



# FELINES

Taunton & Wellington Branch Newsletter  
Winter 2020 (No. 132)



Jethro — read  
about me inside

## In this edition

- Rehoming - hands free works!
- Support our Cat Petitions
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- Our first foster cats in the new pens
- Some cat statistics - home & abroad

REG CHARITY 203644 (ENGLAND AND WALES) AND SC037711 (SCOTLAND)

**We love to hear news of previously rehomed cats and kittens, so please keep in touch**

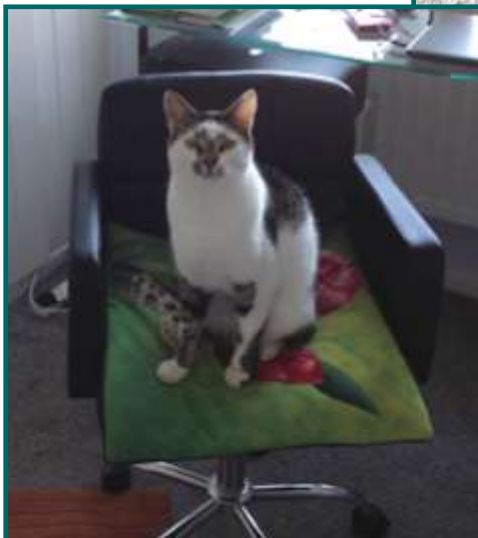


### **Grayson**

adopted  
in July 2019, has  
become the baby  
and centre of the  
family.

**Zodiac**, one of a pair of  
kittens adopted from The  
Taunton & Wellington branch  
some years ago.

Zodiac is definitely boss of the  
cat flap.



Hope **Riley** wasn't waiting  
to enter or exit.

Maybe just manage the  
office instead?

*Hello Friends and Readers,*

*Welcome to our Felines Newsletter — **Winter 2020***

It is perhaps for the first time, rushing down towards Christmas as we are, one is actually looking forward to the end of 2020 - with the hope 2021 will be an improvement.

It has continued to be a very difficult few months to try and engage in the Branch's cat welfare activities - but there is some good news. Our Homing Pens are open at last and have welcomed their first feline visitors. More news in this edition together with the pictures of our first residents.

Specially trained volunteers from welfare and lost & found have engaged in 'hands-free homing' so we've been able to rehome cats whilst being 'locked down'. This time round volunteering was permitted with appropriate care, so a limited amount of other activities could continue. We have carried on with all our regular cat support routines, recording details of missing cats, endeavouring to reunite lost cats with their owners., offering advice and trying to help as many cats and their owners as it has been possible whilst ensuring everyone stays safe.

The Branch's long time coordinators have, after many years of 24 hour seven days a week overseeing all aspects of the activities of a very full on CP branch, decided it was time to reduce their work load and retire from full on hands on. However, reducing, in their terms, still means fostering at home days old kittens (as per Jethro, our front cover kitten), getting the pens ready for residents, showing potential volunteers around the pens and explaining what is needed of pen volunteers, plus engaging in all manner of cat related jobs - so much for retiring!

The Branch committee has held a meeting and thank you presentation in the garden of the new pens. We wish them well knowing they will still be around to offer advice and be lending a hand to ensure Taunton & Wellington Cats Protection branch continues to thrive. A big thank you for all your hard work.

## Good neighbours support TNR (trap, neuter and return)

Autumnal TNR activity saw three adult cats trapped in a domestic garden close to a location where we'd visited several times in previous years. A lovely lady had sought help to trap semi feral adult cats that were regular callers in her garden.



With the restrictions earlier in the year, time had passed and to the three adults cats had been added six kittens. So it was becoming very urgent that we intervene to reduce nine turning into a large colony all on its own. With the help of the home owner, we successfully trapped the older cats, two males and one female.

With agreement the two boys were relocated to a new home some distance away, where they would be fed and looked after, whilst being able to roam free.

The female, a lovely fluffy grey, was returned to the garden she had been visiting - where she had formed a bond with the resident male house cat.

Usually after having been trapped, taken to vet for an overnight stay, neutered and then picked up to be returned, a cat would make a bid for freedom, not to be seen for several days.

This little lady, had undoubtedly decided this was to be her forever home. Snapped on return, in the kitchen doorway being welcomed back by said resident male cat - a very happy ending.

Meanwhile the 6 kittens were being fed twice daily by the kind lady. So plans were laid to return a few weeks later to trap the kittens and find new homes for all of them. They were camped out in the next door garden, an empty house, which had recently been sold - so it was becoming urgent that they were picked up to be relocated. Moving home is stressful enough, not sure what the purchasers would have made of finding 6 kittens already in residence.

So with the help of Mount Vets, who agreed to hold a special surgery morning for us, we turned up one evening, to attempt to pick up all six together.

The kittens, though friendly to the lady who had been feeding them, were not so keen on the members of the trapping team. We only managed to trap three. However, almost as soon as we'd departed leaving a trap behind, we were called, the lady who had looked after them so well, had succeeded in trapping the remaining three .

Fortuitously we had been approached by a farmer in Devon, who had previously adopted ferals which were now elderly, and was seeking some younger felines for rodent control. He was willing to take on all six - amazing.!



They were all pronounced fit and, having been neutered, made the journey down to Devon next day to their new home to be placed in five large puppy cages, tied together to give them space to eat, sleep and run around whilst they got used to their new home.

Unusually again, although initially disappearing into one or more of the sleeping boxes provided, quite quickly four reappeared to check out their new surroundings.

Intrigued we stayed to watch Good job we did! All six food bowls we'd just filled for them, were soon cleared. So we put out more food to ensure the less adventurous did not go hungry and left them to explore in peace. Their new home is in an idyllic rural setting, much safer than close to the busy A38 where they started life.



Their behaviour and that of the older cats trapped earlier, is a tribute to the kind lady who'd looked after them all, not just feeding, but giving them confidence around humans.

## **Cats Protection - Cat care petitions**

Of all the owned cats in the country, some 26% or a staggering 2.6M are not chipped. That is a huge number that could stray or go missing and be difficult to reunite with their owners. If you know of owned cats that are not chipped please suggest getting this done. It is a simple procedure, the chip is the size of a grain of rice and will not cause any irritation, and it could save long periods of anxiety if a cat strays or is has been driven away in a delivery van unnoticed. 23,000 people have signed our petition so far.

Please support CP's microchipping campaign at:  
**[www.cats.org.uk/microchips-reunite](http://www.cats.org.uk/microchips-reunite)** to sign the petition.

Another issue of huge importance is to get air guns licensed. Whether by accident or deliberate injury to cats, it is an issue that needs addressing.

CP has a separate petition to seek the licensing of all guns at:  
**[www.cats.org.uk/airgunspetition](http://www.cats.org.uk/airgunspetition)**

Mentioned in previous editions of Felines, there continues a need to encourage Landlords to allow pets. This is one of the top 5 reasons why cats come in to CP for homing. A home move where the landlord does not allow pets is heart breaking for the cat owner as well as the disruption for the cat.

Please help by supporting our 'purrfect landlords campaign on  
**[www.cats.org.uk/purrfectlandlords](http://www.cats.org.uk/purrfectlandlords)**

Last but not least in the drive to reduce suffering and life threatening injury to all animals, not least cats, Cats Protection is lobbying MPs to ban wild life animal snares. Cats being curious and at times far roaming animals can get caught up in these ghastly traps. CP are therefore seeking an outright ban. Current legislation if not working. Irresponsible users of these traps don't always, as is required, check the traps regularly enough to ensure pain & suffering is not caused to an animal caught. So you could drop your MP a line & ask that they support a change in the law to ban such medieval devices.



## Some facts & figures and differences between countries

The Charity helped some 191,000 cats & kittens in 2019. It will be interesting to see how 2020's figures reveal how we managed to keep going during lock-down and the recent sequel.

With over 10m cat owners in the UK, there are slightly more female felines than male, and a third of homes owning more than one. Cats are as popular in America although there is a much lower incidence of chipping than we have achieved here (*or perhaps because it is almost double the cost in America*). Even cat owners with very small gardens in the UK, expect their cat to want to spend some time outdoors.



Names also vary between countries,. In America, Oliver, Bella & Simba are popular. In UK Bobby, Belle, and Charlie top our list of names.

Does anyone know of a cat called Simba?

Perhaps an obvious name for some larger 'lion' cats, but certainly not featured in any list of popular cat names here.



Peanut (*above*) is a top cat amongst felines & would be worthy of the name.

Charlie, (*right*). His is a human name that became popular in the 1980s - before names were more likely to reflect a cat's appearance such as 'Spotty' or 'Dottie'

We are also lucky in that being a small island we are able to have a dedicated 'cat' focussed national organisation - **Cats Protection** - America does not. But not withstanding our differences both nationalities love cats and treat them as members of the family.

## NEW HOMING PENS – AT LAST!

### ***We can hardly believe it!!***

After over two years of searching for a suitable site, and progress confounded by two Covid lock-downs, we finally opened our super new homing pen unit at the end of November.

It has been a long journey to reach this point, and we look forward to moving forward and helping the many needy cats and kittens in our Branch area.

The pens are built as a purpose designed, five pen unit, with an attached work/kitchen area, and are located in a large grass paddock away from traffic and disturbance on private land on the outskirts of Taunton.



They are not simply open to the public; visitors wishing to adopt a specific cat will be admitted strictly by appointment and when accompanied by a Branch volunteer.

Cats began to arrive at the weekend of 22<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> November and within a week all the pens were occupied. We had a waiting list of cats ready to come into care and thankfully their owners were very patient and were able to continue caring for their cats until we had the spaces available.



The pens have everything to keep the cats safe and comfortable during their stay whilst they undergo their vet checks, vaccinations, and other treatments to prepare them for life in new homes. As a welfare charity, we have to comply with many requirements and regulations and thus the design and running of the pens conforms to set protocols.

In order to provide the cats with an interesting outlook, we have created a wildflower meadow in front of the pens, and also planted butterfly and insect friendly shrubs. Bird feeders are in place and already there has been a huge number of different species visiting including a Great Spotted Woodpecker and Nuthatches. This part of the facility has a garden seat where volunteers can sit during a break. *(When the weather improves it will be a lovely spot for a lunch or tea break—roll on Spring)*

We aim to make the whole place as environmentally friendly as possible. We are very aware that in this day and age, the amount of waste generated can be huge, so we have in place the means of recycling all washed, empty cat food pouches and other recyclable packaging.

PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) is a great cause of concern as it is plastic. At the moment we cannot easily recycle this but Cats Protection is working to try and establish a national method to deal with this across the whole charity, as the quantity of such waste is massive.

At our pens, we even have the means to recycle any uneaten cat food by composting it in a HotBin. This retains the naturally generated heat from the composting process at a sufficiently high level and thus we can add food waste to this and after a number of weeks, good garden compost results, which any green fingered volunteers would be able to take for use in their own gardens.

*(Fortunately there is eco volunteer up to the technicalities of 'feeding' this unit what it needs, when it needs it)*

So how do we look after our residents?



## Looking after our pen residents

We have a team of dedicated cat care volunteers who have all undertaken the necessary training, but we always welcome contact from people who would like to join the team for this vital work. It is essential that you can drive and have your own transport, and are willing to commit to the required sessions to visit the pens to care for the cats – feeding, cleaning, perhaps taking them to a vet appointment etc. This is all managed using a rota system based around individual availability and it is important therefore that the cat care volunteers communicate with the Branch so that we can ensure that the cats will always have the required support at all times.

Although not set in stone, timings for the main and important sessions are for breakfast any time up to 9am and teatime (4 – 6pm) but these can be somewhat flexible as some volunteers may be at work. If we have small kittens in care, then additional sessions might be necessary to provide the extra meals that they need during the day, especially if they are without a mum. This is an opportunity for a kitten fix!!!

There is also a need for volunteers to socialise the cats if they are unable to commit to a regular breakfast or teatime session. Each cat will have its own specific needs whilst with us, so there is a great opportunity to be with them to encourage play and familiarity with daily life. Many that come into care will bring ‘baggage’ with them and often we will not know what their lives have been like prior to admission – strays in particular. They have to be observed and fully understood so that they can have any issues sorted out as best we can whilst in care. These visit times are more flexible, but again are managed using the rota to keep volunteer numbers on site at any one time within the bounds of current social distancing and practicality.

There is, on occasion, the need to take cats to the Mount Veterinary Hospital at Wellington for treatments, so volunteers willing to undertake this task are also welcome. Such visits are normally planned well in advance by appointment with the practice, so timings are known and all necessary arrangements are in place for the appointment. For example, if a cat is going in for neutering, their feeding pattern must be adjusted so that they have not eaten for a period of several hours before admission, and the time of arrival at the vet is by timed appointment as well.

Our volunteer run pens are something relatively new for the Charity and it is hoped that it might become a model for the future of cat fostering on a more widespread basis across the UK, other branches have already expressed an interest.

If you are interested in volunteering, please call **03452 602 397** or email **[enquiries@taunton.cats.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@taunton.cats.org.uk)** in the first instance for more information.

## Who's who at our Homing Pens?



Beautiful fluff ball **Cassie**.  
Happy to pose for pictures  
and already well settled in,  
in her cosy heated pen



Equally lovely **Tilly**, both very  
pretty cats who will probably  
not stay with us for long as  
both will find loving forever  
homes very quickly





## More first time arrivals

**Loki** is a very friendly cat. Hopefully he too will find his forever home soon.

All five pens, are now fully occupied. Kitten **Fergus** is already reserved and will be, when old enough, going on to his new home. Read all about him on the next page.

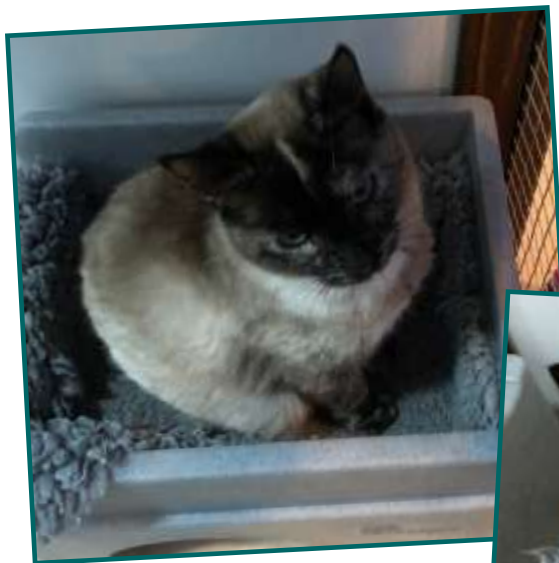
So if cat caring, cuddling, or socialising is something you'd like to do there are always cats waiting to be homed, and in need of some human-cat time to ready them for moving on.

Thinking about volunteering?

Call us on: **03452 602 397**

or email

**[enquires@taunton.cats.org.uk](mailto:enquires@taunton.cats.org.uk)**



Quieter little **Pearl** beautiful colouring a little shy to start with, but settling in.



## First to arrive, first to move on to a new home



**Chief:** A 'Chief' amongst cats and one of the first arrivals in our new pens.

A lovely boy, very friendly who found a new home within days of being admitted. Much to the disappointment of one pen volunteer who took to him instantly.

Chief was 'homed' via 'hands-free'. That is instead of a prospective adopter visiting and getting to meet a cat, before adoption takes place, Covid has meant procedures have changed to achieve something closer to 'hands free'.



However, his adopters are already reporting, he'd found his 'paws'. Within hours of arriving, he was sitting on the sofa next to them watching TV. They just can't imagine life without him. A successful outcome despite difficult times.



## Jethro



**Jethro** came to us from a feral mum at a farm where we have carried out a lot of trapping work in the past. He was found when straw bales were being moved by heavy machinery, and was about four weeks old.

Four to six weeks is a difficult age as we don't immediately know if a kitten is weaned, so he came to Ann and David to be monitored, and where he was bottle fed with formula milk until he was able to feed himself. A single fostered kitten is quite demanding! They need a lot of interaction and socialisation which has to be provided by humans when there are no siblings to join in the games.

Jethro thrived, and proved to be a very affectionate kitten with a penchant for sitting on shoulders and purring in our ears. Before long it was time for him to start his vaccination programme and be neutered. He has now gone to his new home, where he is keeping his new humans on their toes, and we receive regular updates from them.

We miss him, but we know he is much loved.



## A little fluff ball called Fergus



Another day, another farm, another kitten. A week after we took in Jethro, a little black and white kitten was found curled up in the engine of a tractor. How he came to be there, nobody knows, but he is about a week younger than Jethro, and we called him Fergus after Massey Ferguson tractors.

Fergus was the first kitten to be admitted to our new foster pens, and he has proved to be very popular with our volunteers. When word got around that he was in residence, the number of people who put their names down to socialise and play with him

increased dramatically! You need to be fleet of foot when entering or leaving his pen, as Fergus will be off and away in an instant. Though it is possible to distract him with a ping pong ball to chase while you exit.

We have a kitten socialisation CD which includes about 50 normal household sounds which kittens in pens do not normally experience. The idea is to play it quietly to begin with and gradually increase the volume, but Fergus showed no fear of any of it.

Fergus has had his first vaccination and will be homed by Christmas. He is going to join Jethro so that they can work on their double act and become partners in crime, no doubt





I'm told that some of my friends have been asking after me. To tell the truth, I've been a bit bored as Mrs P seems to be spending a lot of time cooking stuff which is not for me and then putting it in a big cold white cupboard in the garage. However, she invented a wonderful new game for me yesterday. **It's called "Changing the Duvet Cover".**



I don't know why I haven't been involved before - maybe it's because I normally get shut out of the bedroom. Anyway, it's a big, big duvet cover, superking she called it, and I

could see she was struggling with it a bit so I leapt in to help, hiding under it, getting inside it, rolling around and generally having a great time. By the time she'd finished, she needed a sit down, so I got a lap cuddle as well.

What a lovely afternoon !

Love, Wilfred X

## **FRIENDS OF THE BRANCH**

'Friends of the Branch' is available to anyone who cares about cat welfare in our area. Membership is free, but we welcome a donation towards the printing costs of 'Felines'.

You can either donate by cheque or postal order payable to:-

### **'Cats Protection T&W – Friends of the Branch'**

and send to :- The Treasurer, Cats Protection T&W,  
51 Yarlington Close, Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton TA2 6RR

Please enrol/re-enrol me as a 'Friend of the Branch' for one year.

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Phone:**

**Email:**

I enclose a cheque/postal order for £ .....

OR donate by BACS payment to sort code 20-42-66,  
account number 90478105 Cats Protection Taunton & Wellington mentioning Friends of the Branch as the reference

**Gift Aid** - I confirm that I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year (6th April to 5th April) it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

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*If you'd prefer not to receive information by post, or wish to change the ways we contact you, please contact Supporter Services by telephoning **0800 160 1012** Monday to Friday during office hours (9am-5pm), or by emailing **preferences@cats.org.uk** or write to: **Freepost, Cats Protection, National Cat Centre, Chelwood Gate, Sussex RH17 7TT.***

*Please visit [www.cats.org.uk/terms-privacy](http://www.cats.org.uk/terms-privacy) if you have any questions about how we use your data.*

## **12 Cat Interpretations of Words and Phrases:**

**TAIL LIFT:** When Cat comes running towards you, elevating its tail with each stride.

**VELODROME:** When Cat uses your sleeping body as a backstop for chasing its tail.

**SOCIAL DISTANCING:** When Cat evades your grasp by a whisker whilst you try to get it in for the night.

**ALL AT SEA:** When Cat performs vigorous cleaning routine, with special attention to scratching ears, whilst on your bed.

**FACE COVERING:** When Cat covers face with tail whilst completing the perfect curled up cat circle.

**THE CAT'S WHISKERS:** When Cat leaves one the night before in your "I'll wear it again tomorrow" polo shirt, which you don't realise until you're at work with no break for two hours.

**MEAL FOR TWO:** When cat says: "You can't count can you?"

**PRINTING PRESS:** When Cat puts perfectly defined paw prints on your items for ironing.

**DAYTIME TV:** When Cat settles on sofa after you've gone to work, pushing the cushions together, activating your remote control. You return from work to some weird channel.

**SEWING MACHINE:** When Cat helps you tie your boot laces as you hurry to get out of the door to work.

**TROTSKY:** When Cat comes running towards you on sprung paws saying "I love You".

**GOODNIGHT:** When Cat comes in when called, eats, sleeps without disturbing you until you are all woken by next door's Milkman and Cat wants to be let out!

SA

## Success stories of hands-free homing



Roger the Lodger was named by a kind couple who had been willing to add him to their all female feline household - but their four had other ideas. So with winter approaching again, they sought our help to find him a forever home, that didn't involve living in a shed.

After a full vet check and with a couple seeking to replace a much loved cat that had passed away - discussions were underway to see if 'Roger' would be a good fit. It seemed he was, and **Twix**, as he was renamed, moved in.

Sensitively handled, he was introduced slowly to a large home having been used to living in a shed. The timid shy boy has blossomed thanks to the family that have given him the home he deserves.



**Bliss**, an elderly lady who had a couple of moves over the years, and now needed someone to pamper her in her final years. With lots of discussions, and photos exchanged, Bliss has fallen on her paws. moving in with an older lady willing to attend to her every need, from a sleeping basket under the radiator, food on demand, to grooming just so - lucky Bliss.

**Update on Peanut - 'doing well'**  
*Signed off for now by the vet and loving life*  
*One contented cat.*



This issue of Felines is generously sponsored  
by **Carly Press,**



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### **Taunton & Wellington Branch**

Call 03452 602 397 (standard rate)

Please note our new email address  
**[enquiries@taunton.cats.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@taunton.cats.org.uk)**

Plus for lost and found please use:

**[lostandfound@taunton.cats.org.uk](mailto:lostandfound@taunton.cats.org.uk)**

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.



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