

SPRING EDITION 2022

# Island Mews

Never  
too old to find  
Love



[www.isleofwight.cats.org.uk](http://www.isleofwight.cats.org.uk)

# WELCOME TO THE SPRING EDITION OF ISLAND MEWS

Hello folks, it's Suzie here. As you all know, I run this place (despite what Mel and Jo say). And as the chief cat here, I thought I'd do the introduction to this Spring Edition. Give it a bit of that extra meow-wow factor!

Spring is the start of kitten season, and with all these cute little bundles of fluff running around the place, us oldies tend to be forgotten. So instead of a cutesy kitten on the front cover, I thought I'd feature my buddy Teddy. We're the same age, you know – 17 years old. Not suprisingly, handsome Teddy was snapped up pretty quick to a new home. But please don't forget that there are still plenty more lovely oldies here looking for a home.

## **Chocolate, chocolate everywhere!**

Talking of Spring, as you can see from my gorgeous photo, I am surrounded by Easter chocolate hampers. (Yes, that is a look of disgust on my face!) Thankfully, we're now back to normal and surrounded by treats for us cats and not for you humans.

The team have reminded me however to thank everybody who supported our Easter Egg raffle, including Teemill, Tesco Ryde, Morrisons Newport and Lake, Co-op Ryde and Spar Elmfield. And a special thank you to volunteers Pauline and Sarah who helped us raise over £800 in donations.

## **On to other matters...I would like to ask for your help**

Apparently some of my cat friends (and their kittens) in here are getting quite stressed being so long in the cattery whilst they're waiting for homes. So I'm looking around for anybody who can look after them for a few weeks in their own lovely home. Us cats really don't require much – just a spare room where we can do our own thing. Ok, we will require



room service, but nothing too fancy (maybe a Dreamie on the pillow at night?)

I know that Emma, our super Volunteer Team Leader, would love to tell you more about this wonderful opportunity. (In fact, she's written a bit more about this on page 8). So please do have a think whether you might be able to help. And perhaps you could also mention it to your friends, family and colleagues as well?

## **Just one more thing to ask, on behalf of all our kittens**

Please can you sign our 'Great Kitten Con' petition. We urgently need to stop all the suffering caused by online selling of kittens. (Simply click on the link on the back page).

## **Well, I think that's enough from me**

I did try and get all my feline friends here to contribute some articles, but they all seem media-shy. All except that Benjiro puss, who was determined we feature his complaints about his new home. I really don't know how his new mum puts up with him!

Once again, from all the cats here and the human team, thank you all for your continued support.

Meows and best wishes

*Suzie (Mel, Jo and the CP team)*

## EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

### GET READY FOR THE NEXT ISLE OF WIGHT HUMAN LOCK-IN JULY 2022!

Eleven years have flown by since the last human lock-in at our Centre. And now we're planning the next one for July 30th to raise money for cats in need.

Two of our brave and fearless volunteers (fosterer Dave and fundraiser Sarah) will be spending a whole night locked inside two pens with our cats. Who they'll be sharing with, we do not know. Will it be the shy, timid one? A friendly cuddly lap cat? A chatterbox non-stop meower (which will certainly put paid to any sleep)? Or will it be one of our fiery ones (where the Hide-Away will certainly come in useful for our volunteers)?

Jo says about her own experience "I loved it! Doing nothing for 24 hours locked in with a cat - my idea of heaven"

This time there'll be live Facebook video feeds, so be sure to keep an eye on our social media pages for more news and live coverage of our Cats Protection human lock-in.



*A young Jo (back in 2011) with her sleeping bag, getting ready to settle in her pen for the night*

## EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

After two years of lockdowns and cancelled events we can finally start welcoming you once again to our stand at some great events. We'll have lots of wonderful goodies on sale, plus cat-filled fun packs for the kids. Please do join us - it makes such a huge difference to us when we meet our supporters and gives us a real boost. Plus, all the proceeds really do help us raise much-needed funds for our cats.

**2 June, Bembridge Street Fayre | 2 July, Binstead Community Centre Summer Sunday | 6-7 August, The Chale Show**



*We'll be there. Please come and join us!*

## THE OFFICIAL WORLD SLEEP DAY

Here, at the Centre, we wish we had known that March 18th was World Sleep Day and that we could justifiably have slept through our whole day at work to support the cause. However our bunch of feline snoozers certainly did us proud. Here's our lovely Teddy doing his bit to celebrate the day.

On the subject of sleep, did you know that domestic cats sleep between 12-18 hours a day? One of the main reasons cats love to sleep so much is to conserve their energy. A tired cat with no energy can't hunt or protect themselves, so they need lots of sleep to make sure they're wide awake and ready for anything!





# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF CATS PROTECTION IOW

## A TYPICAL DAY

**Ever wondered what goes on behind the scenes at our Centre?**

8:30am



Staff arrive to a cats' chorus of 'meows'. So the first thing we do as we come into the cattery is say hello to all the lovely cats. It's hard not to!

Of course, most of them care not for our existence right now, but for their rumbling tummies. It's breakfast time and that's the first important job.



Time to dish up lots of bowls of cat food and remember who's on medication and special diets.

Every cat has an observation chart, so it's very easy to see what each cat has been eating and their preference so we can cater to each cat's likes and dislikes and to their individual dietary requirements.

We also note down their toileting habits – we want to see Grade 5 (a good poop on our scoring chart!)

9:00am



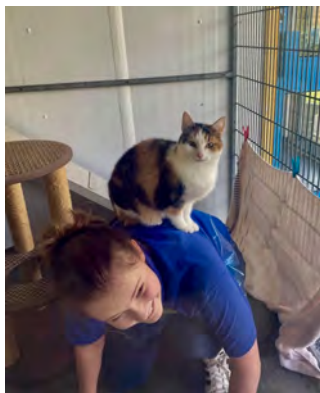
Next task is the cleaning. Staff and volunteers work together, to clean the indoor sleeping areas, remove empty bowls, change litter trays, change bedding and check on the cats to make sure all is well.

'Spot' (ie wipe down) cleaning is done in the homing section so we don't remove all their comforting scent.



However it's extremely hard not to stop and fuss the cats. (Deep cleans are carried out if the cat is homed or moves pen).

This is also the time to clean out the outdoor exercise areas. With all the enrichment on offer there is also quite a bit of cat grass, catnip and toy 'innards' to clean up. As you can see, our cats don't always make it easy for us.



Then there's a pile of litter trays to wash. Some nicer than others!

10:30am



Pens all cleaned, it's now time to

sweep, mop, put laundry on, wash and dry bowls, make up the litter trays, wipe down any surfaces, take the bins out, check the food stock and so on. We make sure the cattery is clean and tidy, not only for the cats, but for visitors, volunteers and staff.

10:45am



Time to catch up with the team! Our Receptionist and Adoption Centre Manager have been busy on site with admin, matching cats to potential homes and with social media, but if we can, we have a team catch-up to pass on information about the cats and the day ahead.

11:00am



Back into the cattery: now is the opportunity to do any odd jobs, and check in with our staff goals. These can be things like sorting all of our generous food and toy donations, PPE stock check, medication stock check, weighing cats, worming and flea-ing schedules, catching up with our volunteer fosterers who have some of our cats in their care, and anything else that needs doing.

11:30am



Adoption Call for Luna (pictured right). We have found it difficult to find the right match for her. She's a bit of a diva, but wonderful with it.

The call goes well and the potential adopter will come up and meet Luna tomorrow.

12:15pm



Cats' lunch time. Any cats that require a lunch will get theirs, and we also use biscuits to fill any food

# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF CATS PROTECTION IOW

enrichment toys like food balls and treat towers, filing in our charts as we go. These toys stimulate the cats' minds and encourage hunting behaviours, which is great for their wellbeing.

12:30pm



New owners come to meet one of our cats, Joey. They love him and want him straight away. They already had an adoption call to discuss Joey and his needs. Paperwork is done and Joey heads off for a fresh start.

**Lunch...for us! Time for our break.**

1:30pm



Interaction and cuddle time. Each of us is a cat buddy for those cats who need some extra TLC and extra thought into making their time here as stress-free as possible. We start off with "what can I do to for this cat's welfare?". Our aim is to get the cat ready for homing.



The cats that are hiding away or showing any behaviour issues are the ones who need enrichment the most. There will be some days that you go to hang out with one of the cats and they won't even show their face, but we still sit with them, letting the cat become

used to our presence without anything scary happening.

And other days you're glued down to the spot by a very snugly over-enthusiastic love bug!



2:00pm



Call to fosterers to chat to see if anyone is available to help with Kasumi who has a sore mouth.

A leaflet drop is carried out to find the potential owner of a stray cat. No point removing a cat if it's living next door. It's a good quick way to find out who knows about the cat in the community.

2:30pm



New cat arrives. The owner is sad to be parting with an elderly cat called Thomas. He has a health-check and weigh-in. We can tell he can't see that well. We will have to monitor this.

3:00pm



Poop run. What goes in must come out. Clean any dirty litter trays. General tidy up for the next day and finish the laundry.

Off to collect five cats from one home. Landlord has threatened eviction if the lady doesn't part with her animals. Another sad situation. They have fleas so Capstar is given and they will have Stronghold after seeing the vet



4:00pm



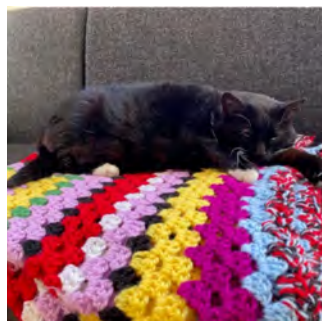
Dinner time. Any cats who don't eat much during the day, get double dinner so they can eat overnight when it's quiet. Another medication and Feliway round. Top up water bowls, and wash up and dry the food bowls.

4:30pm



Check cats are all ok. Make sure litter trays are clean, cat flaps are closed, then time for one last cuddle before we lock up and say goodbye for the day, ready to start again tomorrow.

Sweet dreams little kitties.



## 18 YEARS OLD, ABANDONED AND LEFT TO FEND FOR HERSELF

Elderly Lizzy was found as a stray in East Cowes. She came to us in a terrible state - matted fur, thin, cold and hungry. Who knows for how long she had been struggling to survive.



At the Centre, she was found to be hyperthyroid. Luckily we soon managed to stabilise her condition, and once we completed all her dental work, she was signed off for rehoming. With her lovely personality, she very soon got adopted.

A few weeks later, we got a distraught call from her new Mum. Lizzy didn't want to eat and was also showing signs of discomfort and distress. Poor Lizzie soon went downhill and ended up at the vet on a drip. Understandably, her new owners felt a little over-whelmed and so Lizzy was returned to our care. Her medication was changed and Lizzie recovered and was stabilised once more. However a new home was needed.

We were thrilled when a lady came forward, determined to give this dear old cat a home.

"I don't think I've ever met a more cuddly cat! She is happy to come up for cuddles with both of us, and often comes to sit on our laps" Lizzy is now one very-loved cat.



*"We are so lucky to have Lizzy as part of our family. We love her to bits"*

### Vet-checked and fit-to-home

**All our cats must be vet-checked and signed off as fit-to-home before adoption. But what does this entail?**

When a new cat, like Lizzie, comes to us, a vet will do a thorough examination, including skin, fur and body condition, and any lumps and bumps that may need investigating. Teeth, mouth, ears and eyes will also be carefully checked. Cats are also tested for FIV (Feline Immunodeficiency Virus) and FeLV (Feline Leukemia). Each cat will be given flea and worm treatment and at least one vaccination against cat flu and feline enteritis.

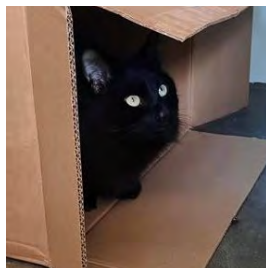
This is also the time when conditions such as hyperthyroidism and kidney disease can be diagnosed. Any treatment needed will be done as soon as possible and no cat will be signed off as fit-to-home, until they have fully recovered or have had their condition stabilised. (If ongoing medication is needed after adoption, Cats Protection may also contribute towards the cost).

As in Lizzie's case, where a cat has an ongoing condition, there may be times when her medical needs change after rehoming. Rest assured, Cats Protection will always be there to support both you and your cat, whatever happens.

## YIPPEE, I'VE BEEN RESERVED! CAT HUGS ALL AROUND

Luna can't quite believe that she's finally been chosen. As she was told the news, she just couldn't hide her joy and gave our team member, Judith, one almighty hug.

After spending almost three months with us in the cattery, Luna was proving quite a challenge. She's what we call 'A little madam' - determined to get her way at all times. Fortunately, she finally managed to use all her feline gorgeousness to persuade one adventurous soul to take her on and take her home.



Here she is, all ready to be boxed up and despatched to her new owner.

We know you're keen to go, but patience, Luna - we've got paperwork, medicals and vet checks to sort out first.



## YES, THERE REALLY IS A HUG-A-CAT DAY!

And it's June 4th. Although the origins of Hug-Your-Cat-Day are unknown, it is clear that the creators of the holiday wanted people to let their cats know that they are loved by embracing them in a warm hug. But we think it's really more about being reassured that we're loved too!

We'd love to feature all the best cat hugs in our next newsletter so get hugging now and send in your photos.

HAPPY NATIONAL HUG DAY!



## SPEAKING OF HUGS, HERE'S OUR NEWLY ADOPTED WILLIAM

First and foremost, Suzie has told us that any self-respecting cat would never let themselves be photographed like this. 'Shame on you William!' Suzie mutters.

To all other cats, Suzie recommends a bit of hissing and spitting (claws allowed as a last resort) to prevent such an embarrassing pose. Clearly however, our very cuddly William is loving every minute of being hugged by his new mum. Don't worry Suzie, we won't try this with you!





# ALL ABOUT CAT FOSTERING



## COULD YOU FOSTER ONE OF US FOR A FEW WEEKS?

**Many people ask us what we mean by 'fostering a cat'. It may sound daunting, but read on to find out more...**

Basically, fostering means just looking after one of our homeless cats, or a litter of kittens, for a little while in your own home until they're ready to be adopted. It's as simple as that. No special skills or experience needed. Just a spare room in your house, a bit of your time and a love of cats.

At our IOW Centre, we always have cats needing a little extra help until they're ready to be rehomed. These may include kittens that need socialising, or cats that are very shy and need help to regain trust in humans; others may be recovering from illness or an operation and simply need a quiet warm place to recuperate. It could be a few days, weeks or even months - it's up to you.

Fostering really is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy caring for a cat in your own home without

the commitment of cat ownership.

Our fosterers come from every walk of life, lead busy or quiet lives, and live in houses or flats. Our cats come from a variety of backgrounds and each has different needs, so we can always find a good match for you.

All food and supplies are provided. And our friendly fostering team is always on hand to give you all the advice and support you need.

Fostering also gives you the satisfaction of knowing that you're genuinely making a life-changing difference to the cat in your care and a huge difference to our charity.

### Keen to know more?

Just call us on 03000 120 251 or email us on [IsleofWight.VTL@Cats.org.uk](mailto:IsleofWight.VTL@Cats.org.uk) for one of our Fostering Information packs or take a look at the Volunteer section of our website for more information.

## YES, YOU REALLY CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Just look at Belle. When she arrived at the Centre, she was a tiny, very frightened cat with a terrible skin condition.

After a few months in care with her foster mum, she grew in confidence and blossomed into this gorgeous cat on the right.





# HEAR WHAT OUR NEWEST FOSTERERS SAY...

Wendy and Abi, who have been fostering with us since January, and Clare and Debbie, who have been fostering with us since March, talk to Emma about their experiences so far.

## Why did you decide to give fostering a go?

Wendy and I heard about fostering from a couple who were already fosterers and told us about some of their experiences. We decided then it was something we really wanted to do.

For Debbie and I, we just wanted to help. When we saw the plea for fosterers, we rang up and talked to a lovely lady who sent us the application form.

## How easy was the application process?

It was simple. After we applied, we had a brief chat with Emma, the Volunteer Team Leader, and then we came to the Centre to meet her and learn more about the role. We were made to feel really welcome by the Cats Protection team and also had a chance to meet other fosterers who were able to tell us first-hand what it could be like. We especially loved the tour of the centre and meeting the cats in care.

## What support and training did you get

We felt very supported and well-prepared for the role. The 'training' is not formal or daunting in any way; it simply guides you through some easy short modules which can be done at the Centre or at your own home and in your own time. It's actually quite fun to do. We were also reassured to know there is always a foster-team member we can call on for help at any time.

## How was your first fostering experience?

For Wendy and I, our first cat was Ruby. She would tolerate us entering her space but certainly didn't want us too close initially! As time went by, we got to know each other better and it was great to see her bloom in confidence.

Debbie and I fostered Peanut and Biscuit who, between them, had six kittens. They shared the feeding, cleaning and playing between them. The kittens were adorable and we could see a change in them every day.

The Centre was great at keeping in touch and supporting us throughout.

## How did you feel when your foster cat was adopted?

We were so pleased for Ruby when she found her forever home. We had grown fond of her and her funny ways! It was lovely to receive a picture of her in her new home, looking like she owned the place almost immediately. It was good to think we had helped in some way.

For us, it was sad to see the kittens leave but great to know that you have been part of their new start in life and that they will all go to their very happy forever homes. It has been an absolute delight to have them in our family.

## Would you recommend fostering to others?

Yes, it is a great opportunity to get to know a whole variety of feline friends: each one bringing their own unique character. It doesn't feel like hard work because it is so rewarding. We have been made to feel really welcome by the staff and we feel a key part of the team.

Clare and I would absolutely recommend fostering. It is so rewarding to know that you have been part of making a cat or kitten's life happier and finding a home that they will love and be loved.



Wendy and Abi, who are now fostering Queenie and her kittens

### MINNIE MOO - OLD, SHY AND UNWANTED

I've been a volunteer at Cats Protection for over five years now and I've seen many cats come and go. Although many have been much-loved cats and are soon found loving homes, others are in a terrible state when they arrive. Some have suffered years of neglect, others have been abused, and some have simply never had a home to call their own. For me, nothing gives me more joy, than to see the Cats Protection team turn their lives around, and find them loving homes.

But there are always the few that nobody wants; the plain ones, the very shy ones, the old and frail ones. Month after month, they stare out of their little pen, desperate for someone to offer them a home.

Minnie Moo is one such cat. At 16 years old, she's lost much of her kitty-cute looks, and she's incredibly shy.

I've only met her once. She was huddled away in the back of her hide-away Fort, terribly scared. I sat with her for 30 minutes but she never moved. For Minnie Moo this little Fort was her world, the only place she felt safe.

"What happened to you, little one? What's made you so scared?"



#### Let me tell you the story of Minnie Moo

Minnie Moo was originally adopted in 2004 as a happy six-month-old little kitten. Sadly, after seven years, she was no longer wanted, and was taken to the vet to be put down. Luckily the vet contacted us and we took her straight into our care at the Centre.

We don't know what happened to her in those seven years, but when she arrived at our Centre, she was a terrified, withdrawn cat, frightened of everyone and everything.

She was with us for many months waiting to be chosen, but no one came. Finally we did find a new home for Minnie Moo with a lady who became Minnie's much-loved companion for nine years.

Then sadly, Minnie Moo's owner died. At sixteen years old, Minnie found herself homeless again. We tried very hard to build her trust but we could see that she was still very scared. Visitors would feel sorry for her, offer her a home, but sadly she was soon returned. 'Old and shy' is not what people wanted. Luckily, we found a foster carer for her, who made a huge difference. And the great news is that after seven months looking for a home, she has finally been reserved. We all really hope it works out for you little Moo!

At our Centre, we have many cats like Minnie Moo, frequently rejected and always overlooked. We'd like to think that Spring can be a new beginning for these cats too and not just our kittens.





## JUST IMAGINE...

**Seventy cats confined their entire lives to just one small shed!**

Fortunately the mainland RSPCA had been alerted. The cats were all rescued promptly and our Isle of Wight Centre took on four of the cats for rehoming. Benjiro was one of them.

As you can imagine, with his limited experience of life and people, he was terrified of everything. Luckily someone saw past the hisses and spits and welcomed him home. And despite Benjiro's complaints (right), we can see that his new family love him. They told us "Although he still hisses and backs away, we are making progress. We realised it would be a long job, so we will not give up. He is developing a lovely character, cute and playful".

Dear Isle of Wight Adoption team,

I thought I would let you know how disgusted I am that you have sent me to this woman. I hate her! I hiss and spit every time she comes near me, and I poop on the floor to prove my point! I have a Feliway diffuser – huh, lot of good that does! I run all over her when I think she is asleep, and I climb on the tree thing they have got me, but only at night. I like sitting on the top of the wardrobe where I can check up on her.

During the day, I stay hidden. I will not make this easy for her at all. I flew at her this morning, all claws blazing when she offered me a titbit. It's going to take more than that to win me over!

I know there is another feline in the house although I have not met her yet. I can smell her. She must be able to smell me too, but I am not sure what my reaction will be when I finally get to meet her.

I thought I would just give you my feelings so far. On the plus side, I'm getting lots of yummy food, so don't worry about me going hungry.

This woman says she won't give up on me, not sure what that means. If she thinks I am going to stop attacking her any time soon, she is sadly mistaken.

Lots of love (but not to HER)

Benjiro xxx

## Suzie's email to Benjiro's email

Dear Benjiro

I was sitting behind the computer and in the middle of my daily ablutions, when I read your email. Oh, I was so cross to hear about your feelings to your new Mum. Do I need to remind you that you came from an awful situation, had to go to the vet where you were probed and prodded to check you were healthy and then (dare I mention it) castrated (oh, the humiliation!) then put on a boat (sea sick, I bet!) to the Isle of Wight – where you were prodded and probed all over again – and all before you met your Mum. So don't take out your feelings on her. She rescued you from all this!

Good to hear you've found a happy place on the wardrobe. Best place for you, is all I can say!

BTW, if you get treats when you're scared, just think how much food you could get when you start being friendly! Go on, try it, just to make your new mum happy.

Meow

Suzie (no kisses from me!)





## KEEP UP-TO-DATE WITH OUR NEWS



### THE 'GREAT KITTEN CON' - PLEASE SIGN OUR PETITION

68% of cats purchased in the last year were found online, according to our CATS report.

While online shopping has become a huge part of our lives, particularly during the pandemic, the online sale of cats and kittens can have heart-breaking consequences.

Some kittens are being sold online for profit too soon. They're being torn apart from their mums before they're even eight weeks old. Not only does this break the most precious bond, it is also life-threatening. Separating kittens from their mother before the age of eight weeks can have an impact on their behaviour, health and sometimes even their

survival. Mum cats are often mistreated and kept in horrific conditions, bred for their kittens again and again.

Unscrupulous kitten selling has to stop. That's why we're calling for cat breeding to be regulated across the UK. Only by ensuring cat breeding is properly regulated can we protect cats and kittens from suffering.

Please sign the Cats Protection petition calling for cat breeding to be regulated. Every signature counts!

[Click here to link to the Cats Protection 'The Great Kitten Con' Petition](#)

### Support us by subscribing

You can subscribe to Island Mews on our website or just phone or email us for a sign-up form, return it to us, and we'll do the rest. You'll receive four emailed issues of cat-infused happiness per year, free of charge.



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