



The Cat's Whiskers



Stewartry & District Branch
Winter Newsletter 2011

It's hard to believe that we are already well into the winter months. We have had a busy summer with our usual fundraising activities as well as dealing with the day-to-day running of the branch. Even with a small branch like ours this can take up a considerable amount of time for the volunteers. Taking and returning calls from the public, trying to help with problems, going out to collect stray/abandoned cats and kittens and trips to the vets are just a few of the things we deal with.

Since our last newsletter we have had a very successful coffee morning in Dalbeattie in July, raising £743 for branch funds. We had a stall at Thornhill Gala Day and it was a hot, sunny day which brought the crowds out. Although our branch covers the Stewartry area mainly, we also cover the areas of Thornhill, Kirkconnell and Moniaive and we think it is important to let local people know of our existence. August brought the annual Stewartry Show where we always have a stall. It was very wet when we arrived to set up but the day gradually improved and the afternoon was dry. We had a reasonable day but our stall wasn't as busy as previous years and there didn't seem the usual number of visitors to the show.

Urgent Appeal for Kandi – Can you give her a new home?



Kandi has featured in our last 2 newsletters because she came into our care with a very nasty wound on her back which may have been caused by something corrosive. The wound needed regular veterinary attention for many months and poor Kandi had a lot to put up with. She is now fully recovered and looking for a new home. She is a lovely, friendly cat, about 4 years old and as she has been in our care for over 9 months we would love to see her find a new home soon.

FIV / FeLV Blood Tests – What are they?

FIV (Feline Immunodeficiency Virus) and FeLV (Feline Leukaemia Virus) are two nasty diseases that cats can suffer from. We always recommend that cats and kittens are vaccinated against FeLV but unfortunately there is no vaccine against FIV. Both diseases can be passed from the mother to her kittens and adult cats can be infected through blood and saliva eg when fighting or mating. FIV positive cats can be rehomed if they are to live indoors without contact with other cats, but they are vulnerable to infection due to a weakened immune system. 80% of FeLV cats die within 3.5 years.

Cats Protection is concerned with preventing the spread of these diseases and often ask the vets to carry out blood tests (snap tests) on feral and stray/sick cats. The snap tests give a result in about 10 minutes. Sick or feral cats that test positive are usually put to sleep, to prevent a probable painful death and to stop them spreading the disease to other cats. If the test result is indeterminate, the blood samples can be sent to a lab in Glasgow for a decisive result.

One of the most difficult decisions to make is when we take in kittens (usually from farms) where some of the adult cats are infected with FIV/FelV. We always try to find the mother of the kittens and if she is FIV positive we also test her kittens as up to a third of them could be infected. Kittens of FelV positive mothers have to be put to sleep as they will all be infected with the disease. This is one of the worst things we have to do which luckily does not happen very often, but we cannot rehome them and they have a painless and dignified end.

A few months ago we took in 5 kittens from a farm where 2 of the male cats were infected with FelV. Read on to learn the kittens' story.

The Famous Five

A few months ago we helped to trap and neuter a colony of farm cats that was getting out of hand. When we arrived at the farm we went to one of the calf sheds and saw some adult cats that looked at us then ran off. Then we saw them – 5 gorgeous kittens, about 5 – 6 weeks old, running about and playing. 2 black ones, 2 black and white ones and 1 tortoiseshell. "They are coming home with me" was my first thought. The farmer was quite agreeable but he was surprised that we would be able to socialise them and rehome them as domestic kittens but we explained that they were young enough for us to do this.

We began setting the traps and baiting them with tuna chunks and soon caught a big ginger tom – he went off to the vets to be blood tested and neutered before being returned to the farm. We caught 3 of the kittens quite quickly but the other 2 were more evasive, we eventually found them hiding in a cardboard box!

Then the vet rang to say that the ginger tom was FelV positive and would have to be put to sleep. This was devastating news. The kittens would now need to be blood tested too. They were all checked by the vet and appeared healthy and after an anxious wait we were very relieved to hear they had all tested negative. However, because of their young age and the possibility of still retaining some of their mother's antibodies, they would have to be kept in isolation for 12 weeks and then retested when the results would be more definitive.

It was an anxious time and I wondered if I could cope emotionally if they had to be put to sleep at the end of the 12 week period. Try not to bond with them/don't give them names, was some of the advice I was given. The minute those wee eyes look into yours and they sit on your knee purring, it's a done deal. Sienna, Harley, Kooki, Syd and Ali had to be given a chance and they settled in almost immediately. They are happy, contented kittens who are full of fun and love to play.

CP cats / kittens are always kept apart from our own cats but I had to be very strict when I was in with the kittens and wear protective apron and gloves as Leukaemia can be passed on in saliva. By the end of the 12 weeks the kittens were 4.5 months old and growing by the day.

At the vets, the kittens had another blood test which was sent to the lab in Glasgow for analysis. Following another anxious wait we got the tremendous news that all the tests were negative. Sienna has already gone to a new home and the other 4 kittens are ready and waiting for someone to adopt them.



SYD



KOOKI



HARLEY



ALI



SIENNA

Charity Shop October 2011

Once again, thanks to the generosity of the McKenzie family, we had a successful charity shop sale in Dalbeattie in October. It was a very busy 3 days and we raised £590, which is a great amount for the branch. We would like to thank everyone who supported us and also those who helped serve in the shop. It is a very small shop but it is amazing the amount of things we packed into it. We hope to have the shop again next Spring so please bear us in mind when you are having a clear out.

EVENTS 2012

24 March – Coffee Morning in Dalbeattie Town Hall 10 – 12 noon

Christmas Food Collections

Every Christmas we have cat food collection bins in several local supermarkets. When you are out shopping please consider buying an extra item of cat food for the cats that are in our care over the festive period. We know they will really appreciate it. The food bins will be in the Co-op in Dalbeattie, and in the Co-op, Tesco and Wilkinsons in Castle Douglas.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions for 2012 are now due, if you haven't already done so, please send a cheque for £7 to:

Stewartry & District Cats Protection
PO Box 7470
Castle Douglas DG7 1YE

We rely on donations to continue our work for the cats in our area and your support is greatly appreciated. To keep costs down we will not send a receipt unless requested.

Newsletters

If you would like to receive your newsletters via email please let us know at:

stewartrycats@gmail.com

This means that more of your subscription will go towards helping our cats. Thankyou.

These cats are looking for new homes

We have lots of cats looking for new homes. If you could offer a loving home please contact us on 01557-339233 to arrange a home visit. Please note we have an adoption fee of £25 per cat. More details about the cats can be found on our website www.stewartry.cats.org.uk



Honey – mature female



Susie – 8 mths female



Seve – 8 mths male



Benny – 6 mths male

Appeal for Books – if you have any fiction paperback books you don't want we would be grateful for them to sell at our fundraising events. Please bring to one of our events or we may be able to collect if you have a lot.

A Happy Ending

We are fortunate in our area that we don't see too many cases of cats being cruelly treated. However, we took a kitten in recently which had been found on the road in an isolated spot. The kitten was about 7–8 weeks old and friendly but he had what appeared to be cigarette burns on his head and his whiskers looked as though they had been melted. How can people be so cruel? After a short time recuperating with one of our fosterers, he was adopted by the vet who first examined him.

Facebook – we now have a page on Facebook – Cats Protection Stewartry & District .



**Festive Greetings and Best Wishes for 2012 to all our
volunteers and supporters.
Thank you, we couldn't carry on our work without your help.**

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