

Welcome



Cats Protection Bedford, Biggleswade & District Branch



T: 0345 260 2505
W: bedford.cats.org.uk
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Welcome to Bedford, Biggleswade & District Cats Protection from our local Branch Co-Ordinator

Welcome to the Bedford, Biggleswade & District branch of Cats Protection and thank you for showing an interest in volunteering with us. We have many varied roles that are detailed further on in this information pack. The branch has been going since 1992, and I joined as a volunteer in 2006 as a home visitor. I had decided to volunteer as I wanted to do something more with my life, and having a great love of cats I felt CP was the way to go. Soon after I became an emergency fosterer for urgent cases that need to come into CP care, but where we didn't have a foster pen immediately available. I continued with home visits and also occasionally dealt with trapping and transporting feral cats. Through this varied experience I got an insight into how the branch ran and, when the previous Co-ordinator decided to retire, in 2009 I became the third Co-ordinator of the branch. During my time here I have tried to build on what has already been started by my predecessors, but also to bring the branch into the 21st century. We now have a new website, a Facebook page; we are on twitter and have fundraising accounts online. The branch is overseen by a committee who meet regularly to

discuss major events within the branch these are:

Jayne (Secretary), Claire (Treasurer), Helen (Fundraising), Nicky (Fostering & Homing) and Vaughn (Newsletter Editor & Publicity).

Our branch is run by volunteers, which is why we are so pleased you are interested in joining us. The majority of our funding comes from the sales of goods in our shop, without this those of us involved in the cat work wouldn't be able to do half of what we do. Ultimately the day to day running of the branch tends to come down to me, and I sometimes have to make the heartbreaking decisions. However I am fortunate in that I also get to make the heart warming ones. I class my role now as 'general dogsbody'! I do a bit of this and a bit of that to make sure the branch runs as smoothly as possible. Again, without volunteers such as you, I wouldn't be able to get this done.

I hope, by reading through this information pack, you will find something within the branch that you would like to get involved in and look forward to welcoming you as part of our family.

Tamsin

Cats Protection - What we are all about...

Cats Protection, originally the Cats Protection League, was formed in 1927 and is the only national charity solely concerned with the welfare of cats and kittens. The objectives of Cats Protection are threefold:

- ✓ To rescue stray and unwanted cats and kittens, rehabilitate and re-home them where possible.
- ✓ To encourage the neutering of cats not required for breeding
- ✓ To inform the public on the care of cats and kittens.

The Bedford & Biggleswade Branch was formed in 1992, starting with a core of about a dozen members, which has grown to a membership of around 200. Since then we have assisted many stray and unwanted cats and kittens. We pride ourselves in obtaining quality homes for our rescue cats, in that all prospective homes are visited by one of our team of Home Visitors prior to homing a cat or kitten and follow-up visits are made as necessary.

Our helpline is open each day, except Bank Holidays, from 9am to 5pm where dedicated Helpline Volunteers take various calls ranging from cats to be re-homed, people wanting to adopt a cat, to various enquiries on looking after a cat.

We have a team of enthusiastic Fosterers and our cats are individually housed, many in walk-in pens, where they get plenty of TLC. The normal course of events would be for a rescued cat to be placed into foster care to be looked after by one of our Fosterers until such time as our Home Visitors have found a suitable home.

How volunteering for Cats Protection can make a big difference to you:

- * You will get a lot of personal satisfaction and enjoyment from your volunteering role
- * You will have the opportunity to make a real difference to cats and kittens across the UK
- * You will be able to develop new skills, expand your knowledge and use your existing expertise
- * You will meet new people, make new friendships and work as part of a dedicated team
- * You will become a key member of the team in the UK's leading feline welfare charity

Home Visitor Volunteer

How you will make a difference to cats and people in this role ?

Cats Protection helps thousands of cats across the UK each year thanks to our network of dedicated volunteers. As a home visitor you will help Cats Protection give cats and kittens in our care a second chance of a happy and healthy life by finding an ideal new home for them in your local community.

What the role involves:

- Visiting potential adopters in their home, providing them with helpful information on basic cat care and the type of cats that would be suitable for their needs and environment
- Communicating and working with potential adopters to complete a homing questionnaire
- Working closely with other volunteers and staff to identify suitable matches based on the information obtained from visits and the nature of cats in care
- Carrying out follow up communications if required [Click here to enter text.](#)



Skills and experience which are expected and/or can be developed in this role:

- Basic knowledge of cats and cat care
- An appreciation of suitable rehoming environments
- Confidence
- Good interpersonal skills
- Good level of record keeping/administration skills
- Patience and the ability to deal with sensitive situations
- Good communication skills
- Committed to working with others to find homes for the cats in our care
- A valid driving licence would be an advantage

Time expectation: This is a very flexible role and the amount of time spent volunteering will be dependent on the demand for home visits. The average home visits takes approximately 30 minutes. This role can be shared by more than one volunteer.

What our team have to say

People often say to me that they don't know how I can be involved in cat rescue as they would find it too upsetting.

My reply is always that while we can't change what has happened in the past, once a cat is with us in rescue we will make sure that we find a lovely forever home and that is where home visitors play a role. We owe it to all the cats in our care to make sure that the home we find for them is the best it can be, so anyone who is interested in adopting a cat from us has to have a home visit as the first part of our rehoming process.

This is a very flexible role – you arrange the visits at a time to suit you so it can fit easily around job or home commitments. The role of a home visitor is to visit prospective new owners at home to discuss the type of cat they are looking for and to help them choose something suitable.

We check that they have landlord's permission if they are in a rented property and make sure they are aware of the financial commitment involved in taking on a cat. We also give advice on how to help the new cat settle in and help put their mind at rest if they have any concerns.

It is so lovely to see how excited people are to be getting a new addition to their family – often they have already been out and bought a bed and toys.

This is why I'm involved in cat rescue – we really can make a difference.

Steph - A current Home Visitor

Helpline Volunteer

How you will make a difference to cats and people in this role ?

Cats Protection helps thousands of cats across the UK each year thanks to our network of dedicated volunteers. This role is the first point of contact for your Cats Protection group in responding to enquiries from the general public regarding cats and cat welfare. By dealing with enquiries and queries you will be directly helping people and cats in your community.

What the role involves:

- Responding to enquiries over the phone from the general public
- Liaising with different members of your branch for support in providing comprehensive information in response to specific queries when necessary
- Signposting queries and requests to other members of the branch



Image: Reuters

Skills and experience which are expected and/or can be developed in this role:

- Good organisational skills
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team
- Good interpersonal skills and ability to deal with sensitive or emotionally charged situations
- Good listening and communication skills

Time expectation: This is a flexible role with time commitment of 4-6 hours per week not unusual. This role can be shared with other volunteers. A special routing service sends our helpline number to your phone - your personal number is never revealed to the public.

Hi. My name is Nancy and I am one of a small band of Helpline Volunteers helping to keep our branch working efficiently. A Helpline Volunteer is probably the first person people will speak to so it is important that we are polite and do our best to answer their questions and help where we can.

Calls can be about anything to do with cats: people wanting us to re-home their cat for whatever reason; people who want to adopt a cat from us; people who have lost their cat and want to know if we can help trace it. Each Helpline Volunteer has a folder containing names, phone numbers and email addresses of the volunteers in our branch so at the end of our shift we go through the calls we have received and allocate them to the person responsible for the specific matter involved.

When someone phones in wanting to adopt a cat or kitten, we take their name, address and telephone number, details of their home circumstances, e.g. garden, children, other pets, and a rough idea of what they are looking for. This information is then passed on to Tamsin to allocate to whoever home visits that particular area.

Any cat that has been lost or found goes to Vaughn our Lost and Found Volunteer, however most requests go to Tamsin.

I am on duty on Mondays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Some Helpline Volunteers do half a day, either 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. or 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. If anyone can spare just four hours a week manning the phone from home we would be delighted to hear from you. We have a reroute service so your home telephone number will not be disclosed to the public.

If you like chatting to people and at the same time helping cats then perhaps you would consider joining us.

Nancy - A long serving Helpline Volunteer

Fosterer Volunteer

How you will make a difference to cats and people in this role ?

Cats Protection helps thousands of cats across the UK each year thanks to our network of dedicated volunteers. As a fosterer you will be directly helping cats and kittens in need; providing them with hands on care and working with others to rehome them, ultimately, providing them with a second chance of a happy and healthy life.

What the role involves:

- This key role ensures the needs of each cat being cared for are met appropriately, upholding minimum veterinary and cat care standards in accordance with Cats Protection's policies and procedures
- Providing temporary care and accommodation to stray, abandoned or injured cats in purpose built cat pen in your garden/outside space or in an adapted space room in your home
- Cleaning of the cats environment and equipment, feeding and grooming
- Spending time enriching the cats experience in care, including, play, exercise, stroking and allowing quiet and relaxation periods
- Administering of medication such as flea and worm treatments
- Working and communicating effectively with others including volunteers, vets, potential new owners and Cats Protection staff



Skills and experience which are expected and/or can be developed in this role:

- Basic knowledge of cats and cat care
- An appreciation of cat care and hygiene standards
- Patience and perseverance
- Empathy
- Level headed and practical
- Ability to work well in a team
- Good interpersonal skills
- Good observational skills
- Good level of record keeping/ administration skills
- Committed to working with others to find homes for cats in your care

Time expectation: Time commitment will vary depending on the number of cats in your care but it would not be unusual for a fosterer to spend 2-3 hours per day as part of this role.

Fostering is hugely rewarding giving every cat that comes into your care love and affection before going to its forever home.

Cats coming into our care can be nervous but with time and patience we change that, you could say it's like watching a caterpillar turn into a butterfly, it doesn't always happen overnight but when you see that change all the time is worth it.

Being a fosterer you will need to book and attend vet appointments with your foster cats and make sure any required treatment it is administered including routine flea and worm treatment. In the early days while you learn help will always be available. As a fosterer you will be in the position of making the final decision if a potential home is the right match for the cat in your care - you know the cat the best.

Fostering with outside pens its lovely, they are heated and you give then comfy beds and lots of toys to play with and in the summer the sides can be removed letting lots of fresh air in, during the winter months when it is wet and cold you can envy the indoor fosterers, but for me when I get to the pen and that smiley face appears and the purring and chatting starts it is worth it.

Fostering is primarily looking after cats but you may have to collect your foster cat or have them brought to you by the public which can be emotional and you have to remember it's a lot harder for the person giving their cat up.

At times our furry lodgers may arrive after being abandoned or hurt, which can be heart-breaking and upsetting. I always think positively that we are going to change that cat's life because they are now safe and going to be looked after until they go to their forever homes.

Jane - Part of the Fostering team

Charity Shop Volunteer

How you will make a difference to cats and people in this role ?

Cats Protection helps thousands of cats across the UK each year thanks to our network of dedicated volunteers. By volunteering in a Cats Protection shop, you will raise much needed money and awareness to support the great work Cats Protection carries out each year, helping thousands of cats and kittens get a second



What the role involves:

- Assisting with the day to day running of the shop by serving customers and arranging and replenishing stock
- Assisting the shop manager and other members of the team in discussing and implementing changes to shop layout, pricing etc.
- Sharing your passion for cat welfare and promoting the work of the charity will also be important when talking to our customers

Skills and experience which are expected and/or can be developed in this role:

- Friendly and outgoing personality
- Confident in dealing with money
- Good communication skills
- Ability to work well in a team
- Previous experience in retail an advantage

Time expectation: This role is very flexible and can be shared by other volunteers, a regular 'shift' of 1-2 hours would help raise those much needed funds.

It is our staff and customers that make the shop so unique and enjoyable.

In a typical day we will serve about 50 customers, some being loyal regulars and others popping in for the first time. There has always been a good connection between the volunteers and the regulars, more of a friendship than a service and it is these friendships and conversations which draw customers back time again. Of course there are times in the shop when all is quiet - no customers, no sorting or pricing. It is these times when the friendliness of other volunteers becomes invaluable - making up mini-games such as "The price is right" where the volunteers will attempt to guess the price of an unusual item.

It is this family away from home and the friends in our customers that make each visit so unique and keeps everyone coming back for more.

Steve - Part of the Shop team



Fundraising Volunteer

How you will make a difference to cats and people in this role ?

Cats in our care rely on generous donations from people who love cats and count on volunteers like you to make those donations happen. Working alongside a team of friendly, enthusiastic volunteers, you will play a key part in raising money and awareness through local fundraising events and activities. Making a difference to cats can mean raising as little as 18p a day (enough to feed one cat in our care for a day) to a pocket bulging £150 a week (the average cost for a cat in our care) however much you raise you can make a real difference!

What the role involves:

- In this exciting role you will assist with organising and running fundraising events in your local area
- You will have the opportunity to get your thinking cap on and share fundraising ideas in meetings with other volunteers and then put those ideas into action
- As well as assisting with the running of events, we encourage you to share your passion for cat welfare and promote our work to the public at the event

Skills and experience required or could be developed:

- Ability to work well in a team
- Good communication skills
- Confident dealing with the public
- Comfortable handling money



Here are a few words from our Fundraising Officer giving you a flavour of what we urgently need in the branch

Street Collections

Although these are called street collections they take place at supermarkets.

We are usually offered two or three per year at Sainsbury's in Clapham Road, Bedford and Tesco in Biggleswade. We need to make up a team of pairs of volunteers to cover the day. If you are new to this you will be paired with an experienced volunteer.

Bazaars, Fairs and Fun Days

These events are organised by the Branch at various venues around our area. We need help to set up, serve at the stalls, help run the games and pack up afterwards.

Stalls at Other Events

We like to have a presence at as many places in our area as possible to raise our profile as well as funds, this involves stalls at village fetes, fun days and festivals and we need a team of people to help at these.

Tasks involve setting up the gazebo and stall, displaying the publicity materials, serving customers and giving advice, packing up and taking down the gazebo. Wherever possible we have a rota so that no-one has to do all day.

Trap, Neuter & Return Volunteer

How you will make a difference to cats and people in this role ?

How you will make a difference to cats and people: Cats Protection helps thousands of cats across the UK each year thanks to our network of dedicated volunteers. The success of our trap, neuter and return (TNR) programmes is crucial as feral and abandoned cats present a huge challenge for Cats Protection and local communities across the UK. Your role as a TNR volunteer will make a vital contribution to maintaining a healthy population of feral cats and will help alleviate cat welfare and community problems caused by uncontrolled cat populations.



What the role involves:

Feral cats are often the offspring of stray or abandoned domestic cats and can be found living in urban and rural areas. A TNR programme involves:

- Trapping the cat using humane trapping methods
- Neutering – taking the cat to a local vet to be neutered
- Returning the cat to their home or finding a suitable alternative

In addition, the role may also include:

- Regular feeding of feral colonies
- Liaising with land owners, local businesses, farmers and local communities to promote the neutering of cats in their locality
- Working closely with vets to promote and arrange neutering
- Working closely with others in your team

Skills and experience which are expected and/or can be developed in this role:

- Basic knowledge of cats and cat care
- Good interpersonal skills
- Good level of record keeping/administration skills
- Well organised and practical
- Patience and perseverance
- Ability to deal with sensitive situations
- Good communication skills
- Happy to work alone

Time expectation: This is an extremely flexible role and the time involved will vary depending on the number of cats identified for the TNR programme or campaign, 2- 3 hours per week would not be unusual for this role. This role can be shared by more than one volunteer.

Sometimes we get asked to help somewhere that has a colony of stray cats, maybe in a private garden or business premises.

Left unchecked a small number of cats can very quickly get out of hand and multiply rapidly and it's far from ideal for kittens to be born outside, not just from a care point of view but also because they will soon become un-handleable if they are not introduced to human contact at a young age. Whilst it isn't always possible to find homes for cats that would never be happy living inside (sometimes we find stables or similar that are willing to take them) we are able to offer a trap, neuter and release service which at least stops the number of cats growing any further.

Usually with the help of the person who has called us, we set humane cat traps that mean we can catch the cats and take them to the vets where they will be given a health check and neutered. Once recovered from their surgery we release them back where they came from knowing that they won't be able to breed and spread disease among the local cat population.

Any kittens that are young enough to be tamed come into foster care where they are socialised until they are ready to go to their forever homes. You need to be physically fit to carry out this role as sometimes we have to trap cats in less than ideal places and you need to be able to transport them to and from the vets but we have a laugh and it's very satisfying when you catch something, even more so when you finally manage to catch the last in a group that may have been avoiding you for weeks!

Steph - Part of the TNR Team

Help Cats While Exercising...

A new way to help local cats

Lost & Found Ranger

We are looking for people to help us start up a Lost & Found Rangers team.

More and more cats are reported missing each day, and we are looking for people who will help us try and find them.

What does this new role involve ?

- We would notify you of any cats reported missing in your local area.
- We would then hope that you would be able to take regular walks around the area they are missing from, in the hope of spotting the cat.
- If you believe you have sighted a missing cat, make contact with the branch so we can let the owner know.

For further information please contact:

T: 0345 260 2505

W: bedford.cats.org.uk/

f: facebook.com/bedfordcats



give a little time
MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Reg Charity
203644 (England and Wales)
SC037711 (Scotland)

Every little helps

Even if your free time is limited you can support your local Cats Protection Branch when you are shopping online.

When you are shopping online you can make sure that the branch is also benefiting by using the easyfundraising.org.uk website. To use this website you need to register (free of charge) and then select the charity you wish to support.

Then anytime you want to order something online you log into the website and follow the link to whichever store you require. A percentage of any purchase you make goes to the branch (up to 15%). If you type in Cats Protection you will get several pages of options and not in alphabetical order. However if you type in Biggleswade we should be on the first page. Amazon, Argos, John Lewis, M&S and HMV are only a few examples of companies who contribute to the scheme.

Selling on eBay ? Why not donate a percentage of the sale to the branch ? We are now part of the eBay charity site Mission Fish. Just select the branch Cats Protection Bedford & Biggleswade Branch your favored charity and they will do the rest for you



Follow us on Facebook and Twitter and let all your friends see our posts and tweets - it is a great way to let everyone know the work we are doing and also to help us find homes for our cats and kittens.

facebook



Next Steps...

We hope this booklet has given you an insight into the volunteering opportunities with your local Cats Protection.

The next step is to fill in a volunteer application form, this will either have been emailed/sent to you as a separate document or if you meet us at one of our events ask for a copy, complete it and hand it back to the team or post/email it using the details below.

Once we have your completed form our volunteer in charge of recruitment will contact you to discuss it further and arrange some training for you with an experienced volunteer in the role you are interested in.

If you have any further questions we are always happy to hear from potential volunteers so please call our helpline.

How to Contact Us

0345 260 2505

www.bedford.cats.org.uk

helpline@bedford.cats.org.uk

Cats Protection Bedford & Biggleswade
PO Box 1556
Bedford
MK41 5BF

Our all-important work to give our local cats and kittens the life they deserve is very costly

YOU can help by becoming a member of our branch

What does becoming a member do for your local Cats Protection Branch ?

By becoming a member of your local Cats Protection Branch your membership fee is used to directly benefit the cats and kittens in our care so you know your money is directly benefiting the most important part of our branch – the cats.

What will you receive as a member ?

- ☐ Quarterly branch newsletter "The Catalyst"
- ☐ Regular email updates on how your branch is doing and the work they are undertaking
- ☐ The chance to participate in fundraising events to support the work in the local area
- ☐ Priority notification of upcoming events within the branch and also at the charity shop.

What can your membership fee do ?

- **£8.00 will feed a cat in our care for a month**
- **£12.00 helps to de-flea a litter of kittens**
- **£25.00 pays for a full health check by a vet**

Your membership fee will be used entirely to help feed, neuter and care for local cats and kittens in the MK40 - MK45 and SG15 - SG18 and parts of SG19

Ready to join us ?

Simply fill in the form on the right and send it with your membership fee to -

Membership Secretary
Cats Protection Bedford & Biggleswade
PO Box 1556
Bedford
MK41 5BF

Please make cheques payable to Bedford Cats Protection



Cash for the kitty

Membership Application Form

I/We wish to become a member of
Bedford, Biggleswade & District
Cats Protection

☐ £10 Single Adult Membership

☐ £5 Junior (Under 17) / Senior
Citizen / Job Seeker

☐ £15 Family Membership

£ Donation

£ Total

Name

Address

Post Code

Tel No

Email

Date

giftaid it
making donations go further

**Make your gift go further... and
make every £1 your give worth at
least £1.25**

To qualify for Gift Aid, what you pay in income tax or capital gains tax must equal at least the amount that all charities you donate to will reclaim in the tax year (6th April to 5th April)

Please tick the box to enable us to treat all your donations in the last 4 years, and all your future donations, until further notice, as Gift Aid. ☐

OR if you are not a UK tax Payer please tick this box. ☐

