

Cats Protection Bye-Laws

These Bye-Laws apply to individual volunteers in general and to:

- Cats Protection branches;
- Fundraising groups; and
- All other groups operating as part of Cats Protection.

Rules, Bye Laws and Policies

The Bye Laws should be read in conjunction with the Rules and with the policies issued by the Trustees from time to time. The Rules, Bye Laws and policies of Cats Protection are devised to ensure the welfare of all Cats Protection cats and to ensure that the charity operates effectively and within the law.

Cats Protection's Rules, Bye Laws and policies are also designed to afford protection to volunteers from Health and Safety risks and from involvement in legal disputes.

For these reasons, the Rules, Bye Laws and policies must be adhered to at all times.

Branches, fundraising groups and other groups are required to sign an annual declaration confirming that they have read and understood the Rules and the Bye Laws and have agreed to be bound by them.

Guidelines, advice and support

Cats Protection also provides more general written guidelines for volunteers and branches. These are aimed at supporting volunteers and branches and helping them in their work. Further support, guidance and advice is also available from the relevant departments at the NCC and from staff working in your region.

Where can I get these?

Policies and written guidelines can be found in the Branch Manual and other publications for volunteers and are also available on line on CatNav. Further support, guidance and advice is available from the relevant departments at the NCC and from staff working in your region.

1. OBJECTS

Cats Protection is a registered charity and all branches and volunteer groups are part of the charity. The aim, of branches, therefore, is to contribute to fulfilling the charitable objects of Cats Protection to prevent and relieve the suffering and distress of cats and to advance the welfare of cats.

2. NAME

- 2.1 Branches will be known as "Cats Protection ... branch" and will be named after the locality in which they operate.
- 2.2 Fundraising groups will be known as "Friends of Cats Protection ..." or "Cats Protection ... fundraising group" and will be named after the adoption centre, branch or project which they support or by such other name as the Trustees consider appropriate.
- 2.3 Other volunteer groups will be given such names as the Trustees consider appropriate.

Any new name or change of name should be discussed with the relevant Regional Development Manager or Development Manager and approved by the Director of Operations on behalf of the Trustees.

3. COMMITTEES AND OFFICERS

Branches, fundraising and other volunteer groups shall be led by a committee normally consisting of 5 members including the following officers:

- (i) a coordinator;
- (ii) a secretary;
- (iii) a treasurer;
- (iv) such other officers as the committee shall decide.

All members of the committee must be members of Cats Protection. The Director of Operations is authorised to approve a reduction in the number on a committee for up to one year to three members.

4. MEETINGS

Committees shall hold at least three meetings each calendar year to review and plan all aspects of the branch's or group's work.

5. FINANCE

Financial safeguards are vital to maintaining public trust and confidence in charities.

- 5.1 Treasurers will be responsible for ensuring that books and records are maintained in accordance with Cats Protection's financial policies.
- 5.2 The Finance Department, auditors and other representatives may need to inspect branch financial and operational records from time to time. Such records must be made available to such representatives on request.
- 5.3 An Annual Return and other returns in the form prescribed by the Finance Department from time to time must be submitted to the Finance Department by the branch or group each financial year or as required.
- 5.4 The Trustees will determine which banks charitable funds will be held in. Branches and groups cannot open accounts and deposit charitable funds with any institution unless this has been approved by the Trustees and authorised in writing by the Head of Finance.
- 5.5 Cheques drawn on branch and group bank accounts must be signed by any two of three authorised signatories (not being members of the same household or family). Under no circumstances may payments be authorised by a single signatory. Purchasing cards in respect of branch and group bank accounts must be used in accordance with policies and guidelines issued by the Finance Department from time to time. Purchasing cards in respect of branch and group bank accounts must be used in accordance with policies and guidelines issued by the Finance Department from time to time.
- 5.6 Cats Protection's Fraud Policy is available on CatNav. Advice on this or any matter of concern can be obtained from the Finance Department.

6. LEGAL

Legal safeguards exist to protect the charity and its volunteers from becoming involved in legal disputes and help to maintain public trust and confidence in charities.

6.1 Legacies

All legacies received are charitable funds of Cats Protection and must be properly administered and accounted for in accordance with the law. In order to avoid misunderstandings and disputes and to ensure that all funds due to the charity are accurately received, if a branch or group is contacted by a solicitor or executor in connection with a legacy:

- 6.1.1. The Legacy Team must be notified as soon as possible and copies of any correspondence and any cheques must be forwarded to the Legacy Team.
- 6.1.2. Branches and groups must not deal with solicitors and executors direct and cannot give legally valid receipts or indemnities on behalf of Cats Protection.
- 6.1.3. Legacies will be dealt with in accordance with Rule 8.4 of the Rules, as approved by the Charity Commission, which provides that:

"All legacies bequeathed to Cats Protection shall be received by the Trustee. The Trustee shall apply such legacies in accordance with any special trusts. Where the relevant special trusts are for the benefit of a named branch, the Trustee shall consult with that branch before deciding on any particular proposed application of that trust property."

6.2 *Contracts and credit*

Branches and volunteer groups must not enter into contracts on behalf of Cats Protection or promise that Cats Protection will pay for goods and services unless they have express delegated authority to do so in accordance with guidance issued by the Trustees in this respect from time to time.

6.3 *Reputation, name and logo*

- 6.3.1. Branches and groups must take care to protect the good name and reputation of Cats Protection. If you are drawn into a dispute with members of the public or with other volunteers you should seek advice, in the first instance, from your Regional Development Manager or Head of Development.
- 6.3.2. The Trustees cannot accept liability for defamatory comments or for the expression of views which do not represent the views of Cats Protection or for wrongful acts or omissions generally.
- 6.3.3. Comments made on behalf of Cats Protection or in your capacity as a volunteer which are broadcast or published in any media (including electronic communications and digital media) must reflect Cats Protection's policies and positions. Support and guidance in this respect is provided by the Media Team.
- 6.3.4. Cats Protection's name and logo is a registered trademark. If you become aware of any misuse of the logo or the charity's name you should notify the Legal Team.

6.4 *Legal proceedings*

Branches and groups cannot instruct solicitors to act on behalf of the branch, the group or the charity and cannot commence legal proceedings against any individual or organisation. Charitable funds must not be used by Branches or Groups for these purposes. All legal matters must be referred to the Legal Services Department.

6.5 *Registered Charity numbers*

Branches and volunteer groups must state that Cats Protection is a registered charity on any notices, advertisements, material placed on web sites, and other documents issued by or on behalf of Cats Protection and in particular on any fundraising documents and materials. The standard wording in 2010 is:

"Cats Protection registered charity 203644 (England and Wales) and SC037711 (Scotland)"

When the Charity Commission in Northern Ireland commences registration this standard wording will be updated.

6.6 Data Protection

In order to comply with the law, data must be processed in accordance with Cats Protection's Data Protection, retention and security policies which are available in the Branch Manual and on CatNav.

7. BRANCH MEMBERS AND BRANCH SUBSCRIPTIONS

- 7.1 Branches may recruit their own branch members as a basis of local fundraising who, unless they are branch committee members, do not have to be Cats Protection members.
- 7.2 Branches may levy an annual subscription from branch members of a sum as fixed from time to time by the branch committee. Requests for subscriptions must include Cats Protection's registered charity numbers.

8. BRANCHES AND CAT WELFARE

- 8.1 In accordance with the duty to ensure welfare contained in the Animal Welfare Legislation, branches must ensure that the needs of cats in their care are met in respect of:-
 - (i) Environment;
 - (ii) Diet;
 - (iii) Behaviour;
 - (iv) Any need to be housed with or apart from other cats;
 - (v) Protection from pain, suffering, injury and disease.
- 8.2 In order to ensure the welfare of all Cats Protection cats, nominated representatives of the Trustees may, on giving reasonable notice, inspect any Cats Protection cat, any facilities at which Cats Protection cats are kept and any associated paperwork.

9. FUNDRAISING

- 9.1 Branches are responsible for raising funds to support the branch cat work in their locality and the aims of Cats Protection generally.
- 9.2 Fundraising has to be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Charities Acts and regulations. The Fundraising Department can provide you with support, advice and materials on fundraising.

10. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Cats Protection's policies, procedures and guidance in this respect are, in part, a necessity of compliance with the law but they are mainly for the good of your own health and welfare and that of other volunteers. Certain risks, such as fire, also place the health and welfare of the cats in our care jeopardy.

When using building contractors (builders, electricians, gasfitters etc) in connection with Cats Protection work you must ask Contractors to provide you with details of their public liability insurance and a copy of the current schedule to the policy. If Contractors do not have public liability insurance, you must not instruct them.