**NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR PRESTIGIOUS INTERNATIONAL CANINE HEALTH AWARDS**

The International Canine Health Awards are returning for the fifth year to celebrate some of the world’s finest researchers and scientists whose work has had a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of dogs.

Nominations are currently being sought for the awards, which are run by the Kennel Club Charitable Trust and include substantial cash prizes donated by Vernon and Shirley Hill, founders of Metro Bank, to go towards new or continued research.

The awards will be presented at a ceremony at the Kennel Club in London on 24th May 2017.

With a prize fund totalling £65,000, the Kennel Club Charitable Trust is urging people to nominate themselves or their peers by 13th February 2017. The awards will be judged by representatives from the veterinary profession and the world of scientific research, including experts in each of the nominees' selected fields.

The three categories for the International Canine Health Awards are:

* **International Prize in Canine Health** for outstanding contribution in the field of canine health and welfare with a prize fund of £40,000 (approximately $55,000 or €48,000) for future projects. The award will be presented to an individual who is currently involved in world class innovation but with much still to contribute.
* **Lifetime Achievement Award** with a £10,000 prize fund - a veterinarian or scientist working in a related discipline who has dedicated much of their career to advancing the health of dogs. The award will be presented to an individual who has made a significant impact on the world stage of canine health.
* **Student Inspiration Awards** which will be split into undergraduate and postgraduate awards, with a prize fund of £10,000 for the postgraduate and £5,000 for the undergraduate winner. These prizes will aid further education costs, the development of their careers, or to create or continue a project. The awards will be presented to extraordinary students studying at a British veterinary school, who demonstrate the potential significantly to advance the frontiers of veterinary medicine and research in the field of dogs.

Last year’s winners included Professor Holger Volk, recipient of the International Award, who was recognised for the progressive work he has carried out in the field of veterinary neurology and neurosurgery. Known for his work in canine epilepsy, Professor Volk has covered many topics within the field, including a study on diets to aid seizure control; an ongoing project on behavioural epilepsy co-morbidities; studies into quality of life issues for dogs and owners; and he has helped to launch a new anti-epileptic drug.

Speaking about the award, Professor Volk said: "I felt very honoured to have received the award earlier in the year. It caught me by surprise that the highly respected Kennel Club would endorse our work by giving me this award. I am grateful for all the amazing colleagues, breeders and pet owners for their passion to help battle animal diseases and for making a difference on a daily basis. Without everyone’s support, our work could never have been achieved or have an impact.”

Professor Mike Herrtage won the Lifetime Achievement Award for his major contribution to veterinary scholarship and research. The Dean of the Cambridge Veterinary School, Professor Herrtage is internationally recognised as a leading expert in diagnostic imaging and small animal medicine. His research has covered a broad range of topics over a 40-year career and he has a specialist focus in the field of metabolic and endocrine diseases.

Professor Herrtage said: “I was surprised and overwhelmed to have been nominated for this auspicious award. It was a fantastic honour and one that I dedicated to my colleagues, residents and students who have stimulated and supported me through my career, as well as my patients who have challenged and continue to challenge me.”

Last year’s other winners were David Singleton, who won the Postgraduate Student Inspiration Award for the research he is doing into antimicrobial resistance in dogs and other animals at the University of Liverpool; and Natalie Gibbons, winner of the Undergraduate Student Inspiration Award for her proposed research at the Royal Veterinary Collage into the phenotypic and functional characterisation of canine monocytes, an area which has not yet been explored in depth.

Professor Steve Dean, Chairman of Trustees of the Kennel Club Charitable Trust, commented: "After four successful years, the International Canine Health Awards will once again, in 2017, recognise those scientists, veterinarians and other individuals who help provide dogs with a healthier future. Massive strides towards improving canine health have been made in recent years and through the generosity of the Vernon and Shirley Hill Foundation we are able to offer these awards to a global audience.

“The International Award recognises innovative work in dog health that deserves recognition and funding. Individuals may be nominated by others or may nominate themselves. Candidates can apply from anywhere in the world and the winner will receive a prize of £40,000 to support their work.

“The Kennel Club Charitable Trust has a long history of supporting work that helps to improve dog health and, thanks to Vernon and Shirley Hill, the International Canine Health Awards is proud to be able to honour and reward world-class achievement."

Vernon Hill, founder and Chairman of Metro Bank, and whose major gift underwrites the International Canine Health Awards, said: “We are proud to support world leaders in veterinary medicine and its impact on human health.”

All nominations should be made via the online application form on the Kennel Club website before 13th February 2017 at <http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/ICHA>. If you have any queries regarding the application process, please contact Denise French at the Kennel Club via denise.french@thekennelclub.org.uk.

**ENDS**

20th September

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**Notes to Editors**

**About the Kennel Club Charitable Trust**

The Kennel Club Charitable Trust was established in 1987 and has provided grants of more than £10m to a range of organisations and charities.

The Trust awards grants to organisations to help them to achieve its objective of 'making a difference for dogs' and supports work with dogs across three distinct areas:

* Science - funding research into health problems in dogs
* Support - helping to train dogs to help human beings
* Welfare - providing funds for dogs that need help or rescue

The Kennel Club Charitable Trust has committed a total of £2.7m of funding for the Kennel Club Genetics Centre at the Animal Health Trust, which is investigating a number of canine inherited diseases, having agreed £1.2m in funds over five years in 2009 and a further £1.5m over five years in 2013.

The Kennel Club Charitable Trust also runs the Bark and Read Foundation to support charities in the UK that are doing amazing work by taking dogs into schools and other places to help children to read. There are now eight charities whose work to improve child literacy is supported by the Bark & Read Foundation.

To donate to the Kennel Club Charitable Trust, text KCCT16 and the amount you wish to donate to 70070.

**About Metro Bank:**

Vernon Hill is the founder and chairman of Metro Bank, the UK’s first new High Street bank in more than 100 years. The revolutionary bank currently has 43 stores across London and the Home Counties, with plans to expand to 200 by 2020. Metro Bank is publicly listed on the London Stock Exchange, symbol: MTRO.

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Vernon and Shirley Hill, and Sir Duffield, their Yorkshire Terrier, have a deep commitment to the veterinary community including:

* Sponsorship of The University of Pennsylvania World Veterinary Award
* Sponsorship of The Hill Pavilion at The University of Pennsylvania Veterinary School

**The Kennel Club**

The Kennel Club is the largest organisation in the UK devoted to dog health, welfare and training. Its objective is to ensure that dogs live healthy, happy lives with responsible owners.

It runs the country’s largest registration database for both pedigree and crossbreed dogs and the Petlog database, which is the UK’s biggest reunification service for microchipped animals. The Kennel Club is accredited by UKAS to certify members of its Assured Breeder Scheme, which is the only scheme in the UK that monitors breeders in order to protect the welfare of puppies and breeding bitches. It also runs the UK’s largest dog training programme, the Good Citizen Dog Training Scheme and licenses shows and clubs across a wide range of activities, which help dog owners to bond and enjoy life with their dogs. The Kennel Club runs the world’s greatest dog show, Crufts, and the Eukanuba Discover Dogs event at ExCeL London, which is a fun family day out that educates people about how to buy responsibly and care for their dog.

The Kennel Club invests in welfare campaigns, dog training and education programmes and the Kennel Club Charitable Trust, which supports research into dog diseases and dog welfare charities, including Kennel Club Breed Rescue organisations that re-home dogs throughout the UK. The Kennel Club jointly runs health screening schemes with the British Veterinary Association and through the Charitable Trust, funds the Kennel Club Genetics Centre at the Animal Health Trust, which is at the forefront of pioneering research into dog health. The Kennel Club Cancer Centre at the Animal Health Trust contributes to the AHT’s well-established cancer research programme, helping to further improve dog health.