

# Felis Catus

Newsletter of the Woking & District Cats Protection

July - December 2021



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# Welcome

Welcome to the latest issue of Felis Catus!

Having taken over from Georgia as Newsletter Editor in January, I have been so impressed and amazed at how the branch has kept going through lockdowns and restrictions, providing high levels of care for cats in need and support for cat owners. Fundraising has continued, with ingenious hamper raffles (page 8) and the opportunity to "Give as you live" (page 9).

I have loved reading all the adoptions stories sent in over the past few months, each one showing the huge role played by cats in the wellbeing of individuals and families, from re-homed strays (page 12) to mature moggies (page 22). We may provide food and shelter, but our feline friends repay us many times over with affection and companionship - and entertaining antics (page 10).

I can hardly believe it was 26 years ago that I first contacted Woking Cats Protection. I had recently got married, moved into a quiet road, and was eager to find a couple of cats to make the house a home. Lovely Heather introduced us to a pair of tabby kittens and we took no time at all to decide that they would be Gilbert and Daisy, our new family members. Four more cats (and two children!) later, it's wonderful to be able to give some time back to the branch and make a small contribution towards CP's mission to achieve a world where every cat is treated with kindness and an understanding of its needs.

Read on and enjoy the latest local branch and national cat news, and don't forget to send updates, ideas and photos to [editor@woking.cats.org.uk](mailto:editor@woking.cats.org.uk).

Jane



## Volunteers Matter

Welcome to: Catherine Millington-Sanders, Neena Spary, Jane Simmonds.

Farewell to: Georgia Fay.

We are always in need of volunteers – please get in touch if you are interested in joining our lovely team. Please contact us at: [info@woking.cats.org.uk](mailto:info@woking.cats.org.uk) or call us on 01483 721700 (mailbox 4).

Like what you see?

We also share our news on social media - please follow us!



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# A word from David

Woking Branch Coordinator

Hello Everyone!

This last year has been extraordinary for us all – but with the recent gradual easing of Covid restrictions, perhaps there is a little light at the end of this long tunnel as we head towards hopefully some sort of normality. We must of course not forget the incredible work undertaken by our front-line workers and I would also like to thank each and every one of you - our volunteers and members - for your continued support for the branch. I cannot think what we would have done without you.

I live in Pyrford with my Dutch wife Elly and one cat, and have two grown up kids; our daughter is a GP and our son is a pilot. As the new Branch Coordinator for Woking & District CP Branch since November last year, I share your devotion and passion for cats. As you will know, we have a dedicated and hard-working team working behind the scenes rescuing, neutering, inoculating, chipping and arranging for fostering and adoption of new owners' forever cats. I am very proud of what they have achieved and continue to achieve, especially throughout this pandemic.

I have always had cats in my family and last summer, we took on our own rescue cat from Crete, Maya. Begging for food at a restaurant, a normally dog rescue orientated group took pity on her and rescued her too. During the usual neutering, jabs, chipping, etc the vet found she was also pregnant at nine months old and her babies had to be unfortunately terminated. We named her Maya as that is Greek for mother. Right now, this lovable bundle of white and tabby mixed fur has settled well into our lives, she is always hungry but still has, like many cats, her feral moments - but we love her to bits!

At the time of writing, we are still not yet sure if we will be able to hold our usual summer and autumn events and have the opportunity to meet you and our local community to share cat experiences and continue local education into cat welfare. Nevertheless, the branch team and I are looking into alternatives like the Christmas and Easter raffles. I would like to say a BIG "Thank You" to all of you who entered the raffles which generated useful revenue for the branch to help in our work with cats and kittens. See the article on page 8 for details of the winners.

I hope to provide support and direction to the branch over the year and look forward to meeting many of you when the restrictions allow. In the meantime, please keep safe and take care!

David



# In memory of... Orlando

Last summer we lost our beautiful boy Orlando. He was the softest, most lovable cat and we miss him so much. He was a big cat in every way, with a huge personality. Many cats run and hide when the doorbell goes but Orlando would rush straight down the stairs to greet visitors - he just loved to meet new people and to travel. As soon as the basket lid was opened he would jump right in ready for a trip. He even loved going to the vet, and they loved him too. He would jump out on to the table in the consulting room and then jump back in the basket when he was ready to go. He loved to visit my mother, who is in a care home, and he adored meeting all the people there who crowded round wanting to stroke his lovely soft fur. He was very popular there and made so many friends.

From the day that he arrived, he won our hearts. He loved to play and would have put Woking FC to shame with his skills at controlling a ball and even catching it in his paws when he was in the right mood! We bought him a mixing deck for his birthday and he loved spinning the turntable with his paw.

Orlando loved lockdown and the chance to spend more time with us, and to have more trips outside in the garden. He loved to jump the fence and say hello to our neighbours and enjoyed chilling out in their garden enjoying the sun puddles.

He was such a big part of our lives and left us so suddenly and so early. It is hard to come to terms with losing him but we are so grateful to Pauline and the CP Welfare Team for allowing his legacy to continue by enabling us to sponsor a lovely rescue boy to share his name (see next page). We are truly lucky to have been able to share our lives with such a generous and loving cat and we will treasure the time we spent together.

Amanda & Ian



# In Orlando's name

It was about four months ago that we adopted Orlando from Cats Protection. We are so happy we adopted him. He is now nine months old and the best kitten ever. From daytime fun to our evening cuddles to waking up with meowing from outside my bedroom door. Orlando is friendly, loving and fluffy. He is such a big part of the family, he's the first one my sister and I ask about when we get in from school. Wherever we go, Orlando is quite often there, he just loves company. He loves to play, jump and scratch his scratching post and, of course, lots of naps too!

Some days he will venture outdoors for a little exploring, sometimes (particularly chilly days) he will prefer to rest in his basket, staying nice and warm, or watch the birds and squirrels from the windows. He is so perfect for our family and we all love him so much. Adopting him was the best way to start 2021 and we could not be happier!

Sophie & Olivia



## Need to talk to someone?

Cats Protection understands just how much your cat means to you and what you may be going through if your pet is missing, had to be rehomed, nearing the end of their life or recently passed away. We have a large range of resources, information and support to help you at this difficult time, including ways to help celebrate the life of your cat.

If you're experiencing the loss of your cat, you can talk to us. Our volunteer listeners can provide emotional support and practical information.

Please get in touch, we're here and ready to listen:

**t: 0800 024 9494** (9am-5pm, Mon-Fri) free & confidential

**w: [www.cats.org.uk/grief](http://www.cats.org.uk/grief)**



# Welcome to Catherine...

## Our newest fosterer

Volunteer fosterers provide a stable, safe and loving environment in their homes or in purpose-built pens in their gardens. They provide vital hands-on care for stray, abandoned cats or cats whose owners can sadly no longer keep them. Catherine is our newest fosterer and here she tells the story of how she came to volunteer and take charge of Mack, a cat on his way to a new home.

Until recently I had my own cat. I loved him dearly, but due to old age, he died during the pandemic. I was distraught. He was my special little friend. When he left, I realised I was not ready for another cat of my own. But I had a lot of love and care to give. Several friends gently encouraged me to think about fostering and so I started to do some research.

I was impressed looking at the Cats Protection website and reading through the volunteering information. One night, I decided to fill out the application form. The next day, I received an email thanking me for my application and alerting me to my local branch. Shortly after that Pauline, the team leader, contacted me.

The next day I was interviewed over the phone. It was an odd experience. I'm senior in my job and I haven't had an interview for years! I realised I

was nervous as I really wanted to be accepted! Pauline spent over an hour diplomatically asking pertinent questions: Was I appropriate for fostering? Why now? What are my skills? The more I listened to her, the more impressed I was by the incredible, professional service provided by Cats Protection for cats. Her experience and kindness shone through and I felt very lucky to have been linked to this branch.

To my relief, I was accepted for volunteering duties, initially for indoor cat fostering. But this turned out to just be my screening interview. A "room-check" interview with both Pauline and Helen (Branch Secretary) followed a few days later. Then came some serious homework with a variety of online learning modules.

Despite living with cats all my life, I learnt so much that was incredibly useful: understanding my role and responsibilities; how the room should be cleaned and set up; and how to support the adoption process.

A week passed and Pauline rang again. There was, she said, a ginger and white cat that she thought would be a good cat to start my fostering journey. His name was Mack and she was collecting him from former home. Then, as he was 12 years old, they'd go to the vet together for his health MOT which included a blood test. The next day, Helen came to my house with more boxes than Santa can carry to ensure Mack was well looked after, his room safe and fully equipped for his stay.

Sadly, Mack's owner had died and suddenly he was alone. A new world loomed for him and for me! He arrived, delivered in a comfy carrier-box and we met face-to-face on my front doorstep. He looked very nervous and I knew I'd need to work hard to build his trust and confidence.

We went upstairs to his new bedroom which was kitty-safe thanks to the support of Pauline and Helen. I'd made a checklist of things I needed to remember to be in place. Cat litter and tray - check. Bowls - check. Food - check. Toys - check. Snuggly blanket - check. Scratching post - check.



Mack

I opened the cage and out he popped, diving straight under my spacious bed. Bending down to check he was OK, I saw him peering at me through his big green eyes. I wondered what he was thinking...Who are you? Where's my mummy? What's happening to me now?

I sat for a while on the floor so he could get used to me in the room. Pauline had spent a lot of time talking with a family member to understand what Mack liked and didn't like. Treats were top of his like-list. I rattled a little bag to see if he'd be tempted. He looked at me encouragingly from his place under the bed. I put a couple of treats near him, a water bowl and gave him a helping of his favourite biscuits and let the blanket flop back so he had privacy. "Crunch, crunch, crunch," I heard. Success!

The next morning, Pauline texted to check on how Mack was faring. I was proud to announce that he'd used the litter tray and eaten more food. He seemed to have made himself comfortable under the bed, where he stayed when I came into the room. She said she had some news about his blood tests. I'm a doctor and I felt the role reversal as this is often what I say to patients when I'm giving them a warning shot of news to come!

"Mack has a high thyroid level but otherwise all his blood tests are normal," Pauline declared calmly, advising he'd need tablets twice a day which should hopefully start to make him feel better. Moreover, she would drop them off. The next test would be in four weeks. Although I'd confirmed I had no holidays or other plans, I was learning quickly that being flexible is an important quality for a volunteer.

I told Mack the news as I stuck his first tablet in a treat, which miraculously went down nicely. I breathed a sigh of relief. However, several tablets and days later it became clear that Mack's body was reacting badly to the medication with vomiting and bloody diarrhoea. Worryingly, he lost all interest in food.

After a thorough check-over, the lovely vet Thomas stopped his thyroid tablets and prescribed an appetite stimulant. It took several weeks for his enthusiasm for food to return. I tried an array of sumptuous morsels... freshly cooked fish, chicken, and Pauline brought over some special tasty items to tempt his taste buds. It was important to rebuild his strength as Thomas advised he would now need an operation to remove his overactive thyroid gland.

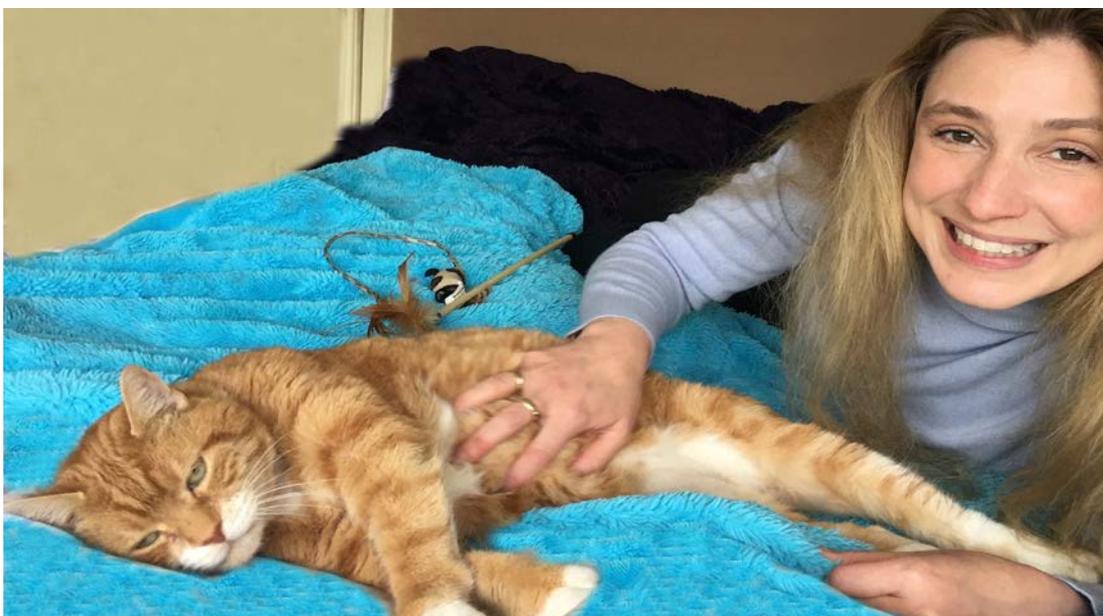
Poor Mack. So much for him to go through, in such a short time. But his winning character shone through and four weeks later he was ready for his op. Thankfully, it went smoothly. He recovered well, quickly regaining his appetite and playing with his new catnip toy with a passion!

Stop press - update! Blood tests have shown that the thyroidectomy has worked and his thyroid levels are normal again. He just needs to have a dental check-up and he'll be as good as new!

What an incredible start both for me as a Cats Protection fosterer and for Mack on his journey to finding his new forever home...

And will I do it again? In a heartbeat.

*Catherine*



# Fundraising update...

With fundraising opportunities still limited due to the pandemic, we are delighted that two hamper raffles have gone a long way towards making up for the cancellation of Christmas and Spring Fayres. Supported by our very dedicated members, volunteers and local cat-lovers, the raffles offered the chance to win a range of superb goodies to be enjoyed by both cats and their human staff.

The Christmas raffle raised £617, with the prizes going to...

1st - Cath



2nd - Kevin



*Congratulations!*

3rd - Mags



Our second online raffle at Easter was even more successful, raising a fantastic £1335, using JustGiving for the first time.

1st - Danielle & Matt



2nd - Amanda & Ian



*Thank you*

3rd - Sue & Eddie



If you're interested in helping us raise funds to support the cats and kittens in our care, see page 25 for details of our [Online Fundraising Volunteer](#) vacancy. You could make a big difference!

# ...and other ways to help



## Love shopping?

Want to help us raise funds for the branch absolutely free? It's so easy to do, just by shopping via Give as you Live Online. When you shop at over 4,500 top stores including John Lewis, Boots, Argos and Marks & Spencer via Give as you Live Online, they'll turn a percentage of your spend into free funds for us!

Simply sign up, search for the retailer and start shopping. It's that simple! Get started today by registering at:

<https://www.giveasyoulive.com/join/cats-protection---woking--district>

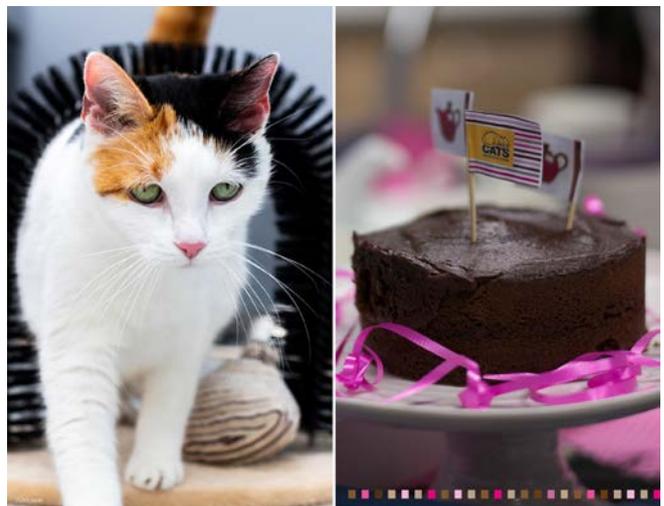
every slice you sell will help give unwanted cats and kittens a second chance.

Support Woking CP by registering now, and you'll receive a Pawsome Afternoon Tea party pack with everything you need to make your planning a piece of cake:

<https://www.cats.org.uk/support-us/events/pawsome-tea/sign-up-to-pawsome-afternoon-tea>

## Love cats and cake?

This August, make a date with friends and family and host your own Pawsome Afternoon Tea (following the latest government guidelines of course) to help cats in need. You could have a tea party at home, a bake sale in the office, or even enjoy a picnic outdoors if it's sunny weather. Whether you bake or buy some delicious goodies to share,



## Follow us and spread the word!

Says Neena, Social Media Volunteer



Hi, my name is Neena and I look after the Social Media for Woking Cats Protection! I reached out after seeing a position advertised online and feel extremely lucky to have been given the opportunity to help raise the online profile of such an amazing branch of the Cats Protection charity.

I love animals and using my skills and spare time to help little, vulnerable beings alongside such wonderful volunteers makes me feel part of a community that I would never have otherwise been a part of. One of the things that I enjoy most is getting the online community to interact with us and share their pictures and cat experiences!

I hope that the cute content brings others as much happiness as it does me. I look forward to seeing how the platforms grow and the impact that will have on raising Woking Cats Protection's profile!



Neena



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# Crazy cats - antics and attitudes!

Our cats may sleep an average of 15 hours a day, but they still find time to entertain us with their naughty antics and appearances in unexpected places. Here is a selection of CP cats and kittens showing their attitude and their sense of humour. Is your cat even crazier? Let us know - and send your photos to [editor@woking.cats.org.uk](mailto:editor@woking.cats.org.uk).





Chester



Lulu



Misty



Orion



Summer



Bunty

# Once straying...now staying!

## A fresh start for this lucky bunch....



Bertie turned up in a garden as an unneutered and unchipped stray. Cats who can't be identified via a microchip are fitted with a paper collar - if they will tolerate it - which includes the CP contact details as part of establishing whether they have an owner or not. However, in Bertie's case he was never claimed, so the hunt was on for an adoptive family to welcome him into their home.



Bertie

We had been talking as a family for a while about getting a new cat but it seemed that the closest we ever got was occasionally looking at the Adopt a Cat page online; for one reason or another we'd never quite got beyond "window shopping" as life was always too hectic. Perhaps it was fate as, when we finally made the move, we ended up with the best cat that we could ever hope for.

We have two young children and we'd previously had a cat but when Molly "went on holiday" it felt wrong to simply replace her. By the start of last year, however, it was becoming apparent that the time was right. We finally reached out to CP at the start of the half term holiday in February. Then Jenny, the Homing Officer at Woking CP, got in touch, asking if we could have a chat to discuss the options. This message led me to look at the Adopt a Cat page once more and there, staring out at me, was a photo of an adorable (if slightly dishevelled) black and white cat with the name of Bertie. Instantly something clicked and I knew that he was the one for us. The rest of the family were of the same opinion... Bertie simply had to come and live with us! Jenny agreed that Bertie sounded an ideal fit and arranged for him to interview us the following Saturday.

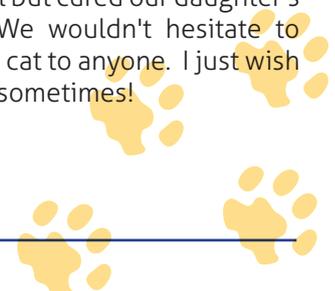
The kids were impatient but finally the big day came and we all made our way to his temporary home to be greeted by Kim who introduced us all. Things couldn't have gone any better and a week later he arrived with us at his forever home.

It quickly became obvious that we were gaining much more than a cat: in offering him a home he was, in fact, helping us to make our own house a home. His arrival proved to be wonderful timing as, less than two weeks after his arrival, we commenced day one of project "Home School" followed quickly by lockdown. Before long we were getting used to the new routine of staying home, and we sympathised with Bertie in his desperation to get out and about. Lockdown really gave us all a chance to get to know each other. In his own unique way, Bertie helped the children through the toughest of times, becoming their new best friend and part of a new routine.

In May we were able to leave the house for more than an hour per day and Bertie also gained his freedom. As a stray it had been suggested that we kept him inside for longer than usual to ensure that he was fully settled - we ended up keeping him inside for two weeks on top of that as the children were terrified that he would run away - but, when the big day arrived, we needn't have worried. He emerged gently and slowly - stately, like a prince - surveying and considering his new kingdom. Having padded softly around the perimeter of the garden he slunk down under the gate and went into the front garden for the first time. Would this be the last that we saw of him? The hissing and squealing we heard outside the gate was terrifying. But we should not have worried, it was just Bertie seeing off a neighbourhood cat. If he'd been a prince in the back garden he had emerged into the front garden as a king! He returned to the house a short while later in triumph... and promptly settled down in his bed for a long sleep!

Bertie has spent the months that followed sunning himself, hunting mice, walking the children to school, staying out too late at night or simply relaxing whilst he watches us working in the garden. He is an excellent mouser... and an even better friend and companion. He may have been a stray but he has been very loyal to us and very protective of his new home and we all love him for what he has brought to the family. We have seen some wonderful caring moments from our son towards him - whilst he has all but cured our daughter's previous fear of animals. We wouldn't hesitate to recommend rehoming a stray cat to anyone. I just wish he'd come and sit on my lap sometimes!

Craig



I first spotted Casper (who at the time I named Charles Xavier from X-Men!) outside our communal car park during the first national lockdown. He looked rather sorry for himself - his white coat was covered in oil from sitting under cars, he was un-neutered, very skinny, and also had quite a large cut on his neck. After a few sightings I started asking around the neighbours if anyone knew who he belonged to, but nobody seemed to know. So, I took it upon myself to feed him and also managed (after a lot of encouragement) to clean his wound. Not long after, I discovered that Casper's original owners had moved away six months before, left him to fend for himself and no longer wanted to have ownership of him.

As the weather started to get cooler and the days shorter, I knew a permanent solution to Casper's situation had to be found! That's when I contacted Cats Protection. Pauline was brilliant, and very committed to getting Casper off the streets! I had an outdoor home and lots of food dropped off for him until he could be caught. Finally, the day came when I was able to entice him into the cage and bring him to a local vet, where he was health-checked and signed over to Cats Protection. I can honestly say they saved Casper's life and I feel very blessed to have been part of his journey to a forever, loving home.

Amy



Since moving in last November Casper has settled in and made our home his home. He is a really chilled, cool cat and smart too. He spends his days pottering around the house and garden, sleeping and playing and dozing and eating. He has taken to lying on the sofa next to his new mum in the afternoons and evenings. He loves his garden and knows all the sunny spots and the shady spots, and every day is an adventure as the plants and shrubs spring into life. He is a blessing to have around and we are lucky to have him with us.

Dave & Patti.

Missy had been hanging around as a stray for several months before she was taken in by a good Samaritan. However, when Missy became unwell she was passed into the care of Woking CP and after extensive tests it was found that she had inflammatory bowel disease. It took a while to get her on the right track but at last she was ready for her forever home...



My husband passed away in 2020 and I was devastated as well as sad and lonely. I scoured the internet to find a cat or dog to give a home to and that's when I came across Missy on the Woking CP website. Missy came to me on 27 January 2021, a very scared little girl. As soon as I opened her carrier she dived out and hid in the farthest corner. That's where she stayed other than to venture out for food and to use her litter tray. A day or two later she found another safe place under the chest of drawers in my bedroom - at least she was moving closer to me. I found a little bell which I rang whenever I put her food down and now she appears when she hears it and not just at mealtimes.

It took a few days before she came out into the open when I was around. Finally, I persuaded her to come halfway down the stairs but that was her limit. A few days later, while watching TV, I was aware that someone was watching me and I turned to find Missy sitting on the bottom step, staring at me. As soon as she realised I'd seen her she ran back upstairs to safety. Eventually she came into the living room and before too long she'd found a spot on my knee to watch TV with me. Now she wakes me every morning with a nibble on the end of my nose, or a paw on my cheek and the biggest rumbling purr I've ever heard.

She has been outside lots of times now, and she loves the fresh air. She gave me a scare on two occasions, when she dived under a fence and disappeared. I called her and rang her bell but eventually her little face appeared at the door and now I feel sure she knows how to get back home if she goes for a wander. She is the sweetest little lady, very affectionate and at times very playful. I don't know what I'd do without her, although I think she needs me just as much as I need her, she just pretends she doesn't!

Lesley

# Bear then...

Death-Stare-Fancy-Cat was Bear's first name. Appearing like a puma, shaded by trees in the woods behind our yard fence, we were feeding the birds when we spotted a pair of eyes watching us. He was a handsome cat, but he did not respond to any of our coaxing; he lay still, flicking his tail with disdain - he was having none of our friendliness, and he successfully stared us out.

He appeared just after the "Beast from the East" of 2019. We assumed the fancy cat was stalking his way over from the swanky flats behind us. He helped himself to the hedgehogs' food and made amorous advances on the lady cat next door - cat fights at dawn were a daily occurrence. That was the way it was over the next 12 months. Near the end of the winter it barely stopped raining and we noticed that the fancy cat from the swanky flats was looking a little shabby. We considered that maybe he was a feral boy after all. A cardboard box house, wrapped in a bin liner together with an old bathmat as a blanket, was hidden under our trailer, just in case he didn't have a home - and he used it.

Lockdown meant we were at home every day and got to notice more of his movements. He was always around, he would never come near, but twice a day he had big dinners, and he moved from the cardboard box to the old tin bathtub, with new bedding and a waterproof cover. He was still very much a wild cat but our support kept him away from hunger and the elements. I have to note here that we are not allowed pets, and next door's cat had produced two litters from him. So it was all a bit "cloak and dagger" to keep him safe.



One evening when he was eating his sardines, a fox-cub nipped in and stole his tea. We were some distance away, but we saw the incident unfold and for a moment he looked as vulnerable as a kitten. He turned and ran over as if to tell us to do something. It was a moment. He meowed and meowed, never once shying away or fearful. Another tin of sardines was produced and we stood guard. That was the first time one of us rubbed his head and he didn't run or hiss, in fact he didn't flinch at all. The next evening, we called him and he came running up the steps into our home. No fight, no drama, but straight onto the sofa. We were open-mouthed in shock.

He spent that first night dozing on the sofa, a little nervous, occasionally lashing out if you moved quickly, but he stayed. He asked only to go out to go to the toilet, or for more food. We should have made a tray of soil for him to use, but he had been so good at asking to go out we assumed overnight he would wake us if he needed to. He obviously didn't want to disturb us and decided one of our drawers was the most suitable back-up, and when that was used, it was important to christen a dressing-gown as well.

From that point we commissioned the cat action plan. Was he chipped? He could have an owner frantically worried about him. Neutered? If he had no one, we needed to do that. Worming he needed desperately, and nutritionally he needed bolstering. A cat carrier was found and with the help of a packet of Dreamies he happily went in. On the advice of Cats Protection we took him to their vet to be scanned. Sadly, there was no chip - so no grand reunion. We rang all the rescue centres, posted his picture on every lost pet site - but nothing came up.

In hindsight, it is something we should have done a year before. If he was a feral cat then things could have stayed as they were; but he had properly moved in. He used the litter tray, ate four cans of sardines a day, loved his vitamin tablets, didn't mind getting neutered and was the most affectionate animal we had met. He was now our cat; but we are not allowed cats!

We need to say here that we are also not cat people: we are addicted to dogs. But the cat loved us, slept on us, talked to us, and was ever grateful for food. He was at his most contented sitting on the front steps, overlooking his territory. He never went far, seemingly not interested in the woods behind the fence, and next door's lady cats were much relieved at the lack of pursuit.

He always looked a bit grumpy, but his name didn't reflect his character. He was so cuddly and regal at the same time, finally we settled on "Bear"- and it stuck. Bear spent over 18 months around us and three weeks in our home. Letting him go was more of a wrench than we had anticipated. We still miss him. Mostly we are grateful to know that he has a forever home and is loved, that he taught us we can love a cat as much as a dog, and that next door's cats are finally neutered, and the caterwauling at dawn has stopped.

*Sharon and Christy*

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## ...Bear now!

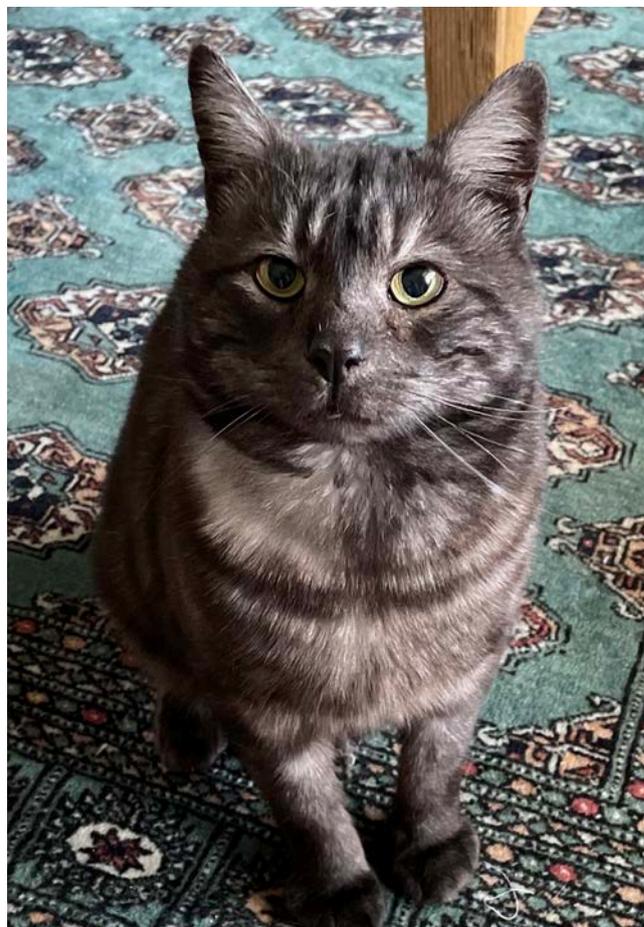
We took the decision to adopt in October 2020, about 12 months after we lost Xena "Warrior Princess" at the young age of about 10. Cats had always played a huge part in my life, keeping me sane during some of the most stressful times. The trigger to adopt this time was my dad; he had been ill for most of last year and I missed having a cat.

I stumbled across Bear on the Woking CP site. It was his name that attracted me. My husband Geoff and I had travelled a lot in North America where bears are symbolised as healers and protectors in most Native American cultures. The bear symbol reminds us to protect our ways of life, to fight for what is right, and to restore balance in our communities. I felt that Bear was meant for us, so I contacted Pauline and had an initial chat. After that it moved very quickly; a Zoom meeting hosted by Bear's lovely fosterer Cheryl - and Geoff and I were hooked.

On Sunday 22 November 2020 Bear joined our family and I soon discovered how much he and I had in common. Like me, Bear:

- talks a lot
- loves after dinner naps
- needs daily grooming
- enjoys endless cuddles
- has a good sense of humour
- loves broccoli with his main course
- is a complete softy underneath
- is very photogenetic.

Geoff was amazed at the effect Bear had on me: he hadn't seen me quite so relaxed for a long time. In fact, Bear had a wonderful effect on both of us - in this time of lockdown, it was great to have someone else to talk to for a change.



We hadn't adopted a stray before, and our last two cats had been female, so it was a very interesting experience for both of us. Bear fitted in immediately. Within 20 minutes of being in the house he joined me for a snooze and snuggle on the sofa. Surprisingly, he really isn't very interested in the outside. For a while he pretended he wasn't able to use the cat flap, but I set up a cat flap camera and caught him in the act! He pops out into the garden a few times a day but rarely stays out for long.

Food remains a bit of battle, I guess that stems from him never knowing where his next meal would come from. After a gentle rebuke from our vet, he's now on a diet with the odd treat thrown in. He loves being with us and as soon as it's possible we want him to meet some friends, so he knows we aren't the only humans in the world. He sleeps in his own bed, with his little Fish that Cheryl made for him and he is happy to wake us up should we oversleep the alarm!

We are very pleased that Pauline and Cheryl allowed us to give Bear a home and the adoption process was very straight forward. I know I'm biased but Bear is just gorgeous!

*Mandy*



# Viggo's story

We have at least seven or eight cats who regularly patrol our garden, but the cat who marched into our house on that Sunday afternoon we didn't recognise. He was startled and ran, and we thought nothing more about it. We hadn't got a good look at him but perhaps a neighbour had got a new cat?

On Monday morning he was there again, sitting on a blanket that had been left on a garden chair. I was always under the impression that cats don't really like me, but as soon as he saw me he charged over, rubbing his chin on me and rolling on the grass meowing for belly rubs. I called out to my partner, Marc, whom cats always seem to love. As we were petting and making a fuss of him we got a better look; if he was someone's pet he wasn't in a great way. It was fairly obvious he was an unneutered male, with a thick neck and ears that were more than a little crusty. The scars on his head and nose were evidence of his fighting past, and yet he was the friendliest cat I'd ever met.

Marc offered our new friend a bowl of water which he lapped up gratefully. We christened him Strider (which Lord of the Rings fans will recognise). We were beginning to suspect Strider hadn't had access to food or water in a while, so Marc rummaged around in the fridge and produced a packet of ham which was wolfed down in no time. We were fairly sure he was new to the neighbourhood, but new as a pet or as a stray? We decided to give it three days to decide and Strider settled into a routine of breakfast on the patio, an afternoon of sunning himself on the neighbour's shed roof, and then dinner.

Then my sister spotted a post about him on the Woking Live Facebook page. It seemed several kind people were putting food out for him but no one was sure who he belonged to. The deciding moment came when we realised where he was sleeping. The nights were getting colder, and one evening we followed him to the end of our garden where we saw him curl up for the night on an old mattress.



We couldn't stop worrying about him so the next day we gave our contact details to Helen from Woking CP, and were quickly contacted by Pauline. We were advised to shut him in somewhere, as long as it wouldn't scare or spook him, and luckily we had a large dog crate. We put his dinner in the crate, with pillows and blankets and a bowl of water. He was so bold and friendly he didn't think twice and walked right in and made himself comfortable. I'm sure as far as cat rescues go this was one of the smoothest, largely because he was the friendliest, calmest and most trusting cat I've ever met. We discovered that his new owner has named him Viggo. Lord of the Rings fans know that Strider was played by actor Viggo Mortensen, so it seems he's exactly where he was always meant to be, and we wish them all the best for their future together.

Kelly



All cats are special, but I have to say Viggo is Super Special. He came into my life when I'd just come out of a long-term relationship with a dog, so I was feeling a bit sad and the house was far too quiet and empty and clean.

I flicked through all the cat profiles online and came across the face of Viggo. Well, he had his own hair and teeth, was good-looking and appeared clean and house trained - he was also within my required age range. I knew he'd be active and confident as he had lived on the streets of Woking and had been capable of finding food and fending for himself. So I applied, and after all the checks he came home. And "home" it felt again for me. Within a few hours Viggo seemed to decide I was a match for him and that he too felt quite at home with me.

It's still early in the relationship and we haven't been out yet, but I know he is just gagging to strut his muscles around my garden. He follows me around the house, chatting and purring, head butts me for a kiss and went straight in for a cuddle and stroke on our first date. I feel privileged that this young chap has chosen me, because that it exactly what it feels like, and I'm blessed to have him in my life.

Camilla

# Buster then...



We first met Buster when he started visiting our garden at the end of the summer in 2020. He was a bit tatty round the edges and his fur was grubby but he seemed to have a very gentle and calm nature. He was terrified of humans though, but after a while he struck up a friendship with our female rescue cat, Molly, and eventually he started eating food we put down for him. When the weather started to get cold we made him a bed in the (empty!) guinea pig hutch, with lots of blankets to keep him warm. He started to enjoy head rubs and strokes and even started coming through our cat flap to eat Molly's food!

I contacted Pauline from Woking CP and she lent me a scanner - but no chip showed up. Pauline then dropped off a trap with instructions on how to use it and after a few days we caught him. He wasn't best pleased but he calmed down after we covered the trap with a towel. We knew Buster would be a bit of a project to prepare him for rehoming and we were delighted when Pauline told us he had found a forever home. We would like to thank Woking CP for turning Buster's life around, and his new family for taking him into their home.

Catherine

# ...Buster now!

The past 12 months have been extremely difficult and unnerving for all of us. I am currently in Year 11 and trying to navigate my GCSE year. It's been incredibly stressful and there are times where I have felt lost and struggling with the increasing uncertainty. When Buster arrived into my life, it gave me an escape. I was no longer going through the motions of each day and feeling like there was no way out. Last lockdown I took up running as a new hobby to distract myself from life but this time I have my loving companion, Buster.

My family adopted him on my birthday in January and since then we have been inseparable. On the first evening when he arrived, he brushed against my hand and sat on my lap. Every morning, after he sleeps in his

bed next door, I wake up to the soft sound of his very chatty voice. As a teenager I would usually be furious if anyone tried to wake me up, but his delightful purr and amusing squeaks are what I look forward to every day.

We knew adopting Buster would come with its challenges because taking on a rescue cat is always a journey, but when he arrived it felt like he was home.

It has only been three weeks and already he has learned to unlock doors, which is very naughty, and he often joins us on the sofa for family film night. His identifiable white feet and gorgeous white nose and tummy make him look like he is wearing a suit, at least that's what my grandma thinks. After playing with his toys and scratching his post, he loves to sit under blankets which sometimes makes him look like ET when his head pops out at the other end. He is the most charismatic and charming cat in the world, and I am so glad we met at this very moment when the world is such a scary place.

Buster is a very keen explorer and loves to roll around on the rug in our kitchen. He is vigilant and watches squirrels with his beady eyes from any window. Sometimes, he even likes to go to the window to look



at his reflection! Shortly, Buster will be able to venture outside and experience our garden and the outdoors which he is already accustomed to.

As I am writing this, he is curled up asleep beside me. I am so appreciative and grateful for people from Woking CP because without you, Buster wouldn't be living the life of luxury he is so thoroughly enjoying.

I hope this inspires anyone to adopt rescue cats because they should be given a second chance, and I hope that there is a place in your heart to adopt a sweet little companion like Buster to brighten up your life.

Freya, (aged 16)





Frankie

Initially named Bella, Frankie was first found in a garden with her four kittens who were around four weeks old. Then along came John who continues her story...

Frankie adopted us in October 2020 after great support and advice from Pauline and Woking CP. As you would expect, she was very timid initially but has really grown in confidence and now rules the roost in our house!

Frankie didn't go outside over the winter months but with some nicer weather over the last few days, she has ventured into the garden to start to satisfy her curiosity. Frankie has settled in really well and we love her presence around the house - she is still hunting out her resting and sleeping spots but likes to follow the sun.

We are looking forward to many happy years ahead with her - she's the boss!

John



Georgie

Georgie was found as a stray with a deep wound under her armpit. She had two older kittens with her who were neutered and returned to where they were found and are being cared for by the person who reported them to Woking CP. After a three-month recovery period, Georgie was ready to find her forever home.

After losing our previous cat early last year we felt ready to offer a home to another rescue and were incredibly lucky to adopt Georgie on 13 March 2020, just before the first lockdown. She was very shy at first but soon came out of her shell. She is such a lovely character and has totally stolen our hearts. She has kept me sane over the last year and has been great company for me whilst being at home.

She has her little routine and likes to wake us up in the morning and have a cuddle on the bed before going out and staring into our neighbour's house, tormenting their dog!

Fiona

Rusty was reported as a stray but turned out to be microchipped. Her registered owner had sadly died months prior to her been reported to us. One of the phone numbers registered to the microchip belonged to a family member, who decided it would be best if Rusty was rehomed.

I adopted Rusty on 16 March 2021 and I have pleasure in saying that she warmed to me and my home from day one. Initially she was under the care of Woking CP as she'd been taken in as a stray. While in foster care she had health checks, vaccines, flea and deworming treatments - all done prior to coming to me. I cannot thank them enough for what they have done for Rusty and myself. I would strongly advise anyone who is looking to adopt a pet to contact these lovely people. I am one big happy person and Rusty agrees!

Keith



Rusty



# Thank you to our crafty supporters



Isla has been knitting blankets for some of our lucky felines.

She learned to knit as her new skill for the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and we are so grateful that she has donated her lovely creations to Cats Protection.



Volunteer Julie's beautiful blankets are being enjoyed by many rescues and strays now in the care of Woking CP.



The ladies of Homebeech House, Woking, have also been knitting for us. Our cats and kittens send appreciative purrs to all who have contributed.



# Volunteer recognition

Volunteers' Week in June is a celebration of the fantastic contribution millions of volunteers make to charities and organisations across the UK each year. The national family of Cats Protection welcomes volunteers with open arms and our local Woking branch is no different. A little bit of time goes a long way towards doing something worthwhile for the animals we love, as many of our volunteers have already discovered.

As a small "thank you" to all the volunteers for their time and commitment helping people, cats and the charity, our Branch Coordinator David has sent a badge for one year, five years and ten years volunteering for CP. He has also presented our Transport Specialist, Steve Dunn, with a little statuette for 20 years of volunteering.



Our charity also has a Special Thanks and Recognition Scheme (STARS) which recognises volunteers who put in additional, special support and we have awarded Alison Lancaster, one of our fosterers, with a small memento for raising nearly £4,500 by making and selling a range of face masks.



# The Time is Meow!

## Advocacy update from the National Cats Centre

Throughout the pandemic the Advocacy team has still been meeting with politicians and decision makers to speak up for cats across the whole of the UK.



### Action Plan for Animal Welfare to introduce compulsory microchipping for cats

This year we focused on our campaign calling for all pet cats to be microchipped to help reunite more owners with their cats if they are lost or stolen. The team was overjoyed by the enthusiasm of supporters to get involved in our campaign and an astonishing 22,000 emails were sent into the Westminster Government's consultation on microchipping via our website.

Happily, the Government has now committed to introducing compulsory microchipping for pet cats in their "Action Plan for Animal Welfare" which was announced in May. Jacqui Cuff, head of Advocacy and Government Relations for Cats Protection, said she was "delighted".

"We had the dog microchipping regulation passed in 2016, so we've been waiting a long time. There are around 2.6 million unchipped pet cats in the UK; that's a lot of cats wandering around with no permanent identification," she explained.

Cat theft reportedly increased by more than 12% over the last year, and only around 70% of owned cats are chipped at the moment.

This action plan also detailed a review of snares, and we will be stepping up our campaign for an outright ban on their use. Snares cause immense pain and suffering to any animal caught in them, including domestic and feral cats. Animals can suffer long, painful deaths after being captured in a snare and we hope this review will be the first step towards a ban.

In addition there was new legislation announced to address low welfare pet imports, for example when kittens are smuggled, the licensing of animal sanctuaries, and measures to tackle pet theft, as cat theft has recently been on the rise.



### Purrfect landlords campaign

Another issue that has also had a breakthrough this year is our Purrfect Landlords campaign, calling for more cat-friendly tenancies. The Westminster Government has recognised the importance of pets and recently published a new model tenancy agreement (MTA) for landlords to use. The MTA makes it the default for pets to be allowed, unless the landlord has a valid reason for there not be pets in the property.



### Scotland matters

In Scotland we've been working with the Scottish Government to develop the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (Scotland) Regulations 2021. These new regulations will come into force in September 2021.

A licence will be required in Scotland for cat breeding activity, commercial pet sales and to run a homing organisation or Animal Welfare Establishment. Licence conditions will help ensure good cat breeding welfare; prohibit the commercial sale of kittens under eight weeks; prohibit the commercial sale of kittens by a seller who is not also the breeder, and ensure minimum standards apply in animal welfare establishments and homing organisations.

### Help us speak up for cats

If you are interested in helping our advocacy work - perhaps by letter writing, sharing campaigns online or even gathering evidence, please get in contact with us.

Please email: [advocacy@cats.org.uk](mailto:advocacy@cats.org.uk)  
Follow us on Twitter: [@CPAdvocacy](https://twitter.com/CPAdvocacy)

# Mature moggies: so much love to give

According to Cats Protection research, senior kitizens take four times longer to find a home than their younger counterparts, despite the many benefits that a more mature moggy can bring to the household.

Generally, an older cat is more likely to be calmer than a harum-scarum kitten. Many retain a playful nature but have probably grown out of the "clawing the furniture" stage and are less likely to chase a fly across the room, scattering objects as they go! If you're looking for a cat that is happy to hang around the house, then an older cat could be your perfect companion.

Having recently celebrated Mature Moggies' Day in June, we thought we'd share some mature moggies of our own that have fallen on their paws.

Our previous cat, Carly, passed at the age of 23 years so we had become used to having an older cat around.

We didn't really want a young cat who would want to explore and as I work from home, I was looking for some company. Daisy Boy was almost 15 when we adopted him - he is great company.

He's really chatty, very affectionate and has settled in well - we've just celebrated his 17th birthday! I'm guessing older cats are more difficult to find homes for, but I knew our home would be perfect and he's now one of the family.

Karen



Daisy Boy



Teddy

My mum is a fosterer for Cats Protection and often sends us pictures of lovely cats looking for homes. When we were sent a picture of Teddy, we instantly fell in love with him. When we visited him in the outdoor pen he was nervous, very hissy and wouldn't let us near him. On the other hand, he was stunning and looked more scared than aggressive. We knew that after a difficult life, he just needed some love and trust.

After a few visits, he slowly let us sit next to him, and would fall asleep while we were there. He still wouldn't let us stroke him, but this was certainly progress.

Teddy is 8 years old and unfortunately has FIV. As a young couple getting our first pet we perhaps would have gone for a young kitten, but being able to give Teddy a quiet, loving home persuaded us that he was the cat we needed. From the moment Teddy came home he has gone from strength to strength. He follows us around the house and has his own seat and blanket on our sofa. He loves a fuss and a brush and his hissing days are over. We are so glad that we chose to bring the hissy, scared cat home as he (and we) have never been happier! First impressions are important, but Teddy's story shows the hidden potential in older, "hard to home" cats.

Charlotte & Daniel



Taking on a rescue cat was not something we did lightly. The time had to be right, plus choosing the right one for our circumstances. After all, they should be with you for the rest of their life.

Our black and white long-haired cat came to us not long after the loss of our black and white short-haired cat, Katie, passed from us. Katie had been a loving part of our lives for 13 years and we knew that nothing could replace her. We waited a couple of months before we felt it was right to get another, and were recommended a long-haired cat called Cabbage. She had been "christened" Cabbage as she looked like she had crawled out of a cabbage patch when she was found. We were told she was eight, but we believed that a cat of any age deserved a second chance.

Her background was rather uncertain, though it was believed she had spent most of her life outdoors. She had been with the foster carer for some months, sleeping on a bed and, ironically, showing no signs of wanting to go out. We said yes to having her and promptly changed her name to Maisie.

After the sad loss of my much-loved cat, Lois, the house seemed empty without a cat making its presence felt. Nothing to come home to, and no one to chat with.

However, Cats Protection found me Florence and Penny who needed a new home late in their life. They are sixteen-year-old sisters and, surprisingly for siblings, get along really well together!

Although they have only been with me for three weeks, they have already worked out which window to sit in according to where the sun is shining! Sometimes they sit on the back of the sofa, facing each other like a couple of bookends. They are delightful old ladies, content with the life they have, and always ready with a strong purr when stroked.

I am very happy with them living here, and I believe they are too.

Frances

We moved away soon after but have recently returned to this area, and she has proved remarkably adaptable to her changing circumstances and surroundings.

Maisie hasn't changed much in the time we have had her – as an older cat she is set in her ways – but she has mellowed over the years.

She is not a lap cat (like Katie was) but she does jump up between us for moments of affection and spends a great deal of time choosing the right place to curl up. Typically, this changes from time-to-time. Being long-haired she needs a bit more care as she's not the greatest self-groomer. She attempts to go out in the back garden, but then a closed door soon gets her hurrying back.

However, she did escape once, though we'll never know for certain how. We had bought a guest house in Torquay and our living quarters were up in the roof, with only Velux windows for light. We assumed she had got out of one of these – using the back of a chair as a launch pad – and then made her way along and down the roof. Frantic, my partner William scoured the neighbourhood and posted flyers in a desperate attempt to locate her.

On the third day, we were outside when we saw her nonchalantly walking up the drive, if a bit bedraggled! She had been gone for 36 hours, but she's never done it again – believing the grass isn't greener elsewhere after all!

Lazy Maisie, or Maisie Moo as we call her, is an important part of the household and we are thankful that Woking CP helped us in finding her.

Andrew & William



# Malcolm: old is gold!



Kittens are irresistibly cute but a death trap on the stairs at my age! I can trip over my own shadow, never mind a lively kitten so I decided to adopt a senior cat. This has the advantage that you will know the cat's habits and characteristics. Is he a lap cat or a wanderer, does he expect to sleep on your bed, does he use a litter tray, is he a hunter or a fighter? You never can tell how a kitten will develop but with a mature cat you will have a pretty good idea from the CP fosterer what to expect.

He may arrive with a name you're not keen on, but as cats rarely respond to their names like dogs do, you can always call him something you prefer. My recent companion, Malcolm, is thought to be around 12 years old. Though his conversation is limited he's

an extremely affectionate chap and enjoys evenings watching TV on my lap. In fact, he tries to "shepherd" me like a dog if he thinks I'm taking too long after dinner to go to my favourite chair. He circles my feet, trying to edge me in the right direction.

I have to admit he can be a bit of a trip hazard, too. Coming downstairs, he stops every few steps to make sure I'm following so if I keep walking we're likely to collide. In the garden, instead of chasing birds he follows me around, supervising my efforts, which my neighbour has remarked is quite dog-like. But dog-or cat-like, he's a wonderful companion.

Gillian

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## Caring for your elderly cat

Did you know, the oldest cat ever was a Texan named Creme Puff who lived to be 38? This is an astonishing life span for a cat, but with the constant improvements in veterinary care it's not uncommon for your cat to reach the ripe old age of 18. As your cat gets older, remember to make a few adjustments to keep them comfortable and healthy.

 Make sure they're eating and drinking enough. Try placing water and food bowls in a few different easy-to-reach spots around your home, raising bowls on a box to make them more accessible to cats with stiff necks.

 Encourage eating by varying the consistency of food and even warm it up a little to make it more appealing. Remember that a cat's sense of taste and smell may diminish in old age.

 Help your cat stay fresh and clean by brushing them regularly – they may not be flexible enough to wash themselves! Gentle grooming also provides the perfect opportunity for you to carefully check for any lumps, bumps, or sores that might require a vet trip.

# Vacancy

## Online Fundraising Volunteer



As a charity we are only able to help thousands of cats and kittens each year thanks to the donations we receive from generous members of the public. Our online fundraisers help our volunteer groups raise vital funds by organising online sales of goods, using social media to encourage donations and any other innovative ways to raise funds they can think of! Making a difference can mean as little as raising 18p, which is enough to feed one cat in our care for a day.

The role includes:

- organising online donations and selling products to raise funds
- raising funds through social networking sites and websites
- asking for pledges and raising awareness of how donated funds are used at Cats Protection
- sharing fundraising ideas and putting these ideas into practice.

We are looking for someone with:

- good IT skills
- good understanding of spelling, punctuation and grammar
- willingness to be part of a team
- the ability to use own initiative
- good communication skills
- knowledge of online fundraising (would be an advantage).

To find out more about this role and volunteering for the branch, please contact us at: [info@woking.cats.org.uk](mailto:info@woking.cats.org.uk) or call us on 01483 721700 (mailbox 4).



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Cats Protection does not swap, sell or share supporter details with any other charity or organisation. It really helps Cats Protection if we can keep you informed about our essential work, campaigns, activities and fundraising. If you would prefer us to not contact you by post, please phone: 0800 917 2287

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20PACG01

## Gifts in Wills

It is thanks to the wonderful kindness of supporters who remember Woking Cats Protection in their wills that we are able to carry out much of the day-to-day work that we do. These donations and gifts fund over 50% of all the work we do to re-home cats to wonderful new families and are vital to our foremost mantra:

*"No healthy cat will ever be put to sleep"*

We rely on gifts in wills to follow this goal and provide abandoned and unwanted cats with a new start and we are incredibly grateful for every gift we receive, regardless of the size. Even little gifts can provide food, a warm bed and veterinary attention to a cat in need, all very important steps to getting our cats into their loving new forever homes. We've been able to refurnish our pens, buy new carriers and even provide ourselves with a van to transport us to our next cases with previous donations. We continue to offer our free neutering programme, and it continues to be successful, all through the generosity of people remembering us in their will. For more information on what gifting is, please visit:

<https://www.cats.org.uk/get-involved/support-us/gifts-in-wills>

### Contact Us

Call us on 01483 721700  
and leave us a message

Mailbox 1 - If you would like to adopt a cat

Mailbox 2 - If you need to rehome your cat

Mailbox 3 - Lost & Found

Mailbox 4 - Neutering and all other enquiries

Alternatively, email us at:

[info@woking.cats.org.uk](mailto:info@woking.cats.org.uk)



If you would like to donate some items to our branch, but are unsure as to what we need, you can try taking a look at our wishlist!

<https://amzn.to/2WXA12w>

## GDPR

### *Be in control of your data*

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

Please visit: <https://www.cats.org.uk/terms-privacy> if you have any questions about how we use your data.

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