



SPECIAL GUESTS: Derrie Cattell and Lola, who visit the care home regularly, with Zoe Bates, who nominated them, watched by residents June Woodridge and Neville Banford

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Doggone great pair brighten up day

A GRANDMOTHER who, along with her dog, "brightens up the days" of residents at an Upper Beeding care home has been nominated for Best Volunteer in the Herald and Gazette's Community Stars Awards.

■ by Alex Therrien
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Derrie Cattell visits Valerie Manor residential care home, in Henfield Road, every other week with her black Labrador, Lola.

Care home manager Zoe Bates said the pair's visits "brighten the days" of the residents, who enjoy spending time with a dog and remembering their own pets.

She said: "Volunteers like Derrie give up their time for nothing and it completely brightens up the lives of the residents and makes their day.

"They beam as soon as they see Derrie and Lola come through the door and it helps with their mental and physical state.

"The residents are really pleased we're putting forward this nomination.

But Derrie, 90, and Lola's visits are more than a opportunity to reminisce – they are also therapeutic for the home's residents.

Lola is a Pets as Therapy dog, which means she has been approved by PAT – an animal charity which promotes the therapeutic effect dogs can have on people who are ill, disabled or elderly.

As part of being recognised as a PAT dog, Lola was given a one-hour assessment to check she had the patient temperament needed.

Derrie, of The Pike, Washington, said: "I feel a bit embarrassed about the nomination.

"I don't think anything I do warrants it. Lola and I enjoy our visits as much as they do.

"Lola is such a kind dog and loves people.

"I know if I didn't have a dog, I'd be miserable. It adds something extra to their day."

Derrie, a retired nurse at Glebe Surgery, in Monastery Lane, Storrington, added: "I think anything that brings awareness to PAT dogs is a good thing."