



# media release

22 June 2015

## **FACEBOOK FUNDRAISING GROUP RAISE MORE THAN 24K FOR CANINE CANCER RESEARCH IN MATTER OF MONTHS**

### **Zoe's Journey UK, named after Golden Retriever Zoe who battled (and beat!) lymphoma, raises staggering amount for Animal Health Trust**

Jayne May, from Bristol, pledged to raise £5,000 for the Animal Health Trust (AHT) in early 2015. She wanted to do something to give dogs a better chance of fighting this terrible disease after three of her own dogs have been badly affected by cancer.

A long term member of the Facebook Group, Golden Retrievers England UK, Jayne turned to the online Group (which had offered her emotional support when her dog Zoe was diagnosed with lymphoma nearly two years ago, aged 12,) for help.

The support Jayne received was unimaginable and today the total amount raised stands well over £24,000.

35 committed supporters of Zoe's Journey UK attended a celebratory event at the AHT, one of the UK's leading veterinary charities, based near Newmarket, Suffolk, on Zoe's 14<sup>th</sup> birthday, Friday 19 June, to mark their special achievement to date.

Jayne said: "Zoe has defied the odds and after carefully monitored and controlled chemotherapy treatment at Watkins and Tasker Veterinary Group in Bristol, she stands here today clear of lymphoma 20 months after her diagnosis.

"But unfortunately, not many dogs are as lucky as Zoe and sadly I've seen too many dogs lost to this horrible disease through friends, family and the Facebook Group.

"I wanted to try and make a difference by raising £5,000 for canine cancer research at the AHT – which I thought was an ambitious target back in January! The support for Zoe's Journey UK from all over the country, and abroad, has just been incredible.

"Groups of people have come together to hold cake sales, garden parties, walks, you name it, it's happened: a lady in Cornwall even shaved her head! We've had people completing marathons and even climbing Ben Nevis, it's really taken off and is so much bigger than I ever thought it would be

– mainly down to people I've never even met before. They have come together as a "Team" fighting for the dogs, to give them a better chance.

"We've also had a running auction through Facebook since February where anyone can get involved by listing an item and all of the money goes straight to the AHT through the [Just Giving Page](#).

"The power of people to rally behind a cause as important as this is truly amazing and I'm so grateful to everyone who has dedicated their time and money to supporting the AHT through Zoe's Journey UK.

"Zoe wouldn't be here if it wasn't for my vets, Steve Tasker and Liz Watkins, and the knowledge they have thanks to organisations like the AHT who are doing so much to improve the knowledge of how to treat diseases like cancer. Hopefully now many more dogs will have a better chance at fighting this disease in the future."

The Animal Health Trust has a dedicated, state-of-the-art cancer centre for treating horses, dogs and cats with cancer and its expert teams of vets and scientists are undertaking multiple research projects to gain a better clinical and scientific understanding of canine cancers, and ways to better diagnose and treat the disease.

During the Zoe's Journey UK visit tours were given of the AHT's facilities and presentations were heard from the AHT's Head of Oncology, Dr Davide Berlato, and Head of Molecular Oncology Research, Dr Mike Starkey, about their work to further veterinary understanding of canine cancers.

A plaque was also unveiled to mark the achievements and continuing support of Zoe's Journey UK for the AHT.

Andrew Simmonds, Head of Individual Giving at the Animal Health Trust, said: "The Zoe's Journey UK team have to be one of our most successful fundraising groups to date and it's just incredible the way that they've been able to galvanise such support through social media alone.

"The sense of community spirit between dog lovers, especially those who have sadly been affected by a cancer in their animal, and the heartbreaking prospect of losing them to the disease, is really overwhelming. We're so grateful to Zoe's Journey UK for choosing to support our canine cancer research and can't wait to see what's next for this amazing campaign which seems to be unstoppable in what they can achieve!

"We know that one in four dogs will get cancer at some point in their lifetime but with quick diagnosis and the right treatment, it can be very treatable.

"We're improving our knowledge of how to treat and diagnose cancer all the time through the work in our clinic, which our vets share with the profession, and we're really excited about the

scientific research currently underway in our labs, which, in time, could make a significant difference to the lives of many dogs affected by this terrible disease.

“Thanks to extraordinary supporters like Jayne May, and all those who give to our cancer research, we’re one step closer to finding the answers and fighting cancer in our dogs.”

To find out more please go to [www.aht.org.uk/cancer](http://www.aht.org.uk/cancer)

**For further information, please contact:**

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**Additional notes:**

- The Animal Health Trust (AHT) is an independent charity, employing more than 200 scientists, vets and support workers. It aims to improve the health and welfare of horses, dogs and cats through research. It also provides specialist referral services and continuous education to vets. Visit the website at [www.aht.org.uk](http://www.aht.org.uk)