



ELTHAM, SIDCUP & DISTRICT BRANCH

Registered Charity No. 203644

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2022

END OF AN ERA

OUR shop has been at the heart of the community for nearly four decades but sadly it shut for good at Easter.

It's the end of an era but we have been caught in a perfect storm which makes closure inevitable.

The Covid pandemic hit us hard as some of our helpers decided not to return after lockdown.

This meant we could not continue to open six days a week, reducing the amount we could raise in funds.

Our volunteer manager Jacqui has also taken the difficult decision to retire for health reasons from the role after 29 years of sterling service.

This has effectively been a full-time job but Jacqui has been an unpaid helper despite the demands of running the shop.

Other branches have gradually brought in paid bosses and eventually she was the only volunteer Cats Protection manager nationwide.

The charity would have taken on a paid worker to run the shop, pushing up costs, while we also have rent and other overheads.

All these factors meant the shop would have struggled to raise enough to make it worthwhile staying open.

There was a big online response to the news with many supporters thanking Jacqui for all her hard work and wishing her well.

Rita wrote: "So sorry to hear this... you have done a tremendous job over the years, your dedication along with your staff has been second to none."

Deborah said: "You have managed a great little shop over the years."

Jo Anna posted: "Thank you for your dedication, enjoy your retirement from the shop."

Beth added: "You will be sadly missed. And so will the shop, I always found something I wanted!"

Jacqui is not leaving our branch but will continue to volunteer by helping to find homes for needy cats. She



was awarded with a bronze cat statue reserved for those volunteers who have given exceptional service to the charity. It was presented to her by Grace Barrett, area retail manager (above), in honour of her 29 years managing the shop.

Jacqui will call the statue Luna after the elderly little black cat who lived out her final days at the shop, becoming a familiar sight for customers and helpers as she dozed in her comfy bed.

Turn over to read a personal piece from Jacqui as she steps down after 29 years.

www.elthamsidcup.cats.org.uk

www.facebook.com/cpelthamsidcup

'Farewell.. not goodbye'

JACQUI WRITES: *In January 2023, I would have been working as a volunteer manager in our Cats Protection shop for 30 years. I was hoping to continue for a while yet but my health has made the decision for me. I have been in a lot of pain for about two years as I have spondylitis which affects my neck and back.*

Also my diabetes has been getting worse and is badly affecting my sight. I have had to give up driving which has made things difficult.

Really I have only been able to continue for the last year because Diane Willis stepped in and took a lot of physical work from me on top of her CP role as welfare officer and fosterer. I consider myself lucky to have been in a position to have been able to work for the cats for such a long time. And again with Diane's help, I shall continue to help out as the branch will still be taking in and rehoming cats.

Thank you to the many, many customers who have been loyal to us for so long. Over the years, I have seen many families grow and some of the children are now coming in with their own children.

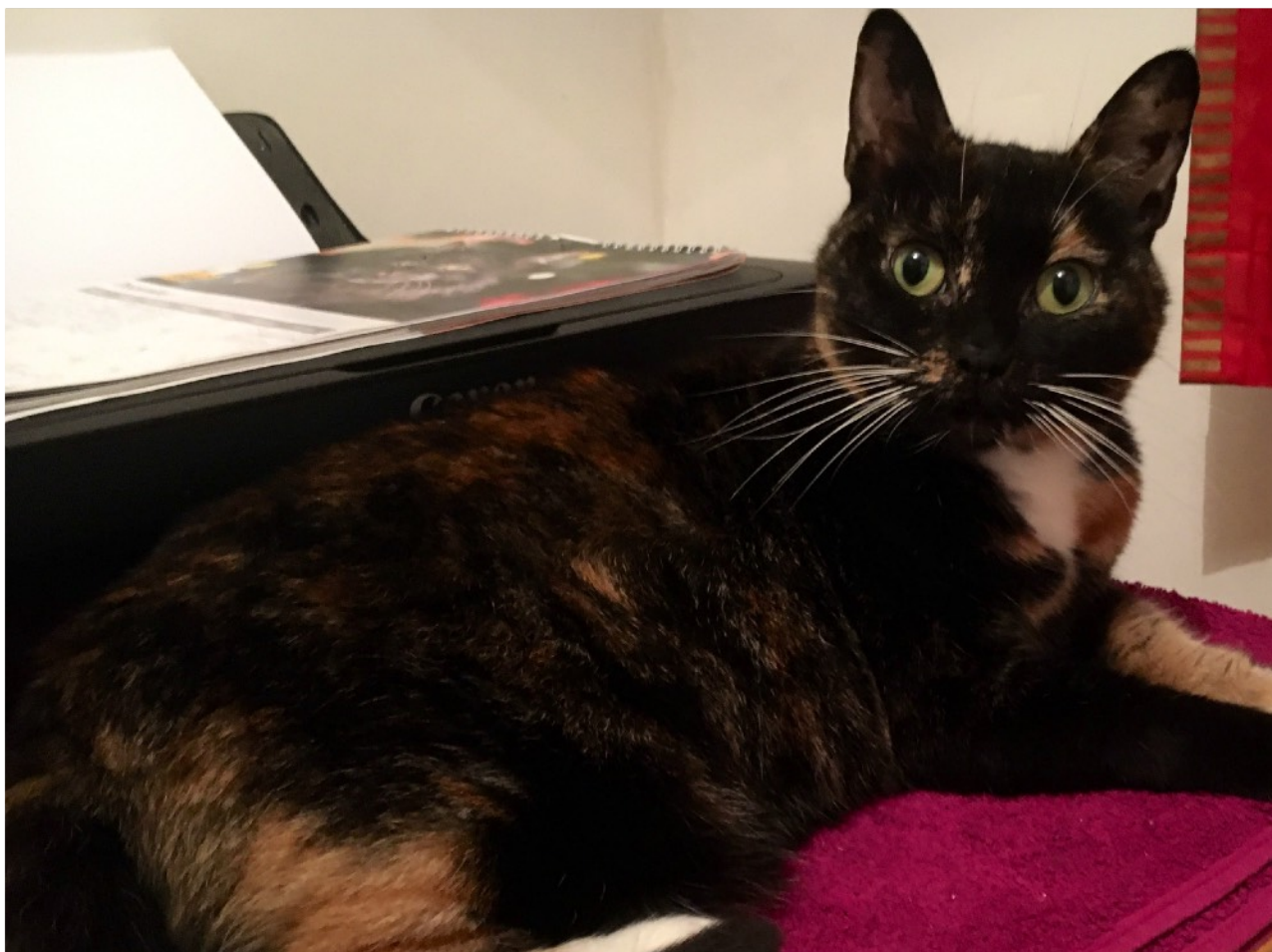
The shop has been a hub for the community, we have often offered a shoulder and tea to those having problems. We have celebrated with those who have had good news and we have just been there when needed. Most of all, I wish to thank the staff (past and present) for the help and loyalty they have given over the years.



NO SHOP BUT DON'T STOP



IT'S a new era for us now after the closure of our shop - but our work to help local cats does not change. We'd like to reassure you that our volunteers are as committed as ever to doing as much as we can to take in needy felines. That will never change as long as our branch exists and we have members like you to support us. Our financial position is shifting but we are fortunate to have been remembered by generous benefactors in their wills. Plus we have kind supporters who donate monthly with standing orders and are grateful for each contribution. Our work to boost neutering by giving out vouchers to help with the cost also goes on unabated. This is vital to try to limit the number of mums and kittens who need help each year. It will be a different way of functioning without the shop but nothing stays the same forever and we have to move on in a positive way. And, with your help and support, that is what we will do.



SOX APPEAL

BIANCA made the headlines on the front page of our last newsletter and has since found a new home - and a new name.

The beautiful tortie is now Soxy, because of her white "socks" or paws, and living with Elise and her young son Ben.

And Soxy is certainly proving a hit as Elise updated us with photos captioned "happy cat" and "she's the best".

Loveliest of all was a text telling us Soxy is "one of the family now".

She had come into our care after being reported when her owner disappeared from his home in Grove Park, leaving her to fend for herself.

Two neighbours fed her outside for four weeks but she needed long-term help so a volunteer went to collect her.

Elise was looking for a pet and came to meet the five-year-old on her own to make sure she was right for Ben.

He had sadly lost his dad to illness when aged only four and had been asking to have a cat to love and cuddle for a while. The visit

went well, with Elise saying she was smitten and that Ben would be over the moon when he found out a feline friend was going to join the family.

His new pet is not only lovely looking but amazingly friendly.

She did have a micro-chip but surprisingly it was not registered to the man in Grove Park. Instead it gave her official owner as Joanna in Greenford, West London, and added that the cat was named Banka and had been reported missing in September 2017.

The neighbours knew her Grove Park "owner" had called her Bianca and it all seemed too similar to be a coincidence.

We hoped Joanna would tell us how her pet ended up on the other side of London being looked after by someone else.

But she did not respond to texts or emails and then we found out she had moved to an unknown address.

So we'll never discover the full story but, much more importantly, we do know Soxy is now in the best place in a loving home.

HERE WE BEAU!

BEAU was a much-loved white-and-ginger kitten who had a lovely home.

But by the age of five months, it was clear he was never going to be accepted by his owner Rita's resident cat Bailey.

So she made the difficult decision to give up Beau, who came into foster care where he proved to be a very friendly and playful boy.

The problem was that Bailey was really missing her pet dog Charlie after he had sadly died. Five-year-old Bailey loved the West Highland terrier, having grown up with him, and saw him as mum, even learning to behave like a dog to fetch balls and toys.

Rita worried that Bailey would be lonely without him so had adopted Beau as company. Unfortunately Bailey, a house cat, treated him as an interloper. He was always hostile, growling and hissing whenever Beau came near, or running away to hide.

Bailey became very stressed as he couldn't understand where his beloved Charlie had gone and why this kitten had suddenly appeared. Rita had to keep the cats in separate parts of her home as she tried hard to make it work. She had experience of owning cats and dogs together before and had never had any problems. But in the end she had to accept that it would never work and Beau would be better in a new home.

Rita was missing Charlie so it was doubly upsetting to also lose Beau, who she said was "such a lovely cat with lovely ways".

She and her daughter Keeleigh were worried that Cats Protection would think badly of them.

But they had done nothing wrong, having loved and cared for Beau, and we never judge but aim to do whatever is best for the cat.

A friend of one of our former volunteers had been in touch and we hoped she would offer Beau a good home.

Kelley lived in Bexley with her three children who would be perfect as he would have lots of attention and playtime! She came to meet him and Beau was a big hit before heading off to his new home a few days later. Kelley let us know



Happy Beau in his new home and, below, as a kitten



Charlie and Bailey

how he was getting on: "He has been running around and playing all day.

"He loves the kids and is very calm and has settled well. He's eating and drinking and being a really good boy."

The last word, however, has to go to Rita, who told us: "Thank you so much for everything. I'm pleased he is going to a good home. We loved him very much."

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

A WARM welcome to our newest member, Lois Taylor of Eltham. Please encourage other fellow cat-lovers to also join us. If you have adopted a cat or had other help from us, please consider supporting our branch by becoming a member, that would be greatly appreciated.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Many thanks to all who have already renewed their membership for 2022.

At the time of writing there are still 32 members who have not renewed, so I hope all has been well for them through these strange times.

Please post off your renewal form plus cheque or postal order as soon as you can. You can also pay online, please email Clare at coordinator@eltham.cats.org.uk for details.

New membership cards will be sent with the next newsletter unless you enclose an SAE or

send a donation for over £5, for which I always send a thank you card. If you would rather I didn't to save on postage, just let me know. Email newsletter recipients - please print off a membership form if you can. If not, please state clearly who the renewal is from. Also remember to let me know if you would like your membership card posted to you as it does act as a reminder of the renewal date.

Everyone is very welcome to pay for a few years in advance to save this annual chore. Please make it clear if any extra money is given for that reason and not a donation.

Many thanks for the welcome cards and letters which were sent to me and for the kindness of your much-appreciated donations.

Don't delay, renew today!

SUE KELLY

(Membership secretary)

Homings sweet homings

HERE is a round-up of some of our recent homings which show why your membership is so important.

OLIVER was adopted by Antony and family in Sidcup. They had been waiting for a while for a single kitten and Oliver fitted the bill when he came in as the last of a litter which his owner was selling. It doesn't make it easy for rescue charities when people add to the number of kittens around by breeding them to sell. And it's not good for the young cats that the main motive for homing them is profit in contrast to Cats Protection and other charities which have the animals' best interests at heart.

Little Oliver was all-black and had no takers so his owner Sherrie asked us to rehome him and we're pleased he's gone to a family who will appreciate and love him.

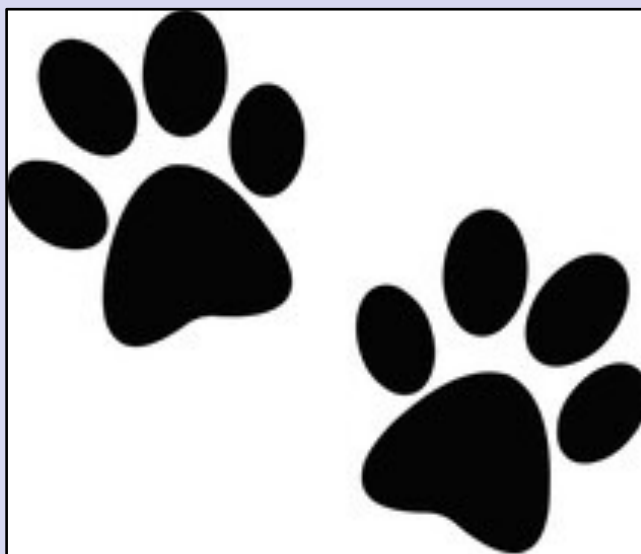
MILO was an eight-month-old tabby who came into us as he was not getting on with a resident

older cat before going off to a new start with Mauela.

TC was rescued as a stray by Lin then offered a fresh beginning by Penny where we hope he's settled in well.

Rosemary gave a home to BUDDHA who

needed help when his owner died. Previously she had adopted a black-and-white boy called Milo and helped him to a new life after he was found weak and hungry on a footpath. Milo featured in several newsletters before sadly passing away but Rosemary opened her heart to another rescue by adopting seven-year-old Buddha.



The branch was also pleased to find new homes for OLLIE and THEO, two of young mum Jenni's litter, who were adopted by Debbie, and another pair of siblings, NALA and SADIE, who went to live with Claire.

OODLES OF CUDDLES FOR HAPPY TIDDLES



TIDDLES gave her fosterer a scare on the morning after she arrived in our care. Walking in to give the beautiful fluffy tabby her breakfast, there was no sign of the one-year-old. Our volunteer searched the room high and low with a mounting fear that Tiddles had somehow escaped. But then logic kicked in and she realised the only place left to look was on top of the tall bookcase in the corner. And sure enough, after getting a chair to see up that high, there was Tiddles curled up out of sight. She had used a scratch pole to get a headstart then scrambled up to her vantage point. The scratch pole was swiftly moved and luckily Tiddles didn't try that trick again! Instead she opted for

the vantage point of the window sill, curling up to show off her amazing thick tail. Her owner Shelby, from Mottingham, had adopted Tiddles as a kitten but asked us to rehome the tabby when her toddler son became allergic to cats. A young couple Gabby and Chris had been patiently waiting for a young female. Tiddles was a definite possibility and they responded "she is adorable!" when we sent a photo so things looked positive when they came to meet her. Our fosterer explained how Tiddles had been in a home with two children aged two and three who may have overhandled her. She was a friendly girl but just needed some time to get

used to contact with adults who would be more aware of over-stepping the mark. Little and often was what Tiddles needed to grow in confidence, which Gabby and Chris understood. She certainly liked company and often greeted her fosterer with a chorus of meows which translated as "give me some attention"! Once she was on a lap and being stroked, all was quiet again. Gabby and Chris decided Tiddles would be perfect for them. And they were ideal for her as they had no children or other pets and worked from home a lot so Tiddles would have plenty of company. The next day, she was on her way to live with them in Lee where we hope she will be very happy.



LOVELY LOLA

TABBY girl Lola was living the high life but it was not working out for her.

She was in a flat on the tenth floor of a smart new tower right next to the Thames at Greenwich with Demmi.

Unhappily Demmi's young son has asthma and it had worsened so she was advised by her doctor to rehome Lola. So the six-month-old came into our care. After one night of hissing and hiding under a bookcase, she proved to be a sweetheart.

Lola loved cuddles and strokes in between indulging in mad playtimes when she loved batting a swinging toy or chasing a ball.

She needed to see the vet for spaying, microchipping and her first vaccination before

going on our website.

The first person to get in touch within a day was Catherine from Sevenoaks. This is not in our usual area but she was very keen on Lola and had really connected with her.

Catherine's situation with two older children and a garden was also ideal so it seemed silly not to follow up her offer of a home.

She came to visit Lola, who immediately got up from her bed to say hello, sealing the deal.

That was that and Lola was soon on her way to a new home and lots of love and playing, this time with her feet firmly on the ground.

Little Rusty looks a little demure in his photo (above

right) but he had so much energy! The ginger-and-white boy adored playing and loved human company.

Sadly he had been a stray while still only young, with the vet putting his age at not more than a year old.

But once he came into us, we gave Rusty lots of TLC plus had him neutered, chipped and vaccinated.

We believe he was ill-treated as a kitten and he did nip his fosterer a couple of times plus he could be a bit of a handful when excited.

But with the right owner, he could have the chance of a secure and happy life.

After a time on our website, Alice from Gravesend offered him this fresh start and he was off to begin a new life with her.



Why should I neuter my cat?

Getting your cat done is good for them... and you! Why? Read on...



Reduces spraying
and wailing



It's normal to neuter!

92% of owned cats
are neutered*
(*PDSA PAW Report 2019)



Reduces fighting,
injuries and vet bills



Kittens are hard
work and cost time,
effort and money



Reduces risk of cancers
and other diseases
through mating



Less likely to roam,
get lost and injured
on roads



Cats can
breed from
four months
of age

Females can
come into
heat every
2-3 weeks



Females can
have up to
18 kittens a
year



Cats don't
need 'just one
litter' before
being spayed



Cats will
mate with
their brothers,
sisters and
parents

Did you know?

We can give you a voucher for your vet to pay for your cat/s to be neutered.
Just contact us and we can help:

- email neutering@eltham.cats.org.uk

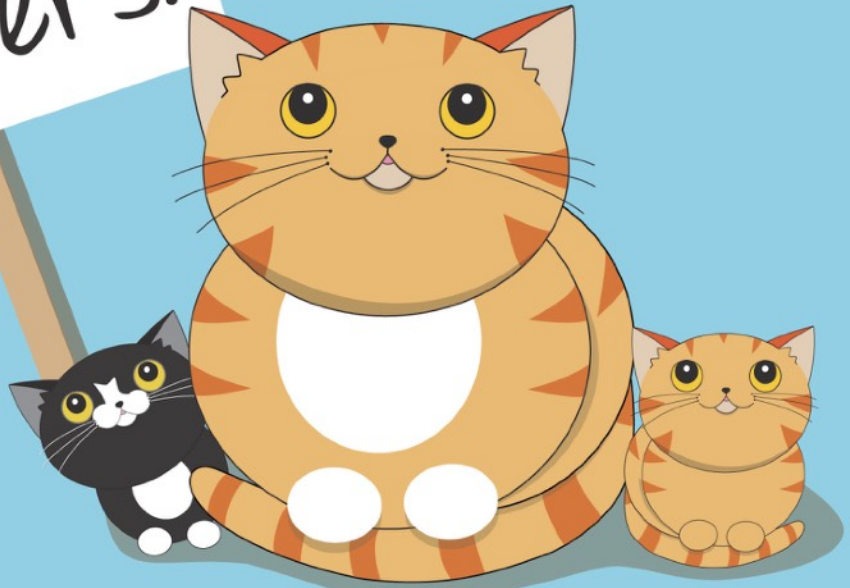
- inbox us on our Facebook page

- call us on 07591 120331



Eltham, Sidcup and District

We need
fosterers!



- UNABLE TO COMMIT TO LONG-TERM CAT OWNERSHIP, BUT CAN'T PASS A STREETCAT WITHOUT STOPPING FOR A STROKE?
- IS YOUR PHONE FULL OF PICS OF OTHER PEOPLE'S CATS?

THEN WHY NOT TRY CAT FOSTERING?!!

- Caring for our cats & kittens in your own home while they wait for adoption won't cost you a penny, & we provide training and lots of support.
- Time and love are all you need to get started!

**Please contact us via our website or Facebook page,
or email: adoption@eltham.cats.org.uk**

MARVELLOUS!

WE told Marvin's story in our last newsletter and can now add a new chapter showing him settled in his new home. He had been a stray being fed by Lin and partner in Lee before coming into us. Then he stole the hearts of Meredith and Nick to become their first pet cat soon after they had moved into their new house in Peckham.

Marvin was soon making himself very much part of the scene as this photo, right, shared by Meredith makes clear.

She told us: "He's such a character, we absolutely love him!"

Another stray Katie, below right, was in a bad way when she was rescued.

The young long-haired girl was very underweight and covered with ticks and fleas. She was not microchipped so we couldn't find whoever had owned her.

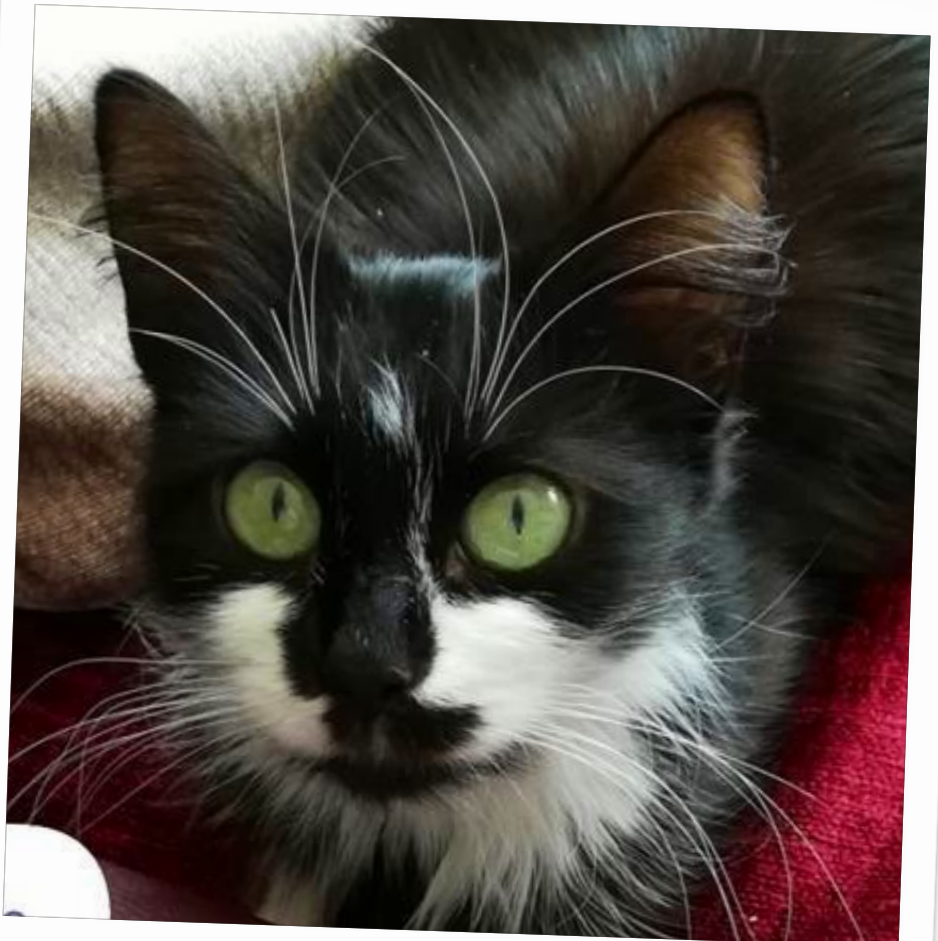
Katie spent some time at our vet while they checked her bloods, which thankfully were all negative, and dealt with the parasites.

She also had to wait a while to be spayed until the vet was happy she had gained enough weight for the operation.

Then finally it was time to be put on our website where her listing read: "Katie is the most friendly little girl, still underweight for her age, but she is gaining by the day.

She loves company and will need to be with owners who spend a lot of time at home."

Katie was offered a new start and, at the time of writing, was due to go to a new home where she can forget about her tough times in the past.



HIS white coat was very grubby and he had a cut on his face, probably suffered in a fight.

But Jeffrey had a lot of potential to be a loving pet and certainly deserved the chance after surviving outside as a stray in Eltham for a long time.

A kind resident Leanne had been looking after him and finally managed to rescue him and take him to our vet at Passey Place.

Jeffrey was aged about six but was not neutered or chipped so we had no chance of finding out where he had come from.

He had the full works plus blood tests to get him ready for homing.

Meanwhile Jeffrey was enjoying the comforts of life with regular meals and TLC, including watching telly snuggled up with his fosterer.

Leanne was grateful that he was finally off the streets and keen to know how he was getting on after seeing him on our website marked as reserved.

She contacted our head office to pass on a message: "I just wanted to say thank you for helping him, he was a stray in the area for years and I managed to pick him up one morning and we got him to the vets, who were fantastic with him.

"I have been keeping an eye out for him and am so glad he is being rehomed. So thank you for your fantastic work and for giving Jeffrey a happy ending."

The message was forwarded to our homing officer Diane, who confirmed that Jeffrey was being adopted by a lovely couple in Lee.

She added: "His dirty white fur is now almost squeaky clean. After some years living on the streets, he's finally got his forever home."

Meanwhile, Luna and Cooper are a bit like chalk and cheese.

Luna is a very confident, friendly and playful girl while Cooper is a little nervous of humans.

The timid boy is a very gentle soul and tends to hide behind Luna a lot.

They both had a tough start in life and needed time to build up their strength and weight for vaccinations to be ready for adoption.

After coming through, it was time to find an owner who would understand their differences and that Cooper needed his own space.

He will be Luna's shadow, always near her but not interacting as much as she does.

The six-month-olds had to stay together, being so close, and after a short time on our website they were adopted to embark on a new, happy life.



Jeffrey

Jeffrey's all white



**Luna and
Cooper**

Eight precious weeks



Week 1 - 3

Mum provides her kittens with milk, that's rich in antibodies, every three hours

! Kittens separated too soon might become under-nourished and vulnerable to infectious diseases

The kittens become copycats, imitating their mum to take their first steps

Week 3 - 5

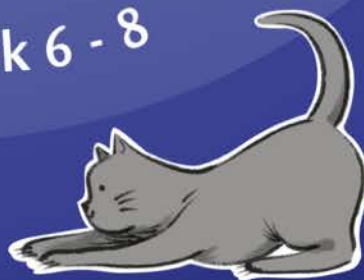


! Kittens taken away now may miss out on key developmental behaviours

The kittens learn appropriate cat behaviour through playing with their siblings

Week 6 - 8

! Kittens separated from their litter too early may play too hard and might bite or scratch their owners!



Eltham, Sidcup and District Branch Committee



HOMING

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CATS PROTECTION

Eltham, Sidcup and District branch

MEMBERSHIP FORM



I wish to become a member of this branch/renew my membership:

Full name.....

Address including postcode.....

Date of birth (if under 18).....Telephone number.....

Email address.....Date.....

Tick to receive newsletter by email

☐

Subscription: (tick as applicable) Individual membership £10

☐

Joint or family £10

☐

Junior, senior citizen, joint senior citizen, HQ member £7

☐

Donations always welcome! Thank you £.....

Please make cheques payable to Cats Protection and send completed page to:
Mrs Sue Kelly, Membership secretary, 354 Well Hall Road, London SE9 6UE

Gift Aid It! Cats get an extra 25p for every £1 with gift aid

I confirm that I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less income tax and/or capital gains tax than the amount of gift aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year (6th April to 5th April) then it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Please tick this box if you want to gift aid this donation and any other donations you make in the future or have made in the past four years to Cats Protection [☐]

Or if you are not a UK taxpayer, please tick the box [☐]

Please notify us if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains

We would love to keep in touch, by telling you about our work with cats, inviting you to support fundraising appeals, join events, campaigns or to volunteer. Rest assured, we'll never swap or sell any details about you with other organisations.

If you'd like to receive information in the following ways, please tick accordingly:

Email [☐] SMS [☐] Telephone [☐]

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