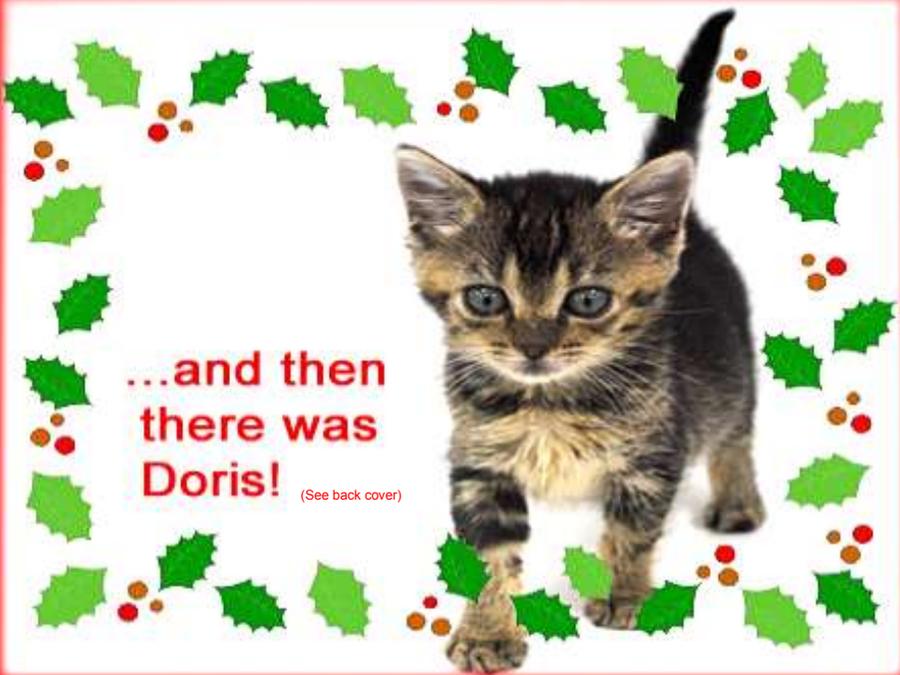




# FELINES

Taunton & Wellington Branch Newsletter  
Christmas 2016 (No. 116)



## In this Issue:

- Knitting and other craft workshops
- In praise of older cats
- Branch News
- News of adopted cats





Hello Readers,

Another year has flown by and once again we are taking a look back at what we have achieved in the branch in 2016.

Many exciting developments have happened, some of which we have mentioned in previous issues of Felines, but this time we can give more positive news about them.

So far (as at the end of November) we have successfully homed 101 cats and kittens which include 11 via the new Homing and Information Centre at Blackdown Garden Centre. We have had some terrific feedback about many of these lucky cats, some of which you can read in this issue.



Also there is news about our new TNR (Trap/Neuter/Return) team and a new foster facility which has been in the planning stages over the past 9 months. Read also about some more of the very special cats that have crossed our paths this year and charmed us in their own ways.

As always we say a huge thank you to all our volunteers and supporters, without whom we would be unable to help so many cats. Sadly the demand on our services never gets any less and we are not alone in the UK—all Cats Protection Branches remain under massive pressure to manage the cats that do not have happy and settled homes and we can only hope that by trying to educate people about cat welfare, life for cats will get better.

**Please email any stories, pictures or events you'd like to feature**

in Felines at: [cp.welfare@gmail.com](mailto:cp.welfare@gmail.com) or write to :

Felines FAO: Laura, Cats Protection Shop, 19 South Street, Wellington TA21 8NR.

See you next issue!





Picture the scene. The humans are standing in the hall, ready to go out, coats on and keys in hand. Then my person utters the dreaded words, "I just need to find my glasses." At this point, she begins a search of each room, looking in all the likely places. Kitchen? NO. Bathroom? NO. On top of her head? NO.

So she goes round again, slightly more frenzied and increasingly grumpy - and woe betide the Mr Person if he should ask where they were when she last saw them! (I would agree it was a pretty stupid question, but brave of him to ask it.)

Meanwhile I feel I have two options. I could make myself scarce in the garden until all the fuss is over, or I could be asleep, which is what I have chosen to do today. Snuggled down into my cuddly blanket, curled up with tail over nose and eyes shut tight.



The missing glasses didn't materialise, so she had to find an old pair and take those with her.

I knew where they were though. I was sleeping on them! Score one to me, I think.

Love,  
Wilfred x

# KNITTING AND OTHER THINGS . . . . .

On 6 October we held a knitting workshop at the Homing and Information Centre, and several supporters came along to learn how to make a catnip pumpkin.

These are very quick and easy – if you can knit garter stitch you can make a pumpkin. And they don't have to be orange. Some of the group are still making them which is very helpful, as it can be difficult to keep up with demand, especially around Christmas time.

The pumpkins and other catnip toys can be bought at our shop at 19 South Street, Wellington, and at Mount Vets at 21 High Street, Wellington.

We were so pleased with the workshop that we plan to run more, but in a slightly different way, so we will be inviting anyone who is interested to bring along their own knitting, sewing or crochet project, and come and have a hot drink and a chat with the other participants.

The workshops will normally take place on a Sunday from 11am to 2pm at the Homing Centre. The next one is on Sunday 18 December, so why not take a little time away from all the frantic Christmas preparations and join us?

If you don't have a craft project at the moment, there will always be some samples of things you can try, plus instruction sheets, so come and be inspired.

Or simply come for the chat!

Making up one of the colourful pumpkins





***Here is what one of the participants has to say .....***

*If you love cats, and if you have a playful cat at home, and if you want a few hours of relaxed fun then please join us for our next knitting project at the Homing Centre at Blackdown Garden Centre.*

*I went along there armed with knitting needles and wool for the first of, I hope, many such sessions. The aim of this session was to make catnip pumpkins for our furry friends (my cat Freda loved hers and has 'killed' it many times!) The atmosphere was very friendly and relaxed, full of warmth and humour and we all had a finished pumpkin by the end (and we got to meet all the lovely cats ready and waiting for a new home).*

*Even if, like me, you're not a seasoned knitter the pattern was easy to follow, and we had expert guidance from Ann who helped with dropped stitches, lost stitches and unexpected extra stitches, as well some very handy tips. It really was a lovely relaxed few hours, spent with like-minded people, full of banter and humour, a much needed stress-free break, and we all had something to take home to entertain our cats by the end. What could be better?*

*So, look out for details of our December session on Facebook, at the Homing Centre, in the shop, and around and about, and please join us. It's such fun.*

*EL*

◆

# Cats and Donkeys



**Twinkle, Holly and Star at Cats Protection NCC**

Cats Protection works closely with other animal welfare organisations who have similar aims – not necessarily with cats. Earlier this year The Donkey Sanctuary homed three donkeys, Twinkle, Holly and Star, to the National Cat Centre on Ashdown Forest. They are now much loved by visitors and staff alike.

Their Welfare Adviser said, “These lovely donkeys had quite a challenging start to life before coming into our care and now that they are fully recovered I am delighted to see them settling into their new home. They’re such friendly, inquisitive donkeys and I know they will adore the attention from all the animal-loving visitors at Cats Protection.”

There is more good news – four cats have been given a home at the Donkey Sanctuary’s biggest farm in Devon, where they join a herd of 449 donkeys. An excellent collaboration between the two charities, designed to promote one another’s rehoming schemes.



**Baron is one of four cats from Cats Protection who have been given a home at Trow Farm at Sidmouth, Devon**

# Fundraising Update!

David's abseil down the cliff face at Uphill Quarry, Weston Super Mare in September has now raised a fantastic £564.30 thanks to some very generous sponsorship.

Having set a modest target of £150, this result is great news and the money will go a long way towards helping more cats and kittens!



More crazy fundraising activities are planned for next year, with the full support of the national Fundraising team from NCC. Our Regional Fundraising Manager Lou Keeling is there to guide and assist with any planning you may need.

So, if you fancy a tandem skydive at Dunkeswell airfield on the Blackdown Hills, an adrenalin laden Zipwire flight across disused slate quarries in Snowdonia or maybe an abseil in the Avon Gorge, then let us know and your name can be added to the already growing list.

You can even raise money by 'doing your own thing'. Why not run a coffee morning, cake sale, sponsored bike ride — whatever you fancy!

By setting up a Just Giving sponsorship page, collecting sponsorship cannot be simpler and all the donations are safely processed by the fundraising team.

# In Praise of Older Cats



Hebie

As cat lovers, we all know that cute kittens home relatively easily, but older cats are often bypassed. Families with young children, in particular, often choose a kitten as they want their children to grow up with it, but is this always the wisest choice?

Kittens are boisterous, lively (and lovely) little creatures who have yet to learn some social graces. They may not always feel like playing when their small humans do as, like babies, they need lots of sleep to recharge their batteries and aid their development. We are often asked whether a kitten will be a lap cat, but it is very difficult to tell when they are so young.

Many of the cats handed in to us and other branches are strays who are about a year old. Often they are pregnant, or come with a litter of kittens. But these lovely cats, who are barely out of kittenhood themselves, already have developed personalities so it is much easier to see how they will fit into a home and family. They are usually affectionate and love a cuddle, and are grateful to find themselves in a situation where they are fed and given attention.

They home really successfully, if only they are given a chance.

We are also asked to take in cats from situations where an owner has passed away, family members are unable or unwilling to take the cat and they cannot find a home for it



Diego

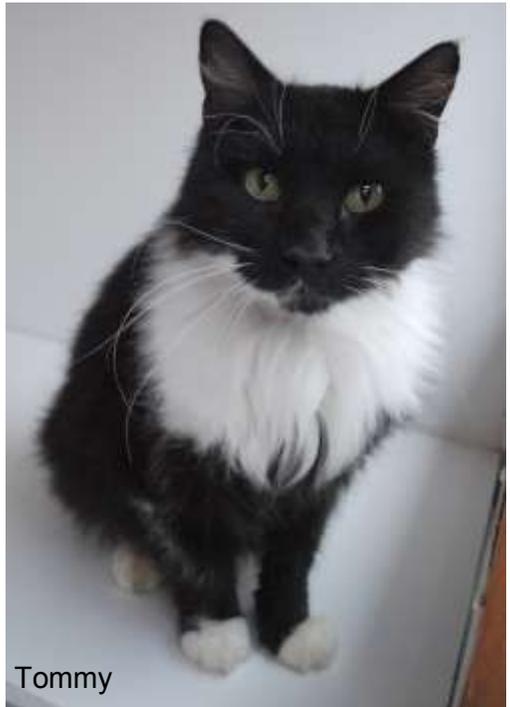


These cats are normally older and vulnerable, as they can find themselves turned out onto the street at a time of life when they should be enjoying home comforts. All they really want is a warm bed, regular food and a lap to sleep on. They make wonderful companions.

Add in to this mix the cats who have to be rehomed because their owners are moving and a landlord will not allow pets, or those with a genuine allergy, and there is a huge choice of adult cats looking for new homes at any time. One thing they all have in common is that they seem bewildered by the situation they find themselves in.

Like the majority of welfare organisations nationally, our fostering facilities are under pressure and normally completely full, so these cats have to go onto a waiting list which is not ideal.

As a Branch supporter, if you are reading this newsletter you probably already have a cat, but if you know of someone who is considering adopting one, please help to promote those older individuals who are seeking a home. They are so worthwhile.



Tommy

Call the branch on **03452 602 397** or go to our website at **[www.taunton.cats.org.uk](http://www.taunton.cats.org.uk)**

Not all the cats in our care are listed on the website, so call and ask as the perfect cat may be waiting to join you in a new loving home.



# Meet 'Team TNR'!

Following our appeal earlier in the year for volunteers to train for trapping work, it is good to report that 'Team TNR' is now in place and tackling the jobs as they arise.

As has been previously explained, TNR work is sporadic and we can never be sure quite what will be involved when a request is made through our incoming telephone service. Sometimes it may be one or two cats and other times it may be a colony that is likely to take many weeks to fully resolve.

Currently the team comprises five volunteers who throughout the summer and autumn have been working hard assessing, planning and successfully carrying out a number of TNR tasks, and just as we thought things were settling for a quieter spell, more requests have come in.

There have been jobs where the cats have behaved impeccably and others where they have behaved like cats—declining to cooperate by not going into traps despite the lure of pilchards in tomato sauce! But we got there in the end.

There have, too, been some sadder moments. As we routinely blood test a representative proportion of feral cats for FIV and FeLV, we have had some difficult decisions to make when a test result comes up as positive. For the benefit of the cat and others in the colony, putting the cat to sleep is often the best and kindest option, but this is never an easy decision to make and is only made after full discussion with the vet. This year's jobs have included identifying a small number of such cats.

Our team live in locations scattered across our 'patch' so we have the area pretty well covered, but there is always room for more volunteers who would like to undertake this important work. All members of the team have other commitments in their lives, so by having more people available, it means that we can respond to requests for help more swiftly. There is a lot of planning involved and therefore we welcome those with patience, diplomacy and the desire to handle sometimes frustrating situations but ultimately to help cats.

Working as part of a team is important as very often decisions have to be made on the spur of the moment and best using the resources available at the time means that the task can be better carried out.

An example was whilst at a job involving a colony of 20 cats, we were alerted to a litter of tiny abandoned newborn, but extremely premature kittens found in a hedge nearby.

We surmised that they were from one of the 'target' cats whom we new was pregnant but had eluded our efforts for several days previously. Upon finding them, it was sad to see that they were covered in fly eggs, and very cold — mum had abandoned them. The team split and whilst these tiny kittens were rushed back to our fosterer with the experience to hand rear kittens, the remaining volunteers attempted to trap the remaining members of the colony. Everything was done to try and revive and raise them, but sadly, after a few days, one by one they died. They were just too depleted to make it.

At times life can be very tough, but at least they were warm and comfortable for their final hours. One needs to consider that there is a natural 'wastage rate' in all animal life and as sad as it is when so closely involved, we must take a practical view—we cannot save everyone.

***Sometimes we are able to relocate feral cats from trapping locations to enjoy a new life elsewhere. Here is a message from one such lucky cat!***

Hiya! Smokey here.

Just giving you an update!

I am doing really well and Mum, (even though **she keeps telling me she's not my Mum!**)...

are both good!

Every time I hear her voice, I come running.

Had a bit of a fight last week with another cat but got the better of it... got a bit peeved with everyone fussing, but doing OK with Mum!!

I will get to have a cuddle one day when I 'm ready!

Thank you for checking on me.

Smokey.

Oh and Lorna at Wyevale Garden Centre!



## Winter Warnings!

As the colder weather approaches, a warning to heed please.

Antifreeze is extremely poisonous to cats, but they find the scent of ethylene glycol, which is the active ingredient in such products, irresistible and will drink it. Kidney failure can quickly follow and recovery can be slow even if treatment is started soon after ingestion.

Ethylene glycol can be found in not only car radiator antifreeze, but also in screen wash, brake fluid and even solar heating panels and snowglobes, so please pay special attention when using or disposing of these products.

In a village close to Wellington, two cats suffered such poisoning in early November but were fortunate to receive veterinary treatment quickly. One recovered fast but the second has had several days at the vet and has been on a drip to aid recovery.

## Another seasonal plea!

Despite the number of 'cute' images of pets that are seen around the Christmas season, please think carefully and don't dress your cat up.

Here is a transcription of the Cats Protection statement concerning this activity which featured on BBC Radio Somerset on 24 November 2016 on the Ben McGrail show.

*'By nature, cats enjoy freedom of movement, so forcing them into clothes can be really stressful. It restricts their movement and makes them less able to express their normal behaviour such as grooming. As cats are free roaming, clothing can get caught or snagged on furniture or other household objects, resulting in injury to the cat. If a cat struggled whilst the clothes were being fitted, then the cat could also develop adverse behaviours that can continue after the clothes have been removed, such as a reluctance to be handled or stroked. Cats are not fashion accessories and we would not encourage owners to treat them that way.'*

Another comment from our Facebook page— *It's a fashion fad that sadly seems to have spread from the dog world. If you want a doll, buy a doll*



## Taunton & Wellington Branch

Call 03452 602 397 (standard rate)

Email [tandwcats@gmail.com](mailto:tandwcats@gmail.com)

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

Taunton & Wellington Branch offers help in the following areas: TA1, TA2, TA3, TA4, and TA21.

We are on Facebook and Twitter!



[www.facebook.com/cpTauntonandWellington](http://www.facebook.com/cpTauntonandWellington)



[www.twitter.com/CPTaunton](http://www.twitter.com/CPTaunton)

Wanted!  
We would love to recruit a volunteer to  
organise our fundraising activities.

If you are creative, full of ideas and have  
experience of organising events, please get  
in touch by emailing [tandwcats@gmail.com](mailto:tandwcats@gmail.com)

Full support will be given!

Thank you



# Cats Protection Shop

19 South Street, Wellington, Somerset TA21 8NR

01823 663455

[wellington.shopmanager@cats.org.uk](mailto:wellington.shopmanager@cats.org.uk)

We always welcome donations of good quality, clean clothes and shoes, books, children's toys and bric-a-brac. Cats Protection branded sacks are available from the shop.

Unfortunately we cannot accept electrical goods.



## Now Wanted!

- ★ Clothes
- ★ Accessories & jewellery



*Please think of us when  
you want to 'rehome'  
your unwanted  
Christmas gifts!  
Thank you!*



Pop in today and take part  
in our Christmas Raffle!



£1 a ticket and the  
prizes are  
a Christmas cake,  
A £10 waitrose  
voucher and a bottle of  
Bucks Fizz.

**All money raised in the  
shop goes to help cats  
and kittens in our area**

## Foster Pen News!

The capacity to foster cats within the branch is always far less than we have space available and on an almost daily basis we have to decline requests to take cats into care and refer callers to other welfare organisations. They are fully stretched as well and it saddens us that we cannot be more positive to many callers. This is a national problem.

We were delighted to have two new pens built in the garden of a new foster home near Wellington in the spring this year and these have been constantly full since completion.

We now have planning permission granted for a new set of pens to be built and hope that these will be ready to accommodate cats in the spring of 2017. The pens have not been previously used and have been purchased from another animal rescue centre, and will provide accommodation for up to 10 cats, so will enable us to be able to be more proactive with requests,.



## Donations for our shop

If you have goods to donate to our shop but have difficulty parking outside, you can leave your donations at the Blackdown Homing and Information Centre where there is plenty of free parking. Donations can be stored there and we will deliver when space is available at the shop.

Cats Protection donation bags can also be collected at the Centre.

And you can pop in to see the cats as well!

A golden starburst with eight points sits atop a Christmas tree. The tree is constructed from numerous overlapping, wavy golden ribbons that spiral upwards, creating a conical shape. The ribbons have a metallic sheen and are set against a plain white background.

**Seasons Greetings to  
all our Volunteers,  
Friends and  
Supporters**

# The Vintage Cars

Sometimes we see a family of kittens who leave a big impression, and one such has been The Vintage Cars, some of whom have been featured in Felines before. As they celebrated their first birthday this autumn, we thought you would like to see how they are all getting on, so here they are. For the purpose of this article we have used the names we gave them, though some of them now answer to different ones or – as they are cats – not at all! We've really enjoyed reading updates about them and we hope you do, too. Ed.

**Riley and Zodiac** are indeed continuing to keep us on our toes. They are lovely boys. Riley has grown into a very handsome boy. He chats away and is so excited about life! If he has not seen us for a couple of hours he squeaks away and almost quivers. He spends quite a lot of time cleaning Zodiac who I think must have the cleanest ears in the world.

Zac is very sweet and is always waiting outside our bedroom to greet us in the morning. He likes to stand on his hind legs and wave his paws in the air. I have been trying to video him doing this but without success! They are devoted to each other, usually coming in together from their adventures. They also sleep together overnight. We can't imagine life without them and they have brought us so much joy.

**Zephyr and Sprite** are spoilt rotten as you can see. Zephyr is such a baby. He wants to be cuddled and in my arms all the time so I've started putting him in Ruby's dolly's papoose so I can carry on with my jobs around the house! He seems to like it. Sprite is adorable. She cries at me really loudly when she comes in and when I check her bowl there's always food there so I've figured out she is crying as she wants me to sit down so she can sit on my lap! Both are good hunters, they bring in lots of presents for us. Lucky us!

**Minx** has had her 1st birthday and is modelling her new blanket (that she loves). She is a fabulous little cat who is so friendly. The children adore her and she loves them. She sneaks upstairs every night into one of their bedrooms. Snuggles down at the end of one of their beds. When Mark and I go to bed we go on a hunt for her and she is normally hiding amongst the teddies. When she has been discovered she lies on her back and stretches her front and back paws out as far as she can. This makes it really difficult to pick her up and she knows it!! Eventually we get her downstairs for some treat biscuits.

**Imp and Elf** have grown into very loving sisters, sleeping together in a heap. Misty is the boss but Imp the better hunter. Misty has not yet learned that rain makes you wet! They have settled well as members of the household and the children have learned to love them and they respond by enjoying hugs which has boosted the confidence of one of the children who was initially unsure of animals.



Riley and  
Zodiac

Interesting to note that there are two distinct pairs here which are social groups. Sleeping together touching is a good indication of this.



Zephyr (L)  
and  
Sprite



Minx



Imp (L) and Elf

...and then there was Doris!



Doris came to me as 200g gravy covered little gremlin, and I immediately fell in love with her pungent aroma and cheeky ways.

She melted the hearts of all the volunteers at the Taunton HIC and anyone that met her for that matter, despite her penchant for vampire-like kisses to the jugular and what I liked to call "kidney hopping" (climbing up the back of ones legs and sinking claws into ones soft tissue!) when you were least expecting it.

People ask me if I miss her..... I do massively, however I know now she is in a great home with a wonderful family and my work as a foster mum is complete .

RB