

CATTITUDE



Newsletter of Haverhill & District Branch of Cats Protection

Autumn/Winter 2020



FREE

Donation appreciated

Reg Charity 203644 (England and Wales) and SC037711 (Scotland)

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A Word From The Branch Coordinator

A very warm welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter. We hope that you have all stayed safe and well during the lockdown.

It was a difficult time for us as no cats were being re-homed or brought into care, due to the very stringent rules laid down by Cats Protection charity as a whole. Things are starting to get back to some degree of normality, although we are still not able to carry out a home-check before allowing a cat to be adopted. Instead, we have to carry out a "hands free" visit over the phone. Unfortunately, this means that the prospective adopter is unable to come and see our cats in person, but can only view them via photographs. It's a case of faith and trust on both sides, and relying on the experience of our Homing Officer in choosing the right cat for the right home. Thankfully, our experience has

stood us in good stead as we have successfully re-homed seven cats so far using "hands free" homing.

Our free Snip and Chip campaign has kicked off to a good start. As you may know, we cannot emphasise enough the importance of getting cats neutered. Statistics show that unneutered tom cats are more likely to become victims of road traffic accidents because of their instinct to roam in their quest to find females and new territory. Female cats don't fair much better either, with the possibility of developing ovarian cancer, shortening of their lifespan and stunted growth, caused by having kittens when they are still kittens themselves.

As Branch Coordinator, I am frequently challenged with a moral dilemma during the running of our campaign. We

receive frequent enquiries from owners who have essentially used their female cat(s) as a cash cow, to breed and then sell kittens at inflated prices. These owners pocket a nice amount of profit, and then ask us to cover the cost of neutering the female cat, once breeding gets out of hand. Sometimes, we are asked to neuter the kittens too, before they are sold on. These owners claim that they cannot afford to neuter the cat(s). It's interesting to note that they are usually not willing to sign the kittens into our care either, despite claiming to not be able to provide them with the care they need out of their own money. It's a sad fact that if the owner does relinquish them, it's usually because the kittens have serious medical issues, rendering them unsaleable.

Should we or should we not be responsible for meeting the cost of neutering these female cats that have been exploited for breeding purposes? From a charity perspective, we are here for the cats and if we don't step in and help, will these poor

females ever be neutered? It really is a catch 22 situation we find ourselves in.

This edition of the newsletter has a strong theme running throughout on the buying and selling of cats/kittens. We wrote predominately about this because we believe it's probably the most prominent cat welfare issue in our area. Sadly, the COVID-19 pandemic hasn't made the situation any better, with some re-homing centres like ours not functioning at 100% or shut down. This caused people to start seeking cats and kittens from unregulated breeders.

If you are thinking about getting a kitten, please speak to a reputable charity like Cats Protection who take the time to have the kittens blood tested, vaccinated, micro-chipped, and flea and worm treatment administered. They are healthy and fully socialised. The cost of neutering is met by Cats Protection once the kitten is old enough. Kittens also come with four weeks free insurance.

Publicity Update

We're now on Instagram! You can follow us on **@haverhillcatsprotection**

We also invite you to take a look at our website's news page, where you will find more cat content and branch updates! You can visit the news page by copying the following link into

your search engine:

www.cats.org.uk/stourvalley/news

For enquiries related to publicity, social media, the newsletter or our website, please contact **publicity@haverhill.cats.org.uk**

Fundraising Update

Over the past months, our fundraising has been limited to online activity. Due to the impact that COVID-19 had on our charity, Cats Protection raised a nationwide appeal called 'Help us Be There'. This has raised £50 so far for our branch. We are very grateful to those who supported this appeal. You can contribute to this appeal until the end of October. Please visit: **www.justgiving.com/campaign/Haverhill-and-District**

We are now slowly resuming face-to-face fundraising. If you have any spare time, please consider helping us as a fundraiser. We are looking for people of any age to come and help us with fundraising. Even if you can only spare a couple of hours, we are happy to welcome you to our team. For more information, please contact **fundraising@haverhill.cats.org.uk**

The Free Snip & Chip is Back!

- Get your cat neutered and microchipped free of charge*.
- We have a limited amount of vouchers available, which are issued on a first come, first served basis.
- Kittens can be neutered from when they are four months old, provided they are of adequate size. Your vet will advise you accordingly.
- Vouchers cannot be reserved for later use and you must already be the owner of the cat/kitten.
- The procedure will be carried out at our partnering veterinary practice, Swayne & Partners, in Haverhill.

To book, call **01440 535 131** or email **enquiries@haverhill.cats.org.uk**

Why is it important to neuter and microchip your cat?

You will find more information on why microchipping is important in our 'Lost your cat?' article.

Neutering is equally important to improve the health of your cat, and help reduce the number of unwanted kittens born each year.

A new Cats Protection survey revealed some very concerning results about the general public's awareness on neutering, which emphasises the need for our Snip and Chip campaigns.

As an example, the findings showed that 77% of respondents were unaware of the fact that a female cat can become pregnant at as early as 4 months old.

*Terms and conditions apply. If you have been a recipient of 2 or more Snip & Chip vouchers in the past, you are not eligible for more vouchers.

Lost Your Cat?

It is not uncommon for a cat to go missing at some point during their life. However, in many cases, the cat is safely returned home upon the owner taking the right action. Also, there are two very easy ways to minimise the chances of your cat getting lost or to reunite them with you if they do wander off.

Is my cat lost?

Not all cats are house cats. Some are inclined to wander, especially if there is fuss or food to be found elsewhere. It is normal for your cat to pop in and out throughout the day – especially if they have a taste for adventure.

If your cat hasn't returned by dinner time, however, you might be worried that your cat is missing. Try not to panic. Cats can disappear for days at a time and return with no trouble, looking perfectly healthy. While you might be worried, they're likely to stroll in and wonder

what all the fuss is about. If they haven't yet returned, give them a few hours before you make a plan of action.

I've lost my cat. What can I do?

If your pet still hasn't returned home, there are a few simple things you can do to help find your missing cat.

The first thing to do is to **check your own home and garden.**

Cats love small cosy spaces and might be hiding in the unlikeliest of places – from cupboards to garden sheds. Check every room in your house, including any outbuildings and sheds too. Behind curtains, under duvets and even in household appliances like tumble dryers and washing machines. If you're having building work completed, check under floorboards or any holes big enough for a cat to nestle into.

If you're sure your cat isn't at

home, the next thing to do is to **speak to your neighbours as well as any delivery people nearby**. They might have seen your lost cat somewhere and can let you know of their whereabouts. Ask them to check their own sheds and outbuildings, as well as under any parked cars in the neighbourhood. Remember to check homes on both sides of the road, as well as homes that have gardens that back on to yours. You could even provide neighbours with an up-to-date photo and your cat's name, reminding them to keep an eye out.

Advertising on social media is a great way to get the message out that your cat is missing, particularly if you're a member of a local Facebook community group. Post a clear photo of your cat, their name and your contact details. Also, **get in touch with us and any other local animal welfare organisations** that can post details of your missing cat online.

It is also useful to keep a list of

useful phone numbers pinned to a board in your kitchen. Please see below:

Useful contacts

RSPCA (UK) – 0300 1234 999

Petlog – 0870 606 6751

Cats Protection's National Information Line – 03000 12 12 12

Haverhill & District Cats Protection— 01440535131

How do I get my cat to come home?

If putting out the word about your missing cat hasn't worked, there are some great tips and tricks to try at home.

Cats are heavily reliant on scent, so leaving out items that may entice them back to you is well worth an attempt. Things to try include the following:

- Leave your cat's favourite toy or some of their unwashed bedding in the garden
- Leave an unwashed item of your clothing, which will have your scent on it, outside
- Place any used litter from

your cat's litter tray outside, or perhaps the contents of your Hoover for a smell of home

- Call out for your cat in the garden early in the morning or late at night, when everywhere is likely to be quieter
- Shake a box of their favourite biscuits or treats

Keep calling your cat, leaving enough time for them to hear you and be led home.

Microchipping your cat

Microchipping your cat is the most effective way to ensure that they can be identified if they go missing, and keeping your details up to date can increase the likelihood of a happy reunion.

If your lost cat is found and taken to a vet or animal welfare organisation, you'll be contacted quickly.

According to the Petlog database, 75% of dogs and 45% of cats were reunited thanks to their microchip. However, a

microchip will not be effective if the owner's contact details are not up-to-date.

Neutering your cat

A less obvious but, nevertheless, very effective way of minimising the chances of your cat getting lost is neutering.

Neutered cats are less likely to roam, reducing the risk of them getting lost or being involved in a road traffic accident.

If unneutered, particularly male cats will travel a large territory of many miles in search of unneutered females. However, females too are known to wander off when in season.

In particular, if your female cat gets pregnant, she may look for what she deems as a safe place to have her kittens, which in many cases may not be your home or garden. This will lead to her being away from home for a long time, with the kittens receiving no veterinary care unless they are found.



Lost your cat?

Follow our checklist:

- ☐ Search first. Check small spaces – everywhere from cosy cupboards to garden sheds, garages and outbuildings
- ☐ Make your neighbours aware your cat is missing. Ask them to check their property, sheds and garages
- ☐ Speak to your local **Cats Protection** branch. To find your nearest branch, visit www.cats.org.uk/find-us and enter your postcode
- ☐ If your cat is microchipped, talk to **Petlog** on **0844 4633 999** to register your cat missing
- ☐ Register the details of your cat at www.animalsearch.co.uk
- ☐ Contact the **RSPCA** helpline on **0300 1234 999** (UK), the **USPCA** on **028 3025 1000** (NI) or the **SSPCA** on **03000 999 999** (Scotland)
- ☐ Get in touch with any local animal shelters in your area. Try www.catchat.org to find your local shelter
- ☐ Contact all vet practices in the area
- ☐ Speak to your local council's Environmental Health Department
- ☐ Make and put up flyers to place around the local area
- ☐ Post a picture and description of your cat on your own Facebook page, as well as the Animal Search UK and CatAware pages
- ☐ Try leaving your cat's belongings in the garden to entice them – bedding, favourite toys and tasty treats like tuna might lure them out of their hiding place
- ☐ Go out at night with a friend or family member to search for your cat. Cats are generally more active at night, especially during hotter weather

Don't give up! Cats are often reunited with their owners, sometimes years after they have gone missing. If you need more help, call our **Helpline Team** on **03000 12 12** or email helpline@cats.org.uk

Thinking of Getting a Kitten through Facebook?

This year, we have been very concerned with the number of kittens advertised on social media and online selling sites.

Nowadays, these online resources have made it incredibly easy to get yourself a kitten, or any other animal, very easily.

Whilst, at first, these animals seem to be an absolute bargain, there are often serious consequences for both the kitten and newly acquired owner.

The sale of animals has now been banned by Facebook, however, the practice continues, as sellers find new subtle methods of advertising. They are spurred on by high interest from the Facebook community.

On the surface, getting a pet through Facebook looks like the perfect deal. The animals are often very cheap – usually

cheaper than at a rehoming centre. Moreover, they are often claimed to be from loving homes, from owners who have given them all the necessary care and veterinary treatment. Have they though?

Before taking advantage of a great deal on Facebook, think whether someone would sell a kitten for £20, or even £60, when flea and worming treatment and vaccinations would exceed this cost. This doesn't even take into account the veterinary care that the mother of the kittens should have received. So, **why would anyone engage in a business with no profit?**

Whilst your pet might be very cheap initially, the veterinary costs that you will have to pay following the purchase will by far exceed those of an adoption fee from a rehoming centre.

Animals from irresponsible

breeders often suffer from many health issues. They may suffer from serious conditions due to interbreeding (between closely related animals) at puppy/kitten farms. They can often suffer from life-threatening conditions that could have easily been prevented if the kittens were vaccinated at the right age. They may also have behavioural issues due to improper handling and care.

Only too often, Cats Protection has had kittens signed over to us from owners who have purchased them from these sites, who then cannot afford the vet expenses. These kittens are usually extremely sick, either with cat flu or tick/worm related issues. It takes a lot of time, effort and money to nurse these kittens back to full health.

Rescue centres like Cats Protection receive donations which cover part of a kitten's care costs. Therefore, an adopter will pay a smaller adoption fee than what was actually spent on the care of the animal. When you adopt a cat/kitten from us, you

have the guarantee that it has received all necessary vaccines, blood tests, flea and worm treatment, vet checks, it was neutered where appropriate and you will receive 4 weeks of free pet insurance. Above all, you will have a guarantee that your cat or kitten has received the highest quality of care, with a friendly team always on hand to give you advice.

"I want to sell kittens because my cat has accidentally become pregnant"

If your cat has had kittens by accident, we appeal to you to get in touch with a reputable animal charity that will help you find them loving homes, where the prospective owner will be checked. Unfortunately, not only the sellers are a concern when it comes to online pet sales – buyers can get a new pet as an 'impulse buy', not having thought of the long-term implications of having a cat. Therefore, these animals may later in life be neglected or given up for adoption due to no longer being wanted.

To avoid unwanted kittens, Cats Protection runs annual campaigns that cover the full cost of neutering. If you miss out on one of our campaigns, you may be eligible for help if you are from a low-income background or if you receive financial help from the government. Therefore, there is no excuse not to have your animal neutered.

In summary, we appeal to our cat-loving community to avoid buying animals from online sellers. If you see any posts

advertising animals online, please report them to help stop a business that does not prioritise animal welfare.

To report posts on Facebook, click on the 3 dots in the top right-hand corner of the post. Then, click 'report post' on the dropdown menu. Next, click 'unauthorised sales' then 'other animals'. Click 'next', then 'done'. Making a difference for the cats in our community is as simple as that.

Buying from a Breeder

When buying a cat from a breeder, you'll need to make sure you see the kitten where it was bred before agreeing to the sale. Being introduced to the kitten's mum, as well as seeing its home environment, is important too.

On meeting the kitten, you should check they are: sociable, alert, have bright eyes and no

visible health conditions.

If the kitten is a pedigree, there are rules which the breeder should adhere to. Some organisations, such as the Governing Council of the Cat Fancy (GCCF), have rules about ethical breeding and health. However, certain governing bodies do not require the breeder to show their cats' living

conditions. Therefore, regardless of any accreditations or memberships, always check the kitten and their environment.

Also, make sure to research the cat breed online before deciding to buy a specific breed.

Animal Trading Rules and Regulations

The introduction of the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 requires all commercial sellers of pets to have a licence.

There are various rules that sellers must comply with, including displaying their licence number on adverts and not selling kittens under 8 weeks of age.

The licences are issued by local trading standards authorities and it is for your local authority to determine whether the breeder is indeed operating a commercial business and complying with the regulations related to selling pets. If the breeder is running a commercial business, then like all businesses, they must comply

with taxation regulations which are managed by HMRC.

You could ask your local trading standards authority if you have any doubts as to whether someone is a licensed seller.

Kitten farms with poor welfare standards happen all over the UK. If people do not buy from these places, the sellers will not profit and will eventually stop. Please do not buy from these places out of pity for the cats. You may help one cat, but it means that you are financing this cruel trade nevertheless.

If you believe that animal cruelty is taking place, you can report this to the RSPCA at www.rspca.org.uk/utilities/contactus/reportcruelty

Thinking of Rehoming Your Cat?

At our branch, we have noticed private adverts of pets for rehoming on social media and online selling sites. Some pets are advertised as free, while others ask for a payment.

Whilst we understand that this is, at times, a faster way to rehome your pet, or that you may want to save your local rehoming centre the hassle of another animal, we encourage you to reach out to your local Cats Protection branch when thinking of rehoming your cat.

Please read this article to understand why you should choose reputable charities when looking to rehome your pet.

What does rehoming through Cats Protection look like?

If you are looking to rehome your pet, for whatever reason,

you can contact your nearest branch to discuss this. We will then discuss your cat's needs with you and the reason for rehoming. This will help us understand how we can care for your cat before we find them a new home. Depending on space within the branch and how urgently you need to give away your cat, we may either admit the cat immediately or put them on a waiting list.

When your cat is admitted, we will conduct vet and behavioural checks. If your cat is not neutered or microchipped, these procedures will also be carried out.

Because we are a small branch without a physical rehoming centre, the cat will be taken into the care of one of our trained fosterers. The majority of the cats will be kept indoors within a home environment, to minimize

stress and make the transition easier for the feline.

We will then assess whether your cat is ready for adoption.

Following this check, we will either work with the cat until it is suitable for adoption e.g. if it has behavioural issues, or we will start looking for the right home for the cat right away.

Our rehoming procedures give the cat the best chance of settling into their new home. We carefully review a potential adopter's experience, living circumstances and lifestyle to see whether the cat is the right fit for them. Some factors we consider are whether the cat needs outdoor access and whether they can live with young children or other pets.

After the cat is rehomed, we are on hand at any time if the adopter needs advice or assistance with their new cat. In very rare cases, if the cat doesn't settle in well, we will take the cat back into our care and look for a

new home that is more suited to its needs.

Overall, it is important to emphasise that we do not rehome cats lightly. We carefully check the new owner to give the cat the best chance of settling into their new home. Therefore, when signing your cat over to us, you can be sure that we will do all things possible to find them a loving new home.

What are the dangers of rehoming through social media and online selling sites?

Despite bans on animal trading on social media, these adverts still appear. They have been banned for a reason: the trade of these animals is uncontrolled and the animals can often get into the wrong hands.

You must consider who will be the potential new owner of your pet, and how you will check whether their household is suitable for your cat. For example, are you sure that the

person is legitimate and isn't going to sell your pet on, reproduce from them (if they are not neutered) or use them as bait? You may ask in-depth questions or even conduct your own home check, but you might miss some things out which are standard procedures for rehoming centres.

Please also be wary of 'animal organisations' which are not registered charities or which do not have credible information on the internet about them. Whilst some may be genuine rescues, you should stay cautious and

rehome with a well-established, local rehoming centre when possible.

What to do if you want to rehome your cat?

Get in touch with your local branch to discuss signing over your cat. Unless there is a long waiting list, your cat should be admitted soon after. Sometimes, adoption centres have a waiting list for adoption so, if your cat does not suffer from behavioural or health issues, it may already have a new home waiting for it.

Keeping Your Cat Safe in the Cold

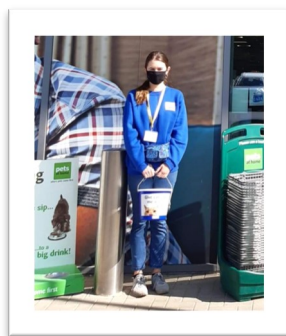
As we head for the colder months, we have some tips to help you keep your cat safe outside:

- If your cat has access to the outdoors, provide them with a shelter to ensure they are safe. A sturdy cardboard box covered in plastic sheeting should do the trick.
- If you've got a cat flap, you'll need to make sure your cat can get easily in and out. A heavy snowfall or icy patch might result in the cat flap becoming stuck, or blocked.
- Ensure that your cat has plenty of fresh water indoors, in case any outside sources freeze.

- Always make sure your cat comes inside at night, locking the cat flap once they are inside. Provide them with warm, comfortable and safe places to sleep.
- Regularly check sheds and garages to ensure your cat isn't locked inside.
- Make sure your cat is microchipped, and the details are up to date. If they do wander off in search of a warm place, they'll be easily traced back to your address.
- If the weather becomes particularly cold, keep your cat indoors. While they might seem bored or restless, pet cats aren't used to extreme temperatures and can even develop frostbite or hypothermia. Keep them entertained and exercised with enrichment toys and feeders.

Update on Volunteer's Challenge for our Branch

As mentioned in our spring/summer newsletter, our Publicity Officer has signed up to one of Cats Protection's international fundraising challenges—the Nepal Trek and Tiger Conservation Programme. The trip is still scheduled to go ahead in November 2021.



Whilst Julia has been unable to complete a significant amount of the planned fundraising events due to coronavirus, she has managed to raise £823 so far, out of the required pledge of

£4,400.

During these uncertain times, Julia is slowly resuming face-to-face fundraising. You may spot her standing outside Pets At

Home on the weekends, holding a bucket collection.

Julia was originally planning to hold a bingo night on 30 October. However, during these uncertain times, she has taken the difficult decision to postpone the event to later on in the year, or the start of 2021.

The money that Julia raises will go directly to our branch, which will help us continue to help the cats in our local community.

To find out more about Julia's challenge, or to donate, please

visit:

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/juliacieslaknepal

If you have an idea of how you could help Julia, please get in touch with her on:

publicity@haverhill.cats.org.uk

Julia is particularly on the lookout for prizes she could use in her fundraising events and raffles.

A big thank you to everyone who has supported Julia's challenge so far.

Are You Up for a Challenge?

There are many ways in which you too could get involved in fundraising for our branch.

You could host your own Afternoon Tea or Black Cat Quiz.

You can take part in one of Cats Protection's challenge events—we host both international and

British challenges that cover cycling, trekking, sky dives and much more. But why limit yourself? You can also come up with your own challenge that suits your hobbies and interests. Please have a look at the following page for examples of current challenges that you could get involved in:



London to Paris Cycle 2021—Tour de France Finale

14 July—18 July 2021

Registration fee: £125 Minimum Pledge: £1600

Four days, 295 miles, two capital cities.



Ben Nevis Climb 2021

23 July 2021

Registration fee: £25 Minimum Pledge: £150

Take on UK's highest peak!



Canoe for cats

22 May 2021

Registration fee: £30 Minimum Pledge: £165

Canoe down River Wye for 14 miles.



Red Devils Skydive in Nottingham

01 July—31 August 2021

Registration fee: £50 Minimum Pledge: £500

Experience the adrenaline rush of skydiving!

If you have any queries, or if you are interested in hosting your own fundraising event for our branch, please contact us on **enquiries@haverhill.cats.org.uk**

more about the general Cats Protection events and challenges, please visit **www.cats.org.uk/support-us/events**

If you would like to find out

or email **events@cats.org.uk**

Learn Online with Cats Protection!

Did you know, you can learn more about cats online for free?

At Cats Protection, our mission is to help create a world where every cat is treated with kindness and an understanding of its needs. That's why we have developed courses which give you an appreciation of your cat's needs, how this relates to their behaviour and how to provide the best environment for them.

Why do an online course?

- The courses are available any time online. They can be worked through in smaller chunks, or all in one go.
- Our courses are free to everyone. There is no catch!
- Our 'Understanding Cats' Needs' course is based on a course we deliver to Cats Protection staff and

volunteers. It is ideally suited to adults and older children interested in cat care.

To find out more, please visit:
www.cats.org.uk/help-and-advice/online-learning

Courses for volunteers

One of the advantages of becoming a volunteer with Cats Protection is that you gain access to many more cat welfare courses online, as well as often having a course specific to your role e.g. fostering, fundraising or media.

Resources for children

Additionally, we have online resources for the younger cat enthusiasts.

We have 'moggy modules' for children aged 5-11, resources for teachers, and 'Feline Focus'

packs for children aged 11+.

To access the resources, please visit: [https://
education.cats.org.uk/](https://education.cats.org.uk/)

We also offer educational talks. Whilst there are restrictions on what we can do at the moment, you can email our branch for more information and to register your interest.

Adoption Information

After all homing procedures were suspended during lockdown, we have now recommenced the admission and homing of cats. There are some temporary changes to our rehoming process, such as the introduction of “hands free” homing.

If you are interested in adopting a cat from us, please email us at enquiries@haverhill.cats.org.uk

When you adopt from us, you can adopt with confidence. Why?
We endeavour to make sure cats and kittens in our care are:

- Health checked
- Blood tested
- Neutered, where appropriate
- Vaccinated against cat flu and enteritis
- Microchipped
- Flea and worm treatment administered
- Provided with 4 weeks of free Petplan insurance

