



## media *release*

Monday 12 March, 2012

### **DEAF AND BLIND RESCUE DOG IS GIVEN GIFT OF SIGHT BY VETS**

**AHT vets and the RSPCA restore sight for rescued Staffordshire Bull Terrier**

An RSPCA rescue dog has been given the gift of sight by vets at the Animal Health Trust (AHT) in Suffolk.

Dodger, an 18-month-old Staffordshire Bull Terrier was born completely deaf and with severe cataracts in both his eyes, making him almost entirely blind.

Dodger's story hit the headlines after his owner was caught hitting him, and the footage was posted online. His owner was subsequently prosecuted for animal cruelty and banned from keeping dogs for 15 years.

Following his rescue the RSPCA team sought advice from the AHT's Ophthalmologists to see if Dodger's sight problems could be rectified.

Claudia Hartley, the AHT's Head of Small Animal Ophthalmology, said: "Dodger is the most adorable dog. As soon as he arrived I fell in love with him and it wasn't long before he'd work his charm on the rest of the vets and nurses here!"

The AHT's vets initially performed cataract surgery on Dodger's right-eye and it became apparent very quickly that he was able to see again.

Kirstyn Gaunt, Deputy Manager at the RSPCA Block Fen Animal Centre, where Dodger is currently staying, said: "Dodger is an amazing dog and everyone who meets him instantly falls in love with him.

"He is just such a loveable character, and when it was discovered he was deaf and unable to see clearly, we wanted to do all we could to give him a second chance. We were all in tears when we heard the AHT could carry out the operation for him and give him the gift of sight again – we are so extremely grateful to them for their help."

Dodger returned to the AHT in February 2012 to have his left-eye operated on and initial signs are very good.

Claudia Hartley, said: "Both of Dodger's operations went very well and we're confident he now has sight in both eyes. It's an absolute joy to be able to help dogs like Dodger who will now, hopefully, have a much brighter future.

"Dodger won the AHT team over with his charm and affectionate nature. I have two Staffies of my own and if I had room for another I'd certainly be taking this lovely young chap home! We all hope he will find a forever home that deserves a dog as special as him."

The RSPCA team will now begin the process of looking for a very special new home for Dodger.

Kirstyn Gaunt, added: "Although Dodger can now see, he is still completely deaf, and he'll need a special owner who can understand his very specific needs. He has started to take on some basic sign language and he is a fast learner. Everyone who meets Dodger is bowled over by his loveable nature and character, but he is still young and has a lot of energy!

"We know that somewhere out there is the perfect home for him, where he will be able to enjoy a fantastic life with a loving family."

Dodger is still receiving follow-up treatment for his eyes. This will continue for several weeks, but anyone interested in offering him a new home can contact the RSPCA's Block Fen Animal Centre on 0300 123 0726 or call 0300 123 8405 or you can email [bfasm@rspca.org.uk](mailto:bfasm@rspca.org.uk)

As Dodger may require follow-up treatments we are looking to find a new owner in the East region.

**Ends**

**For further information, please contact:**

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**Photographs:**

A photograph of Dodger whilst at the AHT is available on request from the AHT press office.

There is also a video detailing Dodger's story available to view at:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e\\_9YeEA4ilU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e_9YeEA4ilU)