

# THE Cat's Whiskers

Quarterly magazine from Shropshire Cat Rescue

**FREE**

Issue 131  
Spring  
2021



Inside ...

• Latest news from our Shelter and Boutique

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**Monday 19th April 2021.**

## Spring 2021

Welcome to the Spring edition of The Cat's Whiskers. I hope you enjoy reading it. Many thanks to all our contributors and advertisers. Very many thanks to those who support the charity in these difficult times. Let's hope for improvement as we go forward into spring and summer.

Our cover star is Belle (formerly known as Annabelle) who joined

us from Shropshire Cat Rescue five years ago. She enjoys playing, having some fuss and catching mice. You may recall that we featured Belle in the Autumn 2017 edition.

David Bates  
Magazine editor.

## Advertise your business in The Cat's Whiskers

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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# Message from the Chairman.

By Marion Micklewright, Chairman.



The term “lockdown” has brought conflicting emotions out in all of us. For those faced with isolation, loneliness and depression may have set in. For others it may be a time to reflect, take stock, organise and wait. For Shropshire Cat Rescue, we have been busy – super busy.

We have recruited four new, exceptional Trustees. You can read about the Trustees in the Spring and Summer editions.

The Big PURR project continues to flourish. We have regular updates from our financial advisors, Croft and Oakes, and our Investment brokers, Quilter Cheviot, and the value of our Big PURR investment has reached £774,000.

Our shelter cats are happy and well. Our plans are underway to replace three of our shelter pens. Our thanks go to Carol Beeles and her team who, using Facebook Marketplace selling, are continuing to raise funds.

Exciting times are definitely ahead as we increase and strengthen our roots, create sub-committees to manage our expectations and welcome our supporters new and old to join with us in our quest to nurture respect and compassion for life through our work at the shelter as well as to press on with our unique Big PURR project.

Thank you for continuing to support us, volunteer with us and spread the word about us. 2021 here we come.



# Lockdown Tails.

By Rachael and Karen Ashton, Shelter Volunteers.

As we came to the end of kitten season more interesting cat cases came our way. We thought we would share some of the interesting stories that stood out in recent months. Each cat had their own story to tell and some even taught us a few things, showing us that no matter how long you are involved with cat rescue, you can still learn from our four-legged friends.



Izzie came to the shelter late October when her owners moved abroad and could not take Izzie with them - not all cats take travelling well and Izzie was such a cat. Known to get stressed and make herself ill, it was unfair to put her through such a long journey and risk her health, so we took her in.

Not every cat that arrives at the shelter settles into their new pen life quickly and often the shock of the sudden change in

environment makes the cats act out, sometimes in fear. Izzie came to us and within days had become so frightened, she would lash out if she thought we were cornering her, so we had to take extra care and patience when dealing with her. We did not want her to get in trouble for doing what was coming naturally to her. She did not know where she was, who we were or what was going on and we could not explain to her, making the situation hard. After some time and gentle coaxing, Izzie soon showed us that she was quite the love bug and despite her attitude, she just wanted a lap and someone to call home. She was soon paired with a lovely lady and her cat who were looking for a companion to join them. Now settled in, Izzie is making the most of her new home and new family, proving that sometimes, all a cat needs is time to readjust before we make decisions on what we think they need.



Little one-eyed Jack came to us on New Year's Eve after his carer passed away, whilst he had been living as a stray in her greenhouse, he is a chipped and owned cat! Sometimes a cat moves away and into other people's homes when they are unhappy with where they are, often for many different reasons, sometimes only known to the cat! Jack had an independent attitude as a youngster and that continued through the years, spending most of his life outside, he was not keen on spending long inside. Thanks to his chip, we managed to locate the owner and chatted with them about what was best for Jack.

Sometimes cats who spend their lives outside and often are found in neighbouring houses will continue that habit when returned and the owners were aware this would be the case with Jack. He

was officially handed over to us upon the request of the owner to find him a home further away where he can spend time outside and hunting. But through the owner, we discovered he had quite an adventure as a young cat! He lost an eye after it became ulcerated as a result of cat flu as a kitten, then a year later got hit by a car, breaking his hip and pelvis – which he has recovered from and is not suffering with currently.

It is rare to have cats come in as strays that end up being chipped, but Jack just goes to show why we scan every single cat that comes through the shelter. Although Jack is not going back to his original home, they know he is okay and is now ready for his next adventure in his new home!

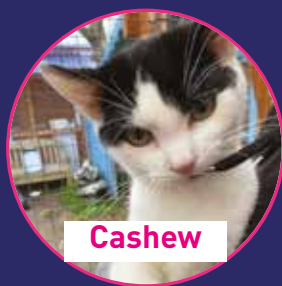




**Nutmeg**



**Peanut**



**Cashew**

## **'Nut' Kittens**

You may recall in the Autumn/Winter 2020 edition of the magazine, Scrabble and Jenga who came to us after being abandoned in a box. Well, unfortunately, these kittens were found in the same area in suspiciously similar circumstances. An email came through saying four tiny kittens were found suffering from cat flu and left out in the cold in early October. Knowing the outcome if we said no, we rushed to take in the four kittens and get them the help they needed as soon as possible. Nicknamed the nut

kittens as despite their health issues, they were full of life and bouncing around the place!

Unfortunately, one of the kittens soon lost the fight but the three soon started to thrive and react well to intense medication intervention. They were given their own names: Nutmeg, Cashew and Peanut. They became favourites amongst the volunteers, showing us that despite their low points fighting cat flu, they still wanted to play and cuddle as they do not know life without illness. But now they are at their turning point, growing into healthy older kittens.

## **Bella**

Not every cat that comes to us is straightforward and we are always here after adoptions to help in any way we can. Sometimes it means taking the cat back when we have space because things do not always go to plan. Bella showed us that despite a previous living arrangement, we cannot always assume they want the exact same thing again!

Bella came to us with some companions and had lived with them for a few years, but after spending time with her we realised she was not bonded with the cat she was sharing her pen with. So, she was homed separately, and she went home to live with a new friend – or so we thought. She soon decided she was not going to be anyone's companion and wanted to be the

**Bella**



lady of the house without sharing attention and soon started to fight her new housemate. As the fights escalated, we scrambled to arrange her to return to us before she scared the existing cat away from the only home he knew.

Upon returning, Bella acted like nothing happened and soaked up the attention she was getting from the volunteers one on one! We soon found her a home where she could be the centre of attention and has settled in happily. She is one story we will not forget for a long time!

## Luke

In early November we went out to a feral colony in Bridgnorth where a lady had been feeding half a dozen feral cats for some time. We started the process of trapping them, neutering and vet treating those that needed it before moving them on to their new locations. However, upon arrival, one little cat jumped straight out and came running for attention and fuss, even going as far as allowing us to put him straight into a carrier!

We named him Luke and discovered he was only about six months old and had clearly stumbled upon the colony and learned to survive with them. Whilst he has been at the shelter, he has battled a sniffly nose and ticks, and he's enjoyed extra attention and love during his

treatment. Despite his start in life, he is a playful little boy who loves to play with hair and sometimes forgets how to retract his claws when he gets so excited!

Luke is ready to go to his new home where he can continue to get the love he craves and can play all day should he wish to.

**Luke**





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# **‘Pleased to meet you’ – the Trustees (part 1).**

## **MARION MICKLEWRIGHT – CHAIR.**



Marion has worked as a lab technician, a Secretary/ Personal Assistant and has run her own businesses. She gave up her working career to focus on learning about volunteer management, animal welfare and teaching. Marion is a co-founder of Shropshire Cat Rescue which was formed in 1991 and moved to her current home address in 1998. She and husband Richard have four sons, two grandchildren and lots of wonderful animals. Her passion for Shropshire

Cat Rescue has resulted in her vision and pursuit of the Big PURR project.

## **DIANNE BEAUMONT.**



Dianne's family has been 'owned' by rescue cats all her married life. Her interest in supporting rescues and feral colonies came from her time living in Sardinia in the British forces. Strays and feral kittens regularly appeared in the British residents' gardens and with friends, she rehomed as many as she could and got them veterinary care. The cats moved from

family to family as people returned to the UK, most lived good and healthy lives. She has volunteered as a shelter helper for Shropshire Cat Rescue for almost 10 years. She is also a fundraiser and a home checker and has occasionally supported our shop. She has been a Trustee for 4 years and raised our brand awareness on our social media channels. She has put her hand to most things at the rescue, if she can do it, she will help.

## AMY CALLAHAN-PAGE.



Amy is a Solicitor in her day job, helping charities and other third sector clients resolve disputes that unfortunately arise from time to time. She is a long-term supporter of SCR, having adopted her first cat from us in 2014 and has been back for two more since! She currently fosters kittens and cats in her spare time, and also has rehomed chickens and rabbits. Amy is looking forward to supporting SCR with their big plans for the future, with a particular focus on governance and regulatory requirements.

## TRACY CROSS



Tracy has worked in the marketing industry for all of her career across large organisations and small business development; latterly as Group Head of Marketing at PDSA before launching her own consultancy; helping businesses and charities to grow and achieve more income and support. She lives in Nantwich with her husband, two cats Poppy and Eddie and Indie the dog. She has three grown up sons who still entertain her on a daily basis. She is passionate about animal welfare and particularly cats and is looking forward to helping Shropshire Cat Rescue to raise its profile, to become better known and loved so that more cuddle bunnies can be helped.

## Trustee Gill Bowler retires from office.



Gill has been a Trustee for many, many years. Her role was initially as Secretary when she painstakingly hand wrote the minutes. As computers became more widely available, she was able to hand over the role to someone with access to a computer and her focus was fundraising in the Oswestry area. Whilst Gill has now retired from her position of Trustee,

I am pleased to report that she will continue as an active volunteer. Many of you will undoubtedly see Gill out and about for years to come, promoting our work, raising funds and feeding feral cats.

Thank you, Gill, you are amazing.

# Shropshire Cat Rescue latest online shop helper.

By Susie Phillips, Registered Veterinary Nurse and Volunteer.



If you follow Shropshire Cat Rescue on Twitter or Facebook you may be familiar with the online shop helper Freddie.

Freddie is one of our volunteer's cats and is ever willing to help out by entertaining passers-by. You can read about Freddie's escapades on Page 25. He also loves to help out when it comes to packaging online shop orders, he ensures that it is done correctly and with his furry paws' help.

Pippin occasionally checks over parcels once they are packaged but Freddie is on hand as soon as he hears the wrapping paper being cut, even if he's outside he will suddenly appear, eager to help.

There are a selection of goodies to purchase from magnets created by volunteer Anji using pictures she has taken of the resident cats and those who have found

their forever homes. Of course, the Forever Homes Calendar is also available from the online shop. Along with the exclusive Shropshire Cat Rescue goodies there are some lovely soft toys.

So don't delay, help keep Freddie out of mischief and get hold of some lovely gifts for yourself or the other cat enthusiasts in your life.

[www.shropshirecatrescue.org.uk/shop/](http://www.shropshirecatrescue.org.uk/shop/)



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# Village Life

By Karen Wainwright, Volunteer

Due to the continuing Covid-19 pandemic only a handful of volunteers are able to attend the Shelter. Regrettably, I have not been able to visit the Retirement Village for some time. I am finding this to be particularly hard as the moggies give me so much pleasure. I hope that you all are keeping safe and well.



**Mattie** arrived in December 2020, she is very friendly and enjoys being picked up. Sadly, her owner has passed away. She is 18 ½ years old.



**Pooky** also arrived in December 2020, she is also very friendly and is 18 years old, and enjoys plenty of fuss.



**Holly** arrived at the Shelter in October 2020 as unfortunately her owner could no longer look after her. Holly is just over 15 years old. Since joining us she has had to have some dental treatment. She is affectionate.



**Sweetie** and **Roly** arrived at the Shelter together. Sweetie is just over 15 years old and Roly is just over 14. Sweetie did take time to settle in the village. Roly been poorly and amongst other things has high blood pressure which is being closely monitored.

It is with great sadness that I have to report that Mandy our grey Persian, passed away in her sleep in November 2020. Mandy came to the Shelter in October 2014, she was always a very happy moggy. She had her left eye removed in July 2019 but adapted very well. Mandy was very popular with the volunteers and visitors alike and she will be sorely missed

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# Do a little good everytime you shop and help Shropshire Cat Rescue.

By Margaret Lloyd, Trustee and Volunteer.



We'd all like to give a little more to help others, but it's not always possible without committing to bigger donations. With the Pledjar app, you can now round-up pennies from your purchases and donate them to Shropshire Cat Rescue. In these challenging times, extra pennies can have a big impact and Shropshire Cat Rescue is proud to now be available on Pledjar - a new and innovative mobile app.

By turning your spare change into real change you can now support Shropshire Cat Rescue through

small acts of kindness by donating pennies from your daily purchases – all through a safe and secure mobile app.

Through Pledjar you can securely connect your bank account and round-up your transactions and pass on your 'spare change' to Shropshire Cat Rescue. With Pledjar you can follow our recent campaigns and give one-off donations with a click of a finger, without changing how you spend.

It's easy and only takes a few minutes! Download the Pledjar app and make sure you select SCR001 which is the code for Shropshire Cat Rescue when asked during the sign in process. For more information visit [www.pledjar.com](http://www.pledjar.com) or watch the video [https://youtu.be/zd7X\\_UVJlv0](https://youtu.be/zd7X_UVJlv0)

Thank you in advance for your generosity.



**Turn your spare change  
into **real change!****



# How to sponsor Shropshire Cat Rescue

## Sponsor a Cat - £20 a year



**Pickle** was admitted into the Shelter in 2014, rehomed and then re-admitted in 2016 at the age of 10. She is tabby and white and lives contently in the Retirement Village.



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



**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!



**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.

## Sponsor the Nursery - £30 a year



**The Nursery** was completed in 2011 and 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.

# How to sponsor Shropshire Cat Rescue

## Sponsor the Moggies Retirement Village - £60 a year



The Retirement Village was completed in June 2010 and was created using donations, sponsorship and the hard work from volunteers. It comprises 6 chalets and a summerhouse.

## Sponsor the Shelter - £100 a year



The Shelter was established in Bayston Hill, Shropshire in 1998 and has continued to grow. The Shelter is currently home to 17 residents, 22 villagers and at full capacity holds around 122 cats and kittens. In addition to the Shelter there is a Hospital, Nursery, Retirement Village, office, laundry room, feeding room, a shop and café/snack bar for visitors.

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Titch			
Annwyn			
The Nursery	<b>£30</b>		
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The Shelter	<b>£100</b>		
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# How to sponsor Shropshire Cat Rescue



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Who is gift from (to appear on card):	Other occasion:
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Gift Aid is reclaimed by the Shropshire Cat Rescue from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

# How you can help us

Not everyone can adopt a cat but there are lots of ways you can support the work we do at the Shelter.

You can find out about our sponsorship packages on **pages 17 and 18**, visit us online at **[www.shropshirecatrescue.org.uk](http://www.shropshirecatrescue.org.uk)** or contact Marion Micklewright at the Shelter on **01743 872857**.



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## The Cat's Whiskers Magazine

The quarterly magazine can be sent to you by post for a minimum donation of £5 for 4 editions. This covers the cost of postage and packaging. You can subscribe or contact the Shelter on **01743 872857**.

## Leaving a Legacy

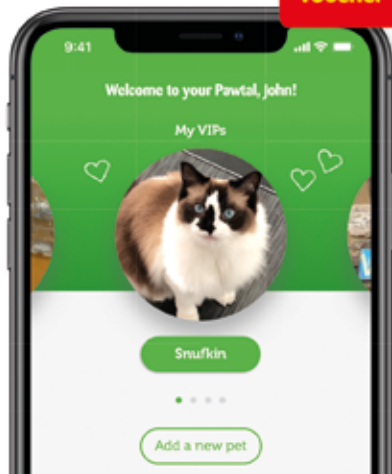
If you would like to remember Shropshire Cat Rescue, please write us into your Will and register it with your solicitor; that way you can rest assured that you are going to make a real difference to the lives of many cats. Ask your solicitor to record our charity name "Shropshire Cat Rescue" and number (No. 1071884) or contact the Shelter if more information is required.

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# Disability? What disability?

By Rachael and Karen Ashton, Shelter Volunteers.



One early afternoon in August 2019, we received a desperate voicemail from a young lady who had found a tiny black kitten on the side of a farm track, clinging to life, with tiny meows being the only sign of life. Volunteer Rene, who had been teaching us everything we need to know about Shelter admin, took the call and gathered as much information as she could whilst another volunteer rushed out to collect the kitten.

Once it arrived, it was rushed into Marion's house who proceeded to clean up and search for any clues to why she was left behind – could it have been an animal attack, or did mum simply leave her kitten behind for some reason? We soon found out she had distinct wounds around her neck, and

it was more than likely a bird of prey had swooped down, taken the kitten then dropped her from a great height – something they do to kill their prey. For some unknown reason, she was not picked up. We suspect it was her loud screams that scared the bird away!

Once the wounds were cleaned up, she was taken to Quarry Vets to ensure there was not more we could do for her and to make sure it was not unkind to keep fighting for her if she were too far gone. Thankfully, she was surprisingly healthy considering her start. A good gag reflex meant she could be bottle fed successfully, so Marion set about hand rearing the young two-week-old kitten. Already hand rearing another kitten at the time, the job just became twice as hard! But the kitten, Lucky as she was nicknamed, thrived and hit her development markers steadily.

As she got older, it was clear she had a wobble to her walk, almost like her back legs did not quite follow the motions she was trying to do. Her head often refused to follow her target, opting to turn her whole body instead. Whilst she was still young, it was unclear whether her issues were physical or neurological, or maybe even



both! But we waited until she was older before we investigated further.

After falling in love with Lucky she was soon fostered into our house. Keeping with the theme of lucky to be alive, we called her Clover.

She has regular check-ups to ensure we are doing the most for her. Being such a fascinating case, we are still learning from her daily and despite disabilities that should be crippling for a young cat, she is living life to the full and is often showing us that she does not know any different. Recent investigations have shown that she has abnormal gait – hypermetric (meaning she oversteps often) and ataxic (meaning her walks are uncoordinated). The Vet also suspect her neck is fused around the area her injuries were, something they would only be able to tell by an X-Ray, and since it is not something they can fix, we have opted not to do. Spinal damage is also likely due to the fall she would have experienced as a baby, but we know she is not

in pain and is closely monitored by the experts to make sure it does not become painful for her.

Despite her rough start and her disabilities, Clover is a happy young cat who is not afraid to tell you what she wants and when she wants it! Running rings around her older feline housemates, she is often found playing with our two sister cats who are a couple years older than her or sleeping by the window.

Famous in our household as the stompy little sassy girl with a tiny squeak of a meow, she has become an amazing addition to our family, and we will be forever grateful to Marion for bringing this bundle of excitement up and letting us take her in. She has taught us so much in the year or so we have had her and no doubt she will teach us more as time goes on. She has shown us that not every disability stops a cat from having the best life possible, and just because she is disabled, she is not in pain and we should not assume so.

Some cats are dealt a bad hand, like humans, but if you give them the chance, they will show you it does not have to define them, and a little bit of love goes a long way. And boy, do we love Clover!

*Sisters Rachael and Karen Ashton have been Shelter volunteers for 4 years, covering a range of roles from Administration to Homing Team.*

Photographs supplied by Rachael and Karen Ashton.

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## A very successful raffle.

By Mel Smith, Boutique Manager.



Katie Ho volunteered in the Boutique after the first lockdown in August 2020, before she started her new job. She could see

that we struggled to raise funds when the shop had to close. Katie decided to set up a raffle online to help raise some much-needed revenue.

She managed to get some fabulous prizes donated from

various very kind companies in the area and raised a huge £1,177.23 for Shropshire Cat Rescue.

Thank you so much Katie for all your amazing help, we really appreciated it. We wish you every success in the future with your new job. Photographs supplied by Mel Smith.



# Fearless Freddie, the adventure cat entertains locals during lockdown.

By Susie Phillips, Registered Veterinary Nurse and Volunteer.

Freddie is a very special ginger cat that came into mine and my family's life and brought love and laughter each day from then on. Why he is such a special cat is a story for another time. I would like to tell you about how he initially caused a panic and also entertained passers by during lockdown.

Freddie turned one last April and by this time he had melted even my 89 year old father-in-laws heart saying "I don't like cats but I love him he's got a great character". It proves there is a cat for all of us in this world and they will find you and change your view on cats.

During the first lockdown, Freddie caused panic by scaling the large cherry tree opposite, looking utterly helpless and tricking us all into thinking he couldn't get back down. Passers-by and those out on their daily exercise were very bemused. Of course, as soon as your back was turned to get the ladder, he reappeared to see what was going on.

As lockdown progressed so did Freddie's climbing escapades. All of a sudden there was a new location for us to have a panic over as Freddie had found a route to the roof of our two-story house and proudly sat on the chimney. My mum and stepdad moved into



the adjoining property just before lockdown. Freddie thought their house was also his so jumping onto the roof via their bungalow extension meant he now regularly went up onto the roof. He was seen walking along the tiles, sleeping on the chimney and more worryingly curling up in the guttering and having a snooze.

Following the knocks on the door from passers-by worried that a cat was wandering around on the roof, we posted a message on social media to reassure people that this was his new regular escapade. Many commented how they saw him in the tree and their children enjoyed spotting him when out on their walks. Freddie even showed



Mum's cat Freya the route to the roof although she quickly got bored with going up there. Freddie is regularly seen up on the roof or enjoying his morning nap between the chimney pots.

Freddie happily progressed on to become the packing assistant for orders from the Shropshire Cat Rescue online shop. By helping out he has helped to increase online shop sales and made a few more fans in the process.

[www.shropshirecatrescue.org.uk/shop/](http://www.shropshirecatrescue.org.uk/shop/)

Look out for more Freddie stories in future magazines and find out how this little cat brought comfort to me and my family when we needed it most.

*Susie Phillips is a Registered Veterinary Nurse and has completed the ISFM Advanced Certificate in Feline Behaviour. Susie has volunteered for Shropshire Cat Rescue with her mum for over 5 years and loves it.*

**Photographs supplied by Susie Phillips.**

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# Working with Shropshire Cat Rescue during the pandemic.

By Rebecca Bennett, Quarry Vets.

It's been a while since I wrote for the magazine, as COVID-19 reared its ugly head and changed the world, and our lives, in so many ways. Previously, I have written about the scientific part of my job; this time I thought I'd tell you about how we do the work, and what has been keeping us busy during this last, difficult year.

Change is never easy, especially in demanding circumstances. Due to COVID-19 regulations, and the requirement for social distancing, the way we do all of our veterinary work for Shropshire Cat Rescue had to change significantly very early on in the pandemic and continues. The pressures on everyone have been significant, but it is thanks to amazing teamwork and hard work from all involved that the cats at Shropshire Cat Rescue have continued to receive the care and attention they deserve throughout the pandemic.

In easier times, I did a weekly visit to the shelter. Marion, or the volunteers, would hold the cats if I needed them to, and any cats that needed procedures or operations would be taken back to the clinic on Old Potts Way for further care. A few hours on a Thursday afternoon, and some work back at the surgery.

The arrival of COVID-19 meant



that routine visits were not allowed, and that I needed to have a nurse with me to hold the cats as it was only by wearing PPE that we were allowed to work closely together. These days, we have a vet and a nurse dedicated to work for the Shelter all day on a Thursday, from the morning until the last operation is finished in the late afternoon.

We are lucky to have a small branch surgery in Bayston Hill and decided this was the best place to see the cats. It is quiet, there are no barking dogs or slamming doors, no telephones ringing.

Our morning of work starts when Karen, Shropshire Cat Rescue volunteer (sometimes accompanied by her mum) arrives with a van full of cat baskets.

It's a good day if only one van arrives but we know it will be a busy one if an extra car arrives too! It's a bit like Christmas when all the baskets are unloaded lots

of parcels and you never quite know what, or who, might be inside them. Hopefully some cute kittens or an inquisitive face.



A list of work arrives with the cats at which point the nurse and I get started while Karen heads back to the Shelter. I am lucky to run the clinic with Michelle, a nurse who is calm and relaxed with the cats and full of knowledge (she is currently studying for the ISFM certificate in feline nursing).

A large part of our time has always been doing routine vaccinations and health checks, with a variety of other work to keep us on our toes as well. The type of work did change a bit with the arrival of COVID-19, though not as much as you might expect. Cats still need vaccinations, dentals, they still get sick.

We usually start the morning with

the vaccinations. During 2020 we did 375 vaccination injections (it was 519 the year before) and all these cats get full health checks too. We do therefore get to cuddle lots of cute kittens! Shropshire Cat Rescue also take on a lot of older cats and we commonly find during the health checks that more work needs doing. Often, we need to take blood samples, urine samples, check down ears and look into eyes. A big advantage of doing everything at the Bayston Hill surgery is that we have all the equipment to hand. It did worry us at the start of this new venture that the trip to the surgery was stressful for the cats- far easier for them if I arrived at the Shelter to see them in their regular

environment. Some cats really do not enjoy the experience of coming to see us, but mostly we feel that the benefits for the cats outweigh the disadvantages. Most procedures can be done on the day, avoiding further journeys to and from the Shelter. Kittens and young cats get to experience cat carriers, examination rooms and new people, all of which is good long term for their socialisation skills.

We try really hard to work in cat friendly ways. From bribing them with food to giving them plenty of

time to get used to the equipment and surroundings we usually find that in the quiet surgery they are very amenable to all we have to do, sometimes even without needing to be held at all. Some of the regulars enjoy a monthly pamper session - Dilly from the village in particular loves her monthly grooming. Because we see a lot of the cats regularly, especially the village cats, we get to know their likes and dislikes, and this makes the work very rewarding.



After we have worked through the vaccination list, we make a start checking the sick cats, and preparing all the paperwork for any operations that may need doing later in the day. Then it is the dreaded paperwork. No one likes paperwork but when cats have conditions that need medication, communication is the key. Most cats that leave the weekly clinics are accompanied by a written 'Treatment plan' to make it easier for the Shelter to follow things up.

A quick coffee, Karen arrives to collect most of the cats who are already waiting in the departure lounge.

carried out 65 dental procedures which included a total of 327 tooth extractions and all cats get a scale and polish too). Sometimes we scan hearts, perform x rays, operate on ears. Sometimes we de-matt the long-haired cats, operate on thyroid glands, and admit cats to the surgery for fluid therapy and treatments. Mostly the work takes us through until 5 or 6pm, after which the cats are tucked up in a warm kennel for the night. Karen arrives to collect them in the morning, and that is usually it. Until the next week when we start all over again!



Any cat needing further procedures then gets a trip to the main surgery for this, which keeps Michelle and I busy for the rest of the afternoon. Commonly we take cats back to be neutered (in 2019 and 2020 combined we did 160 neutering procedures) or dentals (in the same period, I

*Rebecca Bennett graduated from the University of Edinburgh in 1999, and has worked at Quarry Vets, Shrewsbury since 2008. She enjoys all aspects of her job, especially working with cats. Quarry Vets can be contacted at [www.quarryvets-shrewsbury.co.uk](http://www.quarryvets-shrewsbury.co.uk) or telephone 01743 362556.*

**Photographs supplied by Rebecca Bennett.**



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# Your Cat Questions.

By Susie Phillips, Registered Veterinary Nurse and Volunteer.



**Hello, I was wondering if cats could be fed a vegetarian diet, if it's safe to do this and would you recommend a vegetarian diet for cats?**

I understand why you would like to feed your cat a vegetarian diet. I have looked into this as I follow a vegetarian diet myself. However, as cats are obligate carnivores, meaning they cannot survive on a diet that does not contain meat. Due to the way they process food cats require certain amino acids that are only available from meat. For example, one of these is Taurine. A deficiency in this amino acid will lead to blindness, digestive problems, heart failure and ultimately premature death. Unlike humans and dogs, cats lack the ability to convert plant-based alternatives into the amino acids they need. Feeding a cat, a meat free diet will lead to the health problems I've already mentioned as well as causing them pain, discomfort and premature death. There are a few vegetarian diets

coming on to the market for cats but due to their highly specialised metabolism these are unlikely to provide the combination of amino acids, essential fatty acids, vitamins and minerals in the same way that meat does.

Cats are not adapted to cope with vast nutritional changes in their diet from day to day as they need a complete and constant balanced supply of nutrients. Therefore, alternating between a vegetarian and a meat derived diet would not give a cat sufficient nutritional support and would still be detrimental to quality of life and would also be life threatening.

My advice is to continue feeding your cat a complete meat-based diet. Ethically sourced, meat based organic and free-range alternatives to the usual brands of cat food are becoming more readily available so you could try one of those. If you decide to go down this route, please introduce the new food gradually to avoid upsetting your cat's digestion.

Ensure that the label on the food you choose states the contents are a complete diet rather than complementary as fed alone these will lack some or enough of the essential nutrients your cat needs. Complementary foods must be given alongside a complete diet.

*Susie Phillips is a Registered Veterinary Nurse and has completed the ISFM Advanced Certificate in Feline Behaviour. Susie has volunteered for Shropshire Cat Rescue with her mum for over 5 years and loves it.*

Photographs supplied by Anji Smith and Susie Phillips.

# 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 Boutique (3 Roushill Bank, Shrewsbury, SY1 1PN) 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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Trustees .....	Dianne Beaumont
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