



## **Media release**

**17 February 2016**

### **Wales' first feline manifesto to be launched at National Assembly Cats Protection will be 'speaking up for cats'**

Wales' first ever 'Manifesto for Cats' will be launched at the National Assembly for Wales later this month, (23 February) to put feline welfare on the political agenda ahead of the Welsh Government election in May this year.

The UK's leading cat charity, Cats Protection, will be unveiling the 10-point document at a reception to be held at the Pierhead building, hosted by Suzy Davies AM, Regional Assembly Member for South West Wales, and supported by Petplan.

With 29% of Welsh households owing at least one cat – higher than the UK average of 24% - and an estimated UK feline population of 11.1 million\*, Cats Protection hopes that cat owners will get behind the manifesto to call on key policy-makers to protect cats from abandonment, harm and neglect.

The finalised manifesto will be presented to AMs, animal welfare charities and other invited guests at the reception and will be available online.

Deputy Minister for Farming and Food, Rebecca Evans said, "Animal welfare is a priority for the Welsh Government, in line with our Animal Health and Welfare Framework.

"Since the implementation of the Animal Welfare Act 2006, we have strived to raise public awareness of responsible pet ownership in Wales and the Manifesto for Cats will complement our efforts. I would like to thank Cats Protection for the work that they do across Wales to raise standards of welfare for cats and to educate the public about cat welfare issues."

Cats Protection's Advocacy Manager Jacqui Cuff said: "Over the past few years, we have been contacted about a worrying number of issues that our supporters and the general public want us to raise with the Welsh Government. Cats Protection is pleased to be working with the Welsh Assembly, and to be presenting our first ever Welsh Manifesto for Cats. Delivery of the manifesto would improve the lives of thousands of cats and prevent them from harm.

"On a daily basis we hear and witness instances where cats suffer unimaginable pain and suffering – from being the unintended victim of a snare, being peppered with shots from airguns or trying to survive without food or shelter as an unwanted and abandoned stray on the streets.

"As a political issue, animal welfare matters. A YouGov poll asked voters to name issues that will determine how they cast their vote. 18 per cent of those surveyed named animal welfare as such an issue – more than the UK-wide figure of 14 per cent\*\*.

"Policies need to change and politicians can make that happen. As we approach the 2016 Welsh Assembly election, we are calling on existing and prospective AMs to get behind our Welsh Manifesto for Cats to ensure that one of the nation's best loved pets is fully protected by policies and the law."

### **Pocus's story**

Cats Protection in Bridgend is one of two of the charity's adoption centres and seven volunteer-run branches across Wales. The centre has 15 full-time members of staff and a team of 50 volunteers. Sue Dobbs, who has been centre manager for nearly 18 years, sees her biggest challenge as coping with the sheer volume of cats that come into her care.

"We had well over 1400 cats coming into our centre last year alone - but thankfully, we do manage to home each and every one of them." she said.

Just one of the Bridgend centre's recent residents was a family of cats that was found abandoned on a riverbank in Pontypridd. The mother cat – who Sue has named Pocus – was desperately trying to feed her four tiny kittens. Mum and babies had been bundled into a cardboard box which was labelled 'five –week-old kittens'. Sue says that, sadly, Pocus's story is not uncommon.

"Nearly every day, cats and kittens are brought into the centre because they've been abandoned, neglected and harmed – sometimes deliberately. Luckily, thanks to the people of Wales being kind and caring animal lovers, we do find homes for them. And that is just what happened to Pocus and her kittens. They all went to homes where they are loved and cared for", she said.

More information about the work of Cats Protection can be found at [www.cats.org.uk](http://www.cats.org.uk)

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**A high resolution image of Jacqui Cuff is attached with this release along with images of 'Pocus' for your use. For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:**

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**Notes to Editors:**

\*\*Estimated UK population of 11.1 million cats according to the PDSA Animal Wellbeing Report (PAW) 2015.

\*\*[https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus\\_uploads/document/l50ymvzeao/YG-Archive-140201-WASP.pdf](https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/l50ymvzeao/YG-Archive-140201-WASP.pdf)

1. Cats Protection is the UK's leading feline welfare charity and helps over 205,000 cats each year through a national network of over 250 volunteer-run branches and 32 adoption centres.
2. Cats Protection's vision is a world where every cat is treated with kindness and an understanding of its needs.
3. Cats Protection's registered charity number is 203644 (England and Wales) and SC037711 (Scotland). Founded as the Cats Protection League in 1927, **the charity adopted the name Cats Protection in 1998. We ask that you use the name Cats Protection when referring to the charity in all published material.**
4. Petplan is the largest provider of animal health insurance in the world. Established more than 30 years ago, Petplan is part of Allianz Insurance, one of the largest general insurers in the UK. Petplan works with over 1,200 animal charities, more than any other insurer.