



The British Club of The Hague's nominated charity this year is the "Haags Dierencentrum" (the animal shelter of The Hague). HDC is the oldest and one of the largest animal shelters in The Netherlands. Their aim is to provide for every homeless cat and dog that has been given up for rehoming or brought in as a stray from The Hague region. The needs of each individual animal are the guideline when it comes to looking after, training (if necessary) and finding a suitable new owner. The future owner is supplied with straightforward information about the personality and needs of the animal, in order to make sure it receives the care and living conditions it needs when rehomed.

History:

The forerunner of HDC was established in 1877 at Bagijnestraat by Maria Jacoba van Manen-Thesing, together with five other wealthy ladies. Until then there was no shelter for stray animals. The shelter moved to Ammunitiehaven in 1881. Originally only dogs were taken in but from 1893 accommodation for cats was also provided. HDC moved to Schenkade in 1981 and was officially opened by Princess Beatrix. In 1992 HDC moved to its present location at the Lozerlaan. This location provided a suitable area for dog walking and enough space to extend the shelter with a day care facility for dogs and kennels for both cats and dogs. In 2006 the dog training facility Quiebus was added and in 2011 HDC employed two full time certified dog behavioural experts.

In 1910 HDC became one of the first animal shelters with its own veterinary clinic and full time veterinarian. Due to the general mobilisation in 1914, the veterinarian had to report to the army and the clinic was closed only to be reopened in 1925. The second World War was a difficult time for HDC. During that time, the royal family's dog Billy stayed at the shelter's kennel.

In 2003 The Hague municipality lowered its contribution. By 2011 HDC was on the brink of bankruptcy but due to cost cutting measures and donations received HDC managed to remain open without compromising the animal's well-being. HDC is partially financed by The Hague municipality. Other income is generated by kennel and adoption fees. Fundraisers and donations however are essential for the continuation of the work. HDC works with both paid employees and (about 160) volunteers.

You can find more information at www.haagsdierencentrum.nl.