

Police Scotland dog handlers raise thousands for Thin Blue Paw Foundation

A team of police dog handlers from Scotland raised almost £10,000 for a charity that helps support retired police dogs in their new homes.

Lisa Mitchell has worked as a dog handler for Police Scotland for seven years. She is based in Edinburgh with her two dogs, German shepherd Harper and springer spaniel, Digby.

“I found out about the [Thin Blue Paw Foundation](#) in 2020, shortly after it had launched, and I knew I wanted to do something to help raise money for the cause,” she said.

“Harper is eight and will retire next year. Her care will then be my responsibility. I also have to consider Digby and my five-month-old German shepherd, Kaiser, who will eventually take over from Harper when she retires.



"I wanted to help the charity as much as possible; one day, I might need their help."

Lisa and eight of her fellow dog handlers – six from Edinburgh, one from Glasgow, one from Larbert and one from Glenrothes – decided to set themselves challenges throughout January.

Lisa added: "I decided I needed something positive to focus on in January and Covid restrictions made fundraising difficult so I came up with the idea to run, walk or cycle 10k a day. Some other police officers, friends and family also got involved and, between us, we managed to raise £9,650."

The team presented their donation to the Thin Blue Paw Foundation in February with a giant cheque, although Covid restrictions meant they couldn't deliver it in person.

The Thin Blue Paw Foundation was founded in August 2020 and is a national dog welfare charity which protects, celebrates and rehabilitates both serving and retired police dogs from across the UK.

Charity trustee Kieran Stanbridge said: "Many people are

unaware that retired police dogs do not receive financial support in their retirement, meaning the responsibility for their care and vet bills fall solely to their ex-handler or new owner.

“It can be incredibly difficult to get insurance for an ex-working dog and they can face injuries or health problems as a result of their working life, leaving many owners facing ongoing and expensive vet bills.

“The Thin Blue Paw Foundation provides much-needed financial support to over 200 unsung canine heroes and their owners to enable them to have a long and happy retirement.”

Lisa and the team have decided to launch a charity challenge each year to help support the charity.

Lisa added: “I want to raise awareness of the charity and the work they do. Not a lot of people realise that retired police dogs don’t receive support from the force they once served.”