heartwarming to see so many MPs eager to learn more about Herbie's Law – a sign that our message is spreading.

A big thank you to our supporters

Many MPs mentioned that they had received emails from their constituents about Herbie's Law, and for that, we owe you a huge thank you. Your voices are being heard, and they are making an impact!

The great Herbie puzzle competition

To add some fun to the serious business, we ran a Herbie-themed puzzle competition at the Labour Party Conference. The winner, Emma Foody MP, completed the puzzle in an impressive 26.89 seconds, taking home a mini Herbie! In second place was Martin Rhodes MP with 27.89 seconds, and Ruth Jones MP came in a close third at 28.73 seconds. Congratulations to all!

Meeting with DEFRA's Baroness Sue Hayman

Isobel also had a productive meeting with Baroness Sue Hayman, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Minister responsible for animal welfare. They discussed the phase-out of animal testing in medical research, with Sue reaffirming her commitment to supporting this crucial cause. She'll be collaborating closely with Ministers from the Home Office and the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology to push for progress.

Animal welfare conversations

The team also attended several events, including the Labour Animal Welfare Society's event, where we had the opportunity to connect with other animal welfare organisations and hear about the key issues they're working on.

Liberal Democrats Conference

Isobel also represented us at the Liberal Democrats Conference, where she engaged with 18 backbench MPs, 3 peers, and 5 opposition frontbenchers, including a key staffer from the Deputy Leader's office. Whether it was a quick introduction or a more in-depth conversation, our pawprint briefing on Herbie's Law made its mark. A highlight was Tim Farron's positive response to a question from Isobel during a panel discussion on accelerating animal replacement in medical research.

Next stop?

The team will continue the conversation and keep building momentum for Herbie's Law at the Conservative Party Conference.

Your vote is needed

We are thrilled to announce the launch of our inaugural Supporter's Choice Award, and we need YOU to help us decide which groundbreaking, animal-free research project deserves to win!

Each of these incredible projects is pushing the boundaries of science while prioritising compassion for animals, and now it's your turn to make an impact.

Meet the nominees:

1. Mini Hearts - Developing stem cell models to understand heart disease

Professor Chris Denning and Dr Kate Nguyen
University of Nottingham

About the Project: This innovative research is developing stem cell models that mimic human heart tissue, providing crucial insights into heart disease. These "Mini Hearts" could revolutionise our understanding of cardiovascular conditions and pave the way for more effective treatments, all without the use of animals.

Animals replaced: Mice, rats, rabbits, pigs and sheep.

2. Developing organ-chip systems to investigate the spread of breast cancer

Professor Valerie Speirs and Celia Rodriguez (PhD Student)
University of Aberdeen

About the Project: This cutting-edge research uses organ-on-a-chip systems to explore how breast cancer spreads within the human body. By mimicking the environment of human organs, this research aims to uncover new strategies to prevent and treat the spread of breast cancer, moving away from the use of animals and towards more relevant human-based studies.

Animals replaced: Mice and rats.

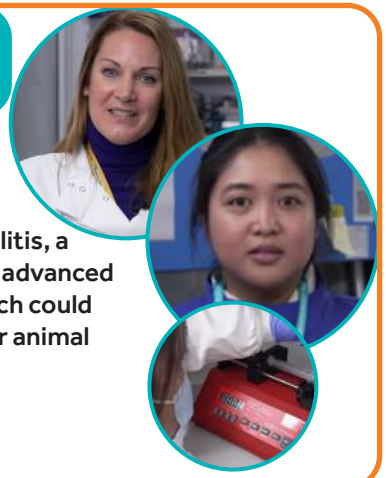
3. Developing a new animal-free tool to detect COVID-19

Professor Lorna Harries and Merlin Davies (PhD student)
ARC 2.0 - University of Exeter

About the Project: In response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, this project focused on creating an innovative, animal-free tool for detecting the virus. This research not only advances our ability to respond to current and future pandemics but also sets a new standard for humane scientific practices

Animals replaced: Mice, rabbits and goats.

4. 3D model of the infant lung to treat RSV bronchiolitis



Dr Claire Smith and Machaela Palor (PhD Student)
Institute of Child Health at Great Ormond Street Hospital

About the Project: Focused on combating RSV bronchiolitis, a severe respiratory infection in infants, this project uses advanced 3D modeling to replicate infant lung tissue. This approach could lead to life-saving treatments and eliminate the need for animal testing in this vital area of pediatric research.

Animals replaced: Mice and rats.

How to vote

You can vote via post by filling out the form on the back of the donation form and return to us using the free post envelope.

To vote online visit animalfreeresearchuk.org/supporterschoice or scan the QR code on the right.

Don't wait—voting closes Friday 8th November, and your favorite project needs your support!

SCAN ME

FABULOUS FUNDRAISERS

Busy bees in Bude

"July was an exciting month for the Bude community group! Not only did we host a successful Tabletop Sale, but we also took part in the annual Bude Animal Friends Awareness Day. The Tabletop Sale was a huge hit, drawing in crowds who are still raving about the incredible cakes, many generously donated by local professional bakers. One cake was so stunning that we raffled it off, raising over £100 just from that alone! In total, we raised a fantastic £590.15.

The Awareness Day is always a highlight, giving us the opportunity to connect with local animal rescues and sanctuaries. This year, I had the pleasure of inviting newly elected MP for North Cornwall, Ben Maguire, and Bude-Stratton's Mayor, Steve Haynes, to join me. They both showed genuine interest and took the time to learn more about our charity and Herbie's Law, a cause close to my heart.

In August, Bude Carnival took center stage, where, among many unique floats, humans dressed as animals paraded the streets. Our day kicked off with a fundraising stall, followed by the grand procession in the evening. This year's carnival held extra meaning as the community honored the beloved local cat, Snowey, who recently passed away. Known for her allergy-induced bedraggled appearance and occasional disappearances, Snowey was a beloved fixture of Bude, with locals affectionately dubbing her "Meth Cat" and even giving her a Facebook page. Her passing touched the community, and in her memory, £452.22 was raised – proving there's nowhere quite like Bude!

September brought two major events. First, Wags Canine Services teamed up with Stable Door Pets to host an enormous dog show. Bella, an ex-laboratory survivor living with her amazing owner, Maxine, won Best Rescue. By the end of the day, we had an incredible total of £589.35.

Our biggest event of the year, however, was something new—a Caribbean Evening. Despite our nerves about turnout, we needn't have worried—it was a resounding success! Huge thanks to Bude Rugby Club for donating the venue and to our fantastic DJs, Rob S and Matty B, who generously gave their time and talent for free. With a Caribbean food van outside serving up delicious meals, the night was truly special. Thanks to the generosity of the Bude community, who enthusiastically purchased raffle tickets, we raised an astounding £1,390.52.

Throughout the year, our dedicated team—Jenny Codlin, Karen Thomas, Penny Baxter, and Juliet Draper—has been hard at work selling donated goods, CDs, DVDs, and books, which has brought in significant funds. I'm so grateful to them and to all our supporters who work tirelessly to make this group a success.

So far this year, we've raised a phenomenal £5,207.23, bringing our total since the group's inception in November 2015 to over £60,000! With a Christmas Craft Fayre and Raffle still to come, we've set our sights on reaching £65,000. If you're reading this and considering starting your own community group, I highly encourage you to give it a go. It's fun, builds strong friendships, and look at what we can achieve together!

Onward to 2025—who knows what adventures await us next!

Steph Jones-Giles
Bude Community Ambassador"

Oceane and Davi's run for a kinder science

Huge congratulations to our incredible fundraisers; Oceane, who ran the Big Half, and Davi who ran the Great North Run!

Thanks to their amazing efforts, they raised over £500!

Thank you so much for sharing your journey with us, and for raising money on our behalf. It means the world to us. We loved seeing the pictures of you both with your medals—such an inspiration!

Your legacy, my future.

Free Wills for our supporters

As we've all experienced over the last few years, life is full of uncertainties. But there is one certainty you can secure: your legacy.

Creating a will isn't just about paperwork, its about peace of mind; a chance to ensure your wishes are met, your loved ones are taken care of and to help causes close to your heart.

Writing a will may be something you've considered but haven't had the chance to tackle yet, or may be you have found it a bit overwhelming. That's why we've joined forces with Beyond to provide our loyal supporters with a free will writing service, to ease the process and reduce the stress.

After providing for your friends and family, we hope you'll consider including a gift in your will to Animal Free Research UK. Thank you.

For more information about our free will offer please visit our website:
www.animalfreeresearchuk.org/beyond-life

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Should you wish to discuss this further or have any queries relating to leaving a gift in your will, please contact legacies@animalfreeresearchuk.org