



The Cat's Whiskers



Stewartry & District Branch
Summer Newsletter 2014

Hello and welcome to the latest edition of our regular newsletter. The good weather has finally arrived, and so have the litters of kittens! A few weeks ago we took in 2 litters of kittens and a pregnant cat in the space of a week. One litter of kittens were found in a garden shed which was about to be demolished and the finder rang us to see if we could take them in. He said they were about 5 – 6 weeks old and we agreed to accept them. When the man arrived at the fosterer's door, he was holding a very small, scruffy sewing basket. The fosterer thought there couldn't possibly be 3 kittens in there but, sure enough, there were 3 tiny black kittens, but they were only about 10 days old. Much too young to have been taken from their mother but she was thought to be a stray or feral cat and the owner of the property didn't want them there. At the time of writing this, they are being handreared and doing well. We have since had several other calls from members of the public asking us to take in kittens but just don't have the space to take them all in. Please help us spread the word on getting cats neutered!

Cats in the Sun



With the good weather we have been having it is worth mentioning that cats can suffer from too much sun. Particularly cats with white ears and pink noses. Too much exposure to sunlight can cause skin cancer and the cat's ears become very red and itchy over time, causing them a lot of suffering. Eventually they may have to have the cancerous parts of their ears removed. It is easily avoided by using sun screen lotion on the vulnerable parts. You can get sunscreen specifically for pet use which is safe and won't irritate their skin.

Soft Toys

We are always looking for soft toys that can be washed and used at our fundraising events, so if anyone has any unwanted teddies lurking in a cupboard. Thank you.

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is an important part of our regular activities. All money for the branch comes from fundraising, donations and a small annual grant from our Head Office. There are so many other charities also looking for help that we have to make as many people aware of our existence as we can. More and more people are asking for our help to get their cats neutered and we also get requests from people who need help with their vet bills. We can't generally help with the bills for owned cats though we do pay for vet treatment for strays. Charities such as the PDSA will help people on low incomes with vet bills.

Coffee Morning

In March we had our first Coffee Morning of the year. It was busy as usual, and the Home Baking stall was groaning under the weight of delicious cakes, biscuits and jams. There is always a queue at this stall and by the end there was very little left. We made a total of £752 which is a great result. We have a fantastic group of volunteers who help at coffee mornings and we are very grateful to them for giving up their time. It would be useful to have a few extra people we could call on to help if some of our regular volunteers are unable to come, so if anyone would be willing to give up 2 hours on a Saturday morning, once or twice a year, we would be very pleased to hear from you. We are always glad of items for the tombola and raffle if anyone has unwanted gifts/bottles etc.

3 Day Charity Shop

During April we had a 3-day Charity Shop in Dalbeattie. The place is a real Aladdin's cave when we have filled it with all the goods that are donated. It is a small shop but we manage to pack every available space with bits and pieces. Although lots of different charities use the shop on a regular basis, the local people never seem to tire of coming in and looking for bargains. Over the 3 days we made a fantastic £608. Thank you as always to everyone who donates goods to sell, those who come and buy and our loyal volunteers who help in the shop. We are very grateful to the McKenzie family who generously let us use the shop. Please keep us in mind if you are having a clear out – we hope to have the shop again in the autumn and would be grateful for items to sell.

Kirkcudbright Children's Festival

At the beginning of July we had a stall at the Children's Festival. We have been going to this event for many years and really look forward to it as it is always a busy and enjoyable day. The sun shone and there were lots of families having fun, and we all sang along with the children's favourite songs. We must be word perfect with 'She'll be coming round the mountain' and 'You canna shove your Granny off a bus' (aye you can)! We made an amazing £610 at the Festival, but on the way home the exhaust on our van broke in half and we had to call out the AA. Unfortunately we needed to replace the whole exhaust, and that took care of over half the proceeds from our day, which was rather bad news but keeping the van on the road is vital for us to continue with fundraising and transporting cats to the vet etc.

Corrin is looking for a new home



Corrin is a lovely, friendly boy who has been with us for a few months now. He is an affectionate cat and would settle well in most homes. He is about 2 years old and is neutered, vaccinated and microchipped. He may be OK living with other cats if introduced to them gradually. If you think you could offer Corrin a new home, please call us on 01557 339233.

Pixie & Ferdie

Earlier this year we got a phone call from a farmer who said he had found 2 cats in his barn. He had put them in a box and, if we didn't come and pick them up straightaway, he would take them to the vets to be put to sleep or they would get shot by a local gamekeeper. We get a lot of calls like this where people use emotional blackmail to try and get us to come and take a cat away. I went out to the farm straightaway and was shown a cat carrier in which 2 young grey and white cats were cowering. The farmer said he thought they had been dumped there and didn't belong to anyone nearby. We don't always know if people are telling us the full story but our priority is the cats' welfare.



The 2 cats were about 6 months old and long haired. They were in good overall condition, though a little thin and had a few tatters in their fur. They were definitely domestic cats but perhaps had not been socialised properly during the early weeks of their life. Ferdie and Pixie were both very nervous of people and spent the first few weeks hiding from me most of the time, though they were quite food-orientated so would come out to eat if I sat quietly on the floor nearby. As time passed they became more relaxed and confident in my presence but would still run for cover if someone they didn't know came in. They were beautiful cats and very good natured. At night they would run riot, playing with their toys and running around scattering cat litter, fur and water all over the place.

After being in our care for about 2 months, some people came to see Pixie and Ferdie and, although the cats were very nervous, the people thought they were lovely and were prepared to give them the time they would need to settle into a new home and learn to trust them. The 2 cats may always be wary of strangers but they have a great new home and lots of outdoor space to explore.

EVENTS 2014

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| 26 July | Coffee Morning Dalbeattie Town Hall 10 -12 noon |
| Autumn | 3 Day Charity Shop in Dalbeattie, date to be arranged. |
| 22 November | Coffee Morning, Dalbeattie Town Hall 10 – 12 noon |
| Nov/Dec | Coffee Morning, Gatehouse, date/venue to be arranged |

Helen's Swanky New Cat Pen



Helen has been involved with Cats Protection for many years and fosters both adult cats and kittens. She has cared for numerous cats in her double cat pen but for the past few years has had problems with leaks in the roof and sides of the pen. Despite repairs being made the rain still came in and buckets had to be strategically placed to catch the worst of the drips, so earlier this year it was decided that the pens were no longer fit for use and we were able

to order her a new and bigger single pen with the help of Head Office. We had the choice of a traditional wooden pen with its usual upkeep, or a synthetic wood one made from recycled materials, which was a bit more expensive but will last many years. Helen is really pleased with the pen and finds it much more roomy for any resident cat and much easier to clean.

Volunteers

We are always looking for new volunteers who would be willing to lend a hand, either occasionally at coffee mornings, or to become more fully involved. We would love to recruit another fosterer to foster adult cats – this could be on a regular basis or just to cover for when other fosterers are on a much-needed holiday. If you have a spare room or have no cat of your own and think you could foster a cat while it waits for a new home, we would love to hear from you. We also have a spare cat pen available for fostering a single cat – it measures approx. 3' wide x 15' long and needs a flat area to situate it. Fostering is very satisfying and seeing a former stray or unwanted cat go to a new loving home is reward in itself.

FELIX TOKENS – please save any Felix tokens from Felix cat food as each token is worth 1 pence and we are now able to exchange tokens for money for the branch. On a box of Felix there are 8 tokens = 8 pence.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

These are now due for 2014, please send a cheque for £7 to: Stewartry & District Cats Protection, PO Box 7470, Castle Douglas DG7 1YE or you can pay online at our website www.stewartry.cats.org.uk by clicking on the DONATE icon.

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. If you are not sure if you have paid for the current year, please ring us to check.

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