

HELPING TO REUNITE DOGS

Our social media seems to be full of found, lost & stolen dogs these days so we are sure yours will be the same too. Most dog lovers have a fear that this will happen to them one day so want to help others be reunited with their own dogs. As a rescue we get a lot of these posts shared with us and see the positives and negatives to them so thought we would put together a short guide so that those who want to help reunite dogs make sure that their effort and shares are not wasted.

There are currently 1000's of groups on social media dedicated to trying to reunite dogs, there can never be too many as the more people sharing and working towards reuniting dogs the better. However you will only see posts in a social media group if you are a member of that group or a friend of someone who is which means many posts are not seen by the people that need to see them the most, the dogs owners. So the best way for dogs to be reunited is for all their details to be located in one place and we recommend www.doglost.co.uk be that place.

We are not sure how long doglost has been around but we were first aware of it in 2001 so it has been around quite a while. All people involved in dog welfare are aware of it and all good dog wardens, rescues and stray kennels etc refer to it when finding a dog. There is no way they could possibly check through the 1000's of groups on facebook even if they could find them (many are listed under the name of a missing dog so if you don't know the dogs name you can't find the group) so there is a much better chance of a dog being reunited if it is recorded on their database. They also have a huge amount of experience and contacts (inc tracker dogs, police liaison, drone operators etc) who will be a great help to owners with lost dogs.

SO HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Firstly register on www.doglost.co.uk Once you have registered on the site you will be sent details of any dogs lost/found in your area then you can do some or all of the following;

- share the poster on social media
- print copies of the poster and put up in various places in your area (remember you need to take them down again when the dog is reunited)
- get involved in looking for the dog (this can mean getting involved in organised searches, organising your own search or just walking your own dogs in the area the dog has gone missing)
- try and match the dog to other missing/found dogs you have seen either on doglost or shared on social media



Encourage people to register dogs on doglost If you see details of a lost/found dog ask if it is registered on doglost, if not send them the link and tell them to register it on there, getting all dogs on one database is the key to reuniting as many as possible.

Encourage people to register found dogs to the dog warden. It is a legal requirement to report any found dog to the dog warden, often people don't want to do this as they don't like the thought of a dog going to the stray kennels. However **if someone loses a dog one of the first places they will contact is the dog warden, if they do not use social media (and many people still do not) this may be their only chance to be reunited with their dog so it is really important that this is done.** Reporting a found dog does not mean it has to go to the stray kennels, it can be kept in the finders home however the rules on rehoming are different. If a dog goes to the stray kennels it can legally be rehomed after 7 days, if the dog is kept in the finders home the dog needs to be kept around a month before it can be rehomed, the dog warden would be able to advise on the exact rules. They can search on www.gov.uk/check-council-missing-dog for dog warden information.

And of course SHARE SHARE SHARE This bit may sound simple but it is important that that your share is not a wasted one. What is a wasted share you ask? A wasted share is a post that is either out of date, does not show the most up to date status of the dog or does not include the most basic details. So when sharing;

- **Wherever possible share the dog's post or link** as this will ensure that the most up to date status and all contact details are visible.
- **Only share and comment on original posts.** If sharing a post make sure you are sharing the original post rather than a share of a share, to do this click on the post and share from the original rather than what has been shared to you. Otherwise any comments made on your share will not be seen by the owner or finder of the dog which could mean the difference between the dog being reunited and not.



For example if you don't share the original post someone could reply to your post with a picture of a dog saying is this your missing dog, you would see that comment but the original poster would not.

It will also mean that if comments are added to say the dog has been reunited the people you have shared it with won't see that and so will think the dog is still not with its owner.

If you cannot get back to the original post don't share it as it means no one else will be able to either.

- **Check essential information.** Only share posts that include the basic information needed to be able to reunite. **What** is missing, **where** from, **when** and **who** to contact, if these basic pieces of information are not available it is unlikely that sharing it will result in a dog being reunited. The best thing you can do in this situation is make a comment to suggest they repost with the relevant information included.
- **Never ever ever share a screen shot,** if you share a screen shot there is no way that anyone you share it with can ever get back to the original poster, see updates or know the date of the original post. These are probably the worst of the wasted shares as they go round and round with everyone thinking they are a recent post. We have had them shared with us up to 3 years after dogs have been reunited.
- **Don't duplicate** before you share a post to a group take a quick look to check that other people haven't just shared the same thing. If lots of people share the same post to the same group it means that lots of people are commenting on lots of different posts and also that the groups page is full of the same post meaning other missing/found dogs are not visible.
- **Choose where to share carefully.** As tempting as it is to share every lost/found dog on every group/page you know of, make sure they are appropriate to the page. For example if a dog local to you goes missing a great page to share is your local selling page however it wouldn't be appropriate to share every dog to that page. If you share every missing dog in the UK to a that page you are likely to either get blocked from the page, the admin ban non selling posts or people will just stop reading the lost dog post. The same goes for sharing on your own page, your non dog loving friends may get bored with your posts and stop reading them and they could miss the one post that they could help with.
- **Take a moment to check** Just before you share take an extra few moments to have a look at the original post to double check that the dog still hasn't been reunited.

You may think that a wasted share isn't that bad, it only takes you a second so what does it matter if it's wasted? The real reason that a wasted share is a bad thing isn't because of the time it takes you; it is because it means social media is full of dogs that are already reunited. People are putting lots of time and effort into trying to reunite dogs that have long since been reunited, this time and effort would be much better spent on helping dogs that are not yet back with their owners.

We cannot possibly list all the groups on social media that you may be able to find lost/found dogs listed as there are just far too many but here are just a few on Facebook that we know of.

DOUGALS ARMY

LOST DOGFOUND

FOUND DOG LOST

WAKEFIELD LOST DOGS

YORKSHIRE DOGS LOST AND FOUND

HARVEYS ARMY (there is one North, South, Wales, Scotland)

DINNINGTON DOG WATCH

NORTH EAST UK LOST FOUND DOGS

LOST / FOUND DOGS IN SHEFFIELD

Most areas have a number of lost dog pages so type in your local area plus lost found dogs and it will probably bring up your local page. Many of the others have been set up in the name of a dog that has been lost so harder to find but as people share between them you can often find them by looking on other missing dog groups/pages.