

THE CAT'S WHISKERS

SHROPSHIRE CAT RESCUE

SPRING 2024



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SPRING IS COMING – SOON!

I am writing this in early February and whilst I confess the days are starting to get longer, the catkins are out in the hedgerow and there are a few snowdrops about – it really doesn't feel very spring-like. Rain and mud are in abundance at the Shelter - throw in a few gales and cold air and it never ceases to amaze me how resilient our wonderful Shelter volunteers are. Some of our freerange cats have decided to be less brave and have insisted upon being let in to the staffroom and reception areas to warm up by the radiators.

Our fundraising volunteers have really done us proud with Susie Phillips and her wonderful alter ego Mickey; Claire Herzig and her TikTok supporters and of course Carol Beeles and her Marketplace customers who raised over £10,000 in the last twelve months alone.

Plans are underway to clear our staff room as much as possible to provide an indoor space for Afternoon Teas, Educational



experiences and of course a place for our staff to rest and warm up. Anyone willing to give a hand should contact us on info@shropshirecatrescue.org.uk

Marion Micklewright BEM
Shelter Manager

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Published quarterly – March, June, September and December

In June 2017 Shropshire Cat Rescue relaunched its quarterly magazine as a brand new, full-colour glossy magazine. It is full of interesting and informative articles about cat care and the work the Shelter does.

With a quarterly distribution of 1000 copies, your advertisement can be seen in homes, Vets and more all around Shropshire. It is available online through our website and Facebook page, which has an audience of around 50,000 cat lovers.

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Contact us NOW to be part of this exciting magazine! Telephone Marion Micklewright on: 01743 872857. Email: info@shropshirecatrescue.org.uk

SHROPSHIRE CAT RESCUE'S SHELTER MANAGER RECEIVES A SPECIAL BENCH

by Claire Herzig



At Shropshire Cat Rescue we have a lovely kind and amazing lady called Marion who is the Shelter Manager. Marion has been rescuing cats for years out of her own time. Marion created Shropshire Cat Rescue's pens, nursery and the unique Retirement Village in her back garden to make a huge difference to hundreds of cats every year that the charity helps. I have been volunteering for two years and felt this

amazing lady deserved recognition for her kindness and hard work. A TV programme called the Woodland Workshop contacted me asking if I would like to nominate her to have something made to thank her for all her kindness. Marion is a very special person to me. I suffer with mental health and the Shelter really helps me in so many ways. I call it my safe place. I had to travel down to the New Forest to film nominating her which I felt honoured to be able to do. A week later we travelled down to the New Forest for the grand reveal. Marion had no idea why she was there. A lovely woodwork person called Ella had made Marion a hand carved bench for her and all the village cats to enjoy. Marion loved the bench and all the amazing detail that was put into it making it so much more special. The village cats love the bench, Jinxie always has her breakfast on there, and the other cats love playing on it.

I would like to thank Marion for all her dedication she gives everyday to all the cats at Shropshire Cat Rescue. You're one in a million!!



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VET DETECTIVE: THE CASE OF ALMA AND HER SORE EYE

by Rebecca Bennett, Quarry Vets. Shrewsburys

Many of you will know Alma, one of the resident cats at Shropshire Cat Rescue. At our vet visits each Thursday, we only usually spot this stately lady from a distance as a trip to the vet's office is not her ideal way to spend a morning!

In November, Alma seemed bothered by her right eye - it was watering and she was squinting. She has always been a healthy and robust girl, so it was unusual to see her out of sorts. On closer examination, we noticed that she had a condition of her lower eyelid called entropion. This is where the eyelid rolls inwards against the eyeball, resulting in severe irritation from the eyelashes. Imagine having a small hair or piece of grit in your eye.... then imagine this being a constant irritation day and night- this gives you an idea of how Alma was feeling.



It is slightly unusual for an older cat like Alma to develop the condition with no obvious underlying cause. We more commonly see it in young



started rubbing again and this time she also developed a large, painful ulcer on the surface of her eye. We therefore opted to do an operation where a small section of skin from below her right eyelid was removed, allowing the lid to be pulled back into its normal position.

If you look closely at the first photo you can see the inward rolling lower eyelid, and in the second photo you can see the stitches, or 'sutures' – they look like eyelashes with mascara on them!

Within a few hours of the surgery Alma was a much happier girl, and within a week the ulcer on her eye had fully healed. She had to wear a buster collar, the 'collar of shame' for two weeks. We are happy to report that she is now fully recovered and has returned to normal life at Shropshire Cat Rescue - once again, avoiding the vet visits.

Rebecca Bennett graduated from the University of Edinburgh in 1999 and has worked at Quarry Vets, Shrewsbury since 2008. She particularly enjoys working with cats, the highlight of her week being the weekly routine vet visit to Shropshire Cat Rescue

male cats with chunky faces where their facial features and big cheeks push the eyelids inwards.

Initially to make Alma more comfortable, we performed a temporary procedure, where some stitches were placed to hold the eyelid in the correct position. This can often be enough to allow the condition to resolve. However, within a few weeks the eyelashes

CAT TAILS

by Karen and Rachael Ashton

We offer support post homing with behavioural problems or queries, but sadly sometimes things just don't work out. We will always accept a cat back, no matter the time passed. Here are the stories of a few recently that have touched our hearts.



This beautiful boy was adopted from us in 2018 and settled into his new home wonderfully. Sadly one of his owners passed away, and the other had to be admitted to a care home leaving poor Chumley alone. He was understandably distraught, and family brought him back to us in December 2023. At nearly 16 years old and on arthritis medication, we decided to place him in the retirement village and see if he settled. So far he is doing really well, he accepts the other cats – in his own way – and entertains the volunteers with his peacock cry!



Rosie came to us originally in March 2023 after living as a stray in a garden for 18 months. Despite her behavioural assessments telling us she is OK with other cats, once in her own home she decided she does not want to share. Despite trying everything possible, Rosie's mind could not be changed and she refused to accept living with another cat. She came back to us in October and quickly found her forever home – as an only pet!



MIC

Darling MIC was adopted from us in 2010 as a kitten. Sadly he returned to us twice, both times following the death of his owners. Due to his age and other health concerns, MIC was admitted in to the village in October 2023. MIC settled so well, he became the face of our winter campaign. Unfortunately we didn't get long to spend with MIC, after he suffered multiple seizures and was unresponsive to medication. We said our final goodbyes to him in December, leaving volunteers devastated.



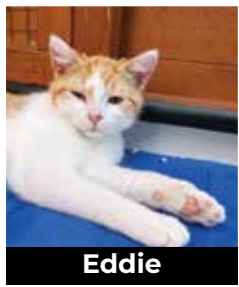
Tilly

Tilly came to us in December 2021 after her owners lost their home. She has always been on the shy side, but she found a new home in March 2022. Sadly she turned out to be a bit more complicated than her new owners could cope with, and she was left with us in November 2023. Luckily, Tilly managed to find a great home with owners who took the time to understand her and build a great relationship with her. She is now thriving and we couldn't be happier for her.



Maxie

Maxie turned up quite unexpectedly in September 2023 and was not in the best of moods! Turned out she had extremely full anal glands and was in very early stages of pregnancy, so it was no wonder she wasn't best pleased. She found her home in November 2023 after what felt like a long wait, but sadly it turned out to not be the home for her. She returned a month later, but luckily she settled in with us quickly and allowed us to find her a great home just a few weeks later.



Eddie



Misty

Eddie and Misty were homed separately in June 2023. It's unusual for kittens from the same litter to be homed separately, and then both having to be returned for vastly different reasons – yet this happened with these kittens. Eddie was returned after his new owner suffered a loss in the family and couldn't cope with the attention

a young kitten needed. Misty was returned as her owners simply didn't understand kitten behaviour and underestimated how playful they can be. Luckily, neither of them stayed back with us for long! Eddie went home with another kitten and settled in quickly. Misty went home to be a companion for another cat, and enjoyed being able to play as much as she wanted!



Did you know ...

You can help to support us by buying items from our ebay shop? We have a unique range to choose from.



GILL BOWER

It was brought to the attention of the Fundraising Team late last year, that Gill had never had her photo in The Cat's Whiskers whilst fundraising.

A long time volunteer, Gill has been a stalwart of SCR since its inception, having been an original Trustee of the charity and a fundraiser.

Gill is well known in the Oswestry area for Tombolas, Tabletop Sales, shaking her collection boxes, as well as her many rescues - some in very precarious circumstances!!

Gill turned 80 last year and has taken a step back to allow a "slightly younger" Fundraising team to take up her baton, but she will still be keeping her hand in, helping cats and she still goes wandering along the local disused railway tracks every night to feed her beloved feral cat colony.

We love you Gill, thank you for all your service to cats and SCR, and here is your photo xxxx



PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION!

We Need Your Pictures! **Forever Homes 2025 Calendar**

Have you adopted a cat or kitten from us? Then get snapping those pictures and send your favourite ones over to us. Your cat could be one of our calendar stars! Please email over your best pictures, along with your cat's name and a few details about them.

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There are so many different kittens and cats who really benefit from your support; from young mothers to elderly cats who need extra medical support. See our website to find out more.

SPONSOR THE NURSERY

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The Nursery has 7 units and 2 incubators. It is closely monitored by the dedicated volunteers as young kittens can get into trouble very quickly. Immediate veterinary attention is available to the mother and the kittens should they require it.

SPONSOR THE RETIREMENT VILLAGE

£60

The Retirement Village was created using donations, sponsorship and the hard work of volunteers. It compromises 6 chalets and a summerhouse to house our permanent residents.

SPONSOR THE SHELTER

£100

The Shelter was established in Bayston Hill, Shropshire in 1998. Currently home to residents and villagers, our full capacity is around 122 cats and kittens. In addition there is a Hospital, Nursery, Retirement Village, office, laundry room, feeding Village, shop and café for visitors.

www.shropshirecatrescue.org.uk/donate

Some of our cats who need a sponsor.



A

Our Free Rangers are all such lovely characters, who live their best lives enjoying the freedom of the shelter supported by the love and care from the Volunteers.



B

Titch was born in 2000 and lives at the Shelter. She is blind but that doesn't deter from her loving nature.



C

Annwyn came to live at the Shelter in Spring 2017 as a very young mother to one kitten. She is a tortoiseshell who lives life to the full!



D

Morris is just over 2 years old and has been one of our free rangers since December 2019. He's a tabby and white cat, and loving son to Vera, another one of our free rangers.

Your sponsorship or your gift

Sponsor a cat A B C D please circle your choice	£20		Your sponsorship begins on the first of the month following receipt of payment and lasts for 12 months.
The Nursery	£35		You will receive a Sponsorship Certificate, plus an information sheet about your chosen sponsorship package, one or more photographs and an annual update to keep you in touch.
The Moggies Retirement Village	£60		
The Shelter	£100		In addition to the above you will also receive 4 editions of The Cat's Whiskers Magazine
TOTAL PAYABLE	£		

Please return this form with either a cheque, made payable to: **Shropshire Cat Rescue, Windy Ridge, Bayston Hill, Shrewsbury, SY3 0AU**, or a BACS payment to Shropshire Cat Rescue. Account number: 12504025 Sort Code: 555005. Reference: **SPONSORSHIP**.
More information about our sponsorship packages can be found online at www.shropshirecatrescue.org.uk

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Who is gift from (to appear on card):	Other occasion:
Name of recipient:	
Address:	

SANTA PAWS ARRIVED IN STYLE ON CHRISTMAS EVE TO DELIVER GIFTS



Santa Paws was busy throughout December visiting various places around Shropshire and Wolverhampton. Children wrote letters saying what their pets would like for Christmas and Santa Paws ensured he read every single letter. It was so heartwarming for Santa Paws and the volunteers to read them. Santa Paws did regular posts with the help of the resident cats so people could hear a small selection of the letters received. The letters melted your heart when reading them, you discovered children wanted their pets to be happy and receive love and kindness.

On Christmas Eve at 4:30pm Santa Paws arrived in style at the Shelter with Sidecar Santa to deliver the donated toys. This was streamed live on Facebook and TikTok so Shropshire Cat Rescue followers could watch and get into the Christmas spirit.

The toys were mostly donated via our online shop using the donate to



Shelter option and our Amazon wish list. Food, beds and scratching posts were also sent or brought by guests to our Winter Wonderland.

The cats all enjoyed receiving their gifts and some even dived into the basket and helped themselves without mentioning any names - Pongo, Maya and Philly! The Yeowww and other catnip toys went down a treat and there were some very happy cats on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Santa Paws' visit would not have been possible without our fabulous volunteers and supporters. We can't thank everyone enough for your continued support and help throughout the year and especially during the festive season.



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GIVING QUIRKY CATS A SECOND CHANCE

by Karen and Rachael Ashton

At Shropshire Cat Rescue, our Retirement Village is uniquely set up to help cats in ways other rescues may not be able to - our “no judgement” approach means that we are often contacted by different rescues for assistance when they get special cases or they cannot provide what the cat needs. Here are a couple of recent examples:



Pebbles is our most recent example, she was rescued by Cotswolds Dog and Cat Home (CDCH), following the death of her owner.

Unfortunately, due to her previous living conditions she struggles with toileting in appropriate places. Coupled with early stage renal disease, she garnered no interest from prospective owners. Understandably, no one wanted to take on a cat who toileted

inappropriately and may only have a few years left. It was believed that her toileting could improve once she had access to outdoors, but there was no way to provide that for her unless she was in a home or a Retirement Village. She arrived on 16/2/24, and because CDCH had provided everything needed such as vaccinations, flea and worm treatment, we were able to let her straight out into the Village so she could finally get the outdoor life she wanted. It is early days, but she seems to have settled in well. She has made a friend in Willow and has chosen her own cottage.



River is very much an unusual intake! She is semi-feral, which normally would be a huge no no for the Retirement Village.

However, after being contacted by Cats Protection (CP) in Wolverhampton, we knew we had to give her a chance. She was admitted to CP with her kittens and was not in a great condition. She has

had almost all of her teeth removed, leaving just one remaining. This leaves her without the ability to hunt effectively, no outdoor home wants a feral cat unable to hunt and she would have been very vulnerable. We took a chance on her, made it very clear to volunteers and visitors that she is a "hands off" cat and it has worked out well. She lives in the outdoor pods, is relaxed enough to sleep with her back to the other cats and people. At night when most people have gone home, she comes out to play!



The infamous **Johnny** is very popular on our social media and with visitors. He was found at 6 weeks old and taken in by Alley Cats Rescue in Buckinghamshire. He was blind and deaf, and they were



unable to find a suitable home for him. He lived with his foster carer for three years, but was desperate to get outside. Obviously due to his disabilities, he was being kept as an indoor pet. He was destroying the

house, breaking out and ripping his fur out due to his stress and frustration. The vets consulted at the time advised maybe the kindest thing would be to put Johnny to sleep if no suitable placement could be found. Luckily, Alley Cats reached out to us and we agreed to give Johnny a chance in our Retirement Village – which did not go well!!

Johnny hated the Village, he was so scared and the other cats sadly were not welcoming. We swiftly removed him from there and set up a run in our staff room for him whilst we scrambled to think of a solution. We set up a GoFundMe page to help us build him an outdoor enclosure of his own, our supporters amazingly doubled the target and we built him his

own space. The husband of one of our trustees built Johnny his own castle, and he has scratching poles that he loves to climb up and down. He goes for regular walks with volunteers to explore the grounds, and he loves to visit admin and “help” our volunteers with their work. His fur condition has improved drastically, although he does still get the odd patch on his legs that he keeps reopening. He seems to have some OCD tendencies, and finds it very difficult to leave something alone once it has irritated him. Everyday we learn from Johnny, he is so resilient despite his disabilities and is overall the most affectionate and loving cat.

Our Retirement Village can be full of heartbreak and upset, but times like these prove that we are doing the right thing, providing a place for these elderly cats who would otherwise not be homed.

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VILLAGE LIFE

by Karen and Rachael Ashton

The last few months have been quite hard on our villagers, and we sadly have to say our final goodbyes to some beloved residents. Currently, the females outnumber the males at 12:6. Out of the 18 villagers, 15 are on an arthritis medication called Solensia. It is expensive – but makes the world

of difference for their quality of life. The average age for our male cats is 15 years, 4 months and our female cats is 14 years, 4 months. The eldest female resident is Catherine at 20 years, 10 months; the eldest male residents are Brothers Sam and Beau, at 16 years, 1 month.

Introducing our newest residents:



Chumley is a beautiful, large lad who was originally adopted from us in 2018. Sadly he had to come back in December 2023 following the loss of one owner, and the ill health of another. He has settled in well, and entertains volunteers with his peacock cry. He prefers to keep his distance from the other cats, but does allow them entry into his cottage to snooze.



River is a very unusual cat for us to bring in to our village. She is semi feral and does not appreciate human contact! She came from Cat's Protection in January 2024, after being admitted to them with kittens. Sadly she had to have all her teeth out, and it would be virtually impossible for them to find her an outdoor home being older and unable to hunt effectively. She has surprised us all by settling in so well, she keeps to herself but is content with what she has and volunteers have been excellent at respecting her boundaries.



Sweet lady **Bronwyn** came to us in November 2023 after being found living as a stray in poor condition. She had thinning fur, was very skinny and in need of dental work. After a lot of TLC she is thriving in the village and loving her life. It's only been 3 months since she arrived, but she's like a completely different cat to the scraggly thing that arrived!

HOW BEING INSURED SAVED BOB'S LIFE

by Susie Phillips



Bob found his forever home as a kitten in 2015 with one of our volunteers who is also a Registered Veterinary Nurse. Being a veterinary nurse with the knowledge of how heartbreaking it can be when people can't afford treatment, Bob has always been insured, regardless of the fact getting him to the vets was nearly "mission impossible"! The ability to be able to say yes to the right treatment for him as an individual is very important for his people.

Bob has always been a cat that fits the description inbetween a cat perfectly, he needs people for food and shelter but doesn't need or desire their attention. Even after 8 years Bob will cautiously leave a room as his people enter when he is on alert mode, although he does love his housemate Gizzmo who he actively seeks out when he returns home after one of his wanderings out and about and they are often seen allogrooming. Bob is like a magician - there can be no sign of him and then he magically appears behind you, he is rarely spotted when outside and if he is, he fully intends for you to see him before vanishing again.

In December 2022 Bob sustained a facial injury that needed treatment it was due to a cat bite abscess. Bob is a strong cat and this was the first indication things were changing for him as Bob sustaining an injury was rare and had only occurred a couple of times in the past. One of these

was 6 months earlier when the end of his tail became floppy it soon recovered and nothing had been broken. But then in January 2023 a hind leg limp began to appear and he struggled to hold his tail up, as he jumped his left back leg trailed behind him. Off to the vets Bob went - he freezes when fearful making him difficult for the vets to do neurological and orthopaedic examinations.

Following xrays, Bob was referred to neurology at Pride in Derby where given the opportunity he hid behind the printer. Bob had a CT Scan which indicated Degenerative LumboSacral Stenosis which is rare in cats. Bob was put under house arrest which is certainly how he saw it, he needed careful management due to him being fearful and outside being his happy place but now being dangerous for him a careful balance to introduce outside smells and using his problem-solving skills were essential for his mental wellbeing. Bob took amazingly well to his confinement and found under the bed to be his new safe place where he would come out and use the puzzle feeders and engage with



the sensory boxes created for him. Rest helped slightly but Bob's life could not stay like this forever for him as there were signs starting to emerge showing he was becoming frustrated and stressed.

The neurologist and orthopaedic surgeon planned surgery after other management options failed but neither had done the surgery on a cat before and their research only found a small number of papers. The only other option becoming apparent for Bob was to say goodbye as life indoors was not in his best interests mentally. He had been tolerating it but that was all - tolerating is not living life. This is how insurance saved Bob's

life – his owners didn't have to worry about how to pay for the surgery, meaning it was an easy decision that for Bob's best interests.

Although not 100% certain it would solve his problems, Bob deserved the chance. By now it was too risky letting him out at all as he could easily get into difficulty and the risk of being injured and dying alone out in the cold and wet was not an option; Bob, as cats do, would still try to jump up that 6ft fence regardless of the fact his left back leg and tail weren't up to it.

So at a total cost of over £5500 (with staff discount), Bob had a pre-op MRI scan, lengthy surgery, a post-surgery CT scan to ensure the pins were in place and a physio plan. Due to his refusal to move through fear, his post-surgery hospital stay was actually reduced by two days. Strict home rest followed and a physio plan introduced, taking into account that Bob is a no contact cat. He had fun tasks to build him up including stepping over hurdles (aka draft excluders) using the dry food he loves to encourage him. He progressed well and soon he could easily jump in and out of a cardboard box for his favourite food

as well. A new game of Chase the Food meant he got used to running into his carrier for treats. This had the added bonus of making the task of getting him into his carrier for post op x-rays a lot easier and calmer.

A year on since he initially went to Pride to see a neurologist, Bob is happily going in and out as he pleases and enjoying his life in the best way he knows how - including coming in soaking wet when others choose to stay in the dry. Monitoring and check-ups continue including videos which were key in being able to monitor and assess his progress as his fearful attitude when at the vets made it nearly impossible to check how his movement was affected. Things could have been very different for Bob if he hadn't been insured so the decision to have insurance from the first day in his forever home has meant he can continue to enjoy life in his own way. Bob received amazing treatment and although you may be shocked by the amount every penny was worth it for Bob and in my opinion a bargain for all the care and specialist treatment he received.

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For more information please check out our website.

www.shropshirecatrescue.org.uk/lottery

Who's Who at Shropshire Cat Rescue.

Shropshire Cat Rescue is a Registered Charity (number 1071884). The charity was established in 1998 and is proud to have Virginia McKenna and Jim Hawkins as Patrons.

You can contact the Shelter on **01743 872857** and the Shropshire Cat Rescue Shop (69 Mardol, Shrewsbury SY1 1PZ) on **01743 236222**. You can write to the Shelter Manager, Shropshire Cat Rescue, Windy Ridge, Lyth Hill Road, Bayston Road, Shrewsbury, SY3 0AU or email **info@shropshirecatrescue.org.uk**

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Shelter Manager	Marion Micklewright
Shop Manager.....	Tracey Shale
Marketing Officer.....	Dianne Beaumont
Social Media Officer	Susie Phillips
Sponsorship	Sam Rushby
GiftAid Officer.....	Marg Lloyd @ShropsCatRescue
Fundraising Officer.....	Carol Beels



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to a bright financial future.

“

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WE WILL MAKE A DONATION
TO SHROPSHIRE CAT RESCUE.”**

CHRIS OAKES

FOUNDER AND INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL ADVISER

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- Investment Advice
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