

Welfare Capacity Expands Further

No matter how hard the going gets, it's vital we don't take our eyes off the bigger, long-term picture. Amid huge workloads right across the Worthing Cat Welfare team, we have surged on with our expansion of care pen facilities. In the last issue we reported on the construction of a new, high-quality block of seven pens in Durrington, which was put into full capacity use as soon as it was finished.

The latest building materials make for much easier work, as the pens are all very well insulated for heat retention – and for coolness in hotter weather too. More importantly, all of the interior surfaces are of high-density resin, so are very easy to keep clean. Bear in mind that after each cat vacates the space, there needs to be a careful clean-down before the next arrival to prevent any cross-contagion.

Another New Care Block

With the launch of the Durrington block in the Spring, we took the opportunity over the Summer to demolish and completely re-build our East Preston facility in similar format. Again, it is another seven pen facility, generous dimensions and with plenty of workspace for preparation of food, etc. It also has additional space, where one-at-a-time, the cats can come out and stretch their legs and socialise with our staff at work. Overall costs for the project came in at around £57,000, which was about £8,000 less than what we paid for Durrington, as we had access to some subsidised labour from our kind supporters.



Exotic East Preston Pens

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Trustees* and Management Group

Chairman	Mike Glennon*	Adoptions	Ana Sales
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Lost & Found	Germaine Conroy- Schneider*	Richard Bailey*	Mee Tiltman*
		Justin Herbert*	

The new block is controlled by our long-standing volunteer and supporter, Allison Pyett: "What a quantum leap forward this has been at practical level. Compared with our old pen facility, there is so much more space to get in for cleaning and preparation – and the modern materials are so much more user friendly. When the block was opened at the end of July, it took us mere days to fill up with new guests!"



As Allison has always been one of our kitten specialists, we direct many of our nursing families there to East Preston (likewise to Tracie at Durrington), because the commercial catteries we also use simply cannot allocate the huge amount of care time needed for small kittens.



Outdoor balconies too!

As with humanity, it's the little ones who are most vulnerable and any poorly kittens may require inspection every three hours – and that includes night time, as Sandra Collins can testify: "Here at my Findon Valley location, I have nursed more feline families over the past decades than I could begin to count. Earlier this year, I remember getting out of bed one cold night at 2am to check on one particular mum and her four new-born kittens.

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“For some reason unknown one of the four had obviously wandered out of the bed area and curled up on the floor in the corner on his own. Meanwhile, mum and the other three were curled up warm and snug, but *Wanderer* was slipping down that dreadful path of no return.

“I picked him up, warmed him close to my body and then placed him gently back in bed to ensure he was suckling again. Come dawn he was as right as rain again, but there’s little doubt in my mind that the 2am call saved this poor little life. Survival rates are so very closely linked to care levels.”

AGM Brings Valuable Board Expansion

The 2022 Annual General Meeting was held again at the Ardington Hotel in Worthing town centre on 3rd September and saw a much bigger turnout than usual.

We were delighted to welcome an additional nine trustees, taking our Board to the maximum of 15 members – an all-time record for the charity. New members include a mixture of ex-trustees, other inner circle volunteers and complete newcomers. Here they are:

Roger Arthur
Richard Bailey
Andy Collins

Justin Herbert
Joss Loader
Miriam Lopez

Andy Petch
Jackie Riddles
Mee Tiltman

In recent years we have become very conscious that the long-term sustainability of Worthing Cat Welfare Trust hinges as much upon human resource as financial funding, so this surge in interest augurs well for strengthening the team further.

Having said that, we are not ones for resting on our laurels and more volunteers are needed in the areas of fostering, vet-running, home-checking and general errands. At the end of the day, whether one is a trustee or not, the real issue is what - and how much - one is really willing to do. Plenty more vacancies – step this way please!

Mike Glennon

Pen Sponsors Needed

Sincere thanks from the Trust to our latest pen sponsors: Emma Kuusela, Alastair Weinberg and Barbara Harris (whose adoption story appears on pages 34-35).

With the launch of our two new care pen facilities, our running costs continue to climb. Inevitably, the greater number of cats we are rescuing nowadays, combined with punitive inflation rates, means that our money is disappearing faster than ever. If you can help, please see our Pen Sponsorship page on www.worthingcatwelfaretrust.org

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New Treasurer Needed Soon

Running any successful charity like ours needs two things essentially: money and people. Oh, and in our case, cats-in-need, of course. On the human resource side, it's all about attracting volunteers and we have a superb line-up of kind, enthusiastic colleagues, who give generously of their time and effort - and in many cases their own money. Their skills span Welfare, IT, Marketing, Editing, Social Networking and many others.

From time to time, however, there is a need for a volunteer to undertake a very specialist role and currently we have just such a "vacancy", i.e. looking after that tiresome old subject of money. Our present Treasurer, after more than four years in the post, wants to reduce her workload and carve out a bit more time for that little old past-time called Retirement. She's certainly earned it!

So, we are seeking another volunteer, maybe also in early retirement, but not necessarily, who could spare on average 12 hours a week (to suit) to take on this fulfilling role. The Treasurer has all round responsibility for banking, paying bills, keeping financial records and producing statutory accounts for the Independent Examiner to review. There are usually four or five trustee meetings per year and, of course, there is the AGM too.



Have £ - Just Need Treasurer

Obviously, some experience of book-keeping and accounts preparation is the fundamental need, but the outgoing post holder would be available throughout the first year to assist, if required. This work can be done at home; so no need to "come to work" as such, except for attending the said meetings.

If you feel you might have the necessary knowledge and experience, please get in touch with our Chairman, Mike Glennon (07923 014458). He would be delighted - and grateful - to hear from you.



The Board of Trustees

Only cats can bring joy like this!

Sadly, our previous cat, Claude, passed away unexpectedly after a very short illness in September last year. This left us heartbroken, as we have always had furry folk and our home felt so empty. We contacted WCWT in the October and spoke with Pam, who - without a shadow of doubt - was so helpful. We arranged a visit to meet some of the cats that were in need of their forever homes. There were kittens, young cats, older cats all needing loving places to be, but who should stand out and come running and purring to the front of her pen ... little Fifi!



Garden Paradise

Sadly for Fifi her two previous owners had passed away and so she was obviously unsettled, but we fell for her straight away. On bringing her home and getting her settled into her forever home she was a little hissy to start with, which is understandable with all she has been through, but with time and giving her space, she has turned into the most affectionate, mischievous, playful little soul. She loves warm weather and is quite often seen rolling around on the grass, her legs stretched out, beckoning for us to come and play, to which we gladly oblige.

We have since found out from the vet that she has a heart condition, for which she will be on medication for the rest of her life. We are not sure how long she has with us, but the medication has enabled her to run, play, chase and enjoy her life. She is such a joy to watch. She also loves to snuggle down in her bed, and snores away!

Not only have we given FiFi a loving home, but she in return has brought us joy and happiness and has helped to mend our broken hearts. We cannot imagine her not in our lives now.



Nick & Linda Baker

Changes to our Golden Oldies Scheme

Over recent months the Trustees have pondered at length on the huge financial liabilities inherent in our **Golden Oldies** support scheme.

Currently, our overall "burn rate" across the charity (the net amount by which we are getting poorer) is heading towards £1/4 million per annum and we have a distinct duty to try to contain this in some way. The prospect of running out of funds at some point in the future is a very sobering thought. It's amazing what doesn't happen when the pounds run out!

The **Golden Oldies** scheme will remain a crucial tool in re-homing our older cats, which are the ones most likely to be entering the more expensive stage of life. Not surprisingly, the scheme accounts for a large proportion of our annual veterinary costs, so from 1st September 2022 the qualifying age for outgoing cats has moved up from 10 to 12 years, which actually brings us into line with other comparable feline charities.

Apart from the age change, we also need to clarify with our adopters that the scheme is there to cover age-related conditions only (or for our younger supported cats, the pre-existing medical conditions prior to their adoption from us). Naturally, these are the things likely to bring the higher veterinary costs, but peripheral treatments, such as claw clipping, worming tablets and flea treatment cannot be financed on the scheme, as these are items common to cats in general, not the special cases, which the scheme is intended for.

Likewise, treatment for injuries resulting from accidents is not an age-related issue, so not covered.



Archie - yet another of our Golden Oldies success stories

It's at times like these one wishes that money grew on trees, so that our welfare provision could be limitless. Alas, things don't quite work that way.

Doing Data Day-to-Day

Hi again everyone. You might remember my piece in the last issue about microchipping? Well, I also wear another hat within the charity and that is handling our ever more complex database.

This is of vital importance to all of us here, because the information it contains feeds in to virtually every part of our organisation: Welfare Officers, the Lost and Found team, Treasurer, Publicity Officer and our Adoption Officers. Without it, these dedicated volunteers would be struggling to do their various jobs - certainly in the longer term.

In simple terms, the database tracks the story of every one of our cats from the day they arrive with us to the happy day when they find their forever homes. Every step of their journey is documented – who they are, where they come from, the cattery where we billet them, their health issues and any medical treatments they may have while with us, and - when they are ready – what sort of adopter they would mesh with.

When one considers that we have rescued, rehabilitated and re-homed well over 600 felines in the last three years, it's easy to see the chaos that would reign if we did not document everything in fine detail.

This is particularly true, of course, when adopters come back to us at some future point with queries. Herding cats was never going to be easy, so meticulous method is our only salvation. It's not so difficult to see why I am also charged with the charity's microchipping brief. All of our cats are chipped as soon as they come in to us. Even if they were already chipped, though, they will be *registered* to the Charity while they are in our care.



My eternal helper - O'Malley

When they have found the right people to adopt them and are happily settled in their new world, we then re-register the microchip to their new owners. This way we know for certain that it has been done and as a charity we aren't even charged any administration fee.

Continues opposite

Data Day-to-Day ... *continued*

Our database also maintains records of our *Supported Cats*. These may be pussies with ongoing health issues or our older cats, which we support on our special *Golden Oldies* scheme. It even extends to kittens adopted from us, but too young for neutering, where we issue a voucher for when their age is right. Working as the Database Administrator is, without doubt, a challenging and sometimes frustrating role. However, when we find loving owners for our cats and they move on to the next chapter of their lives, it is without doubt, the most rewarding job I have ever had.

Lynn Benfield – Trustee Administration

Thirteen Year Later ...

Millie and Molly were rescued by Worthing Cat Welfare Trust back in 2008 and we welcomed them into our family in 2009. Both are nearly 14 years old now - Millie is the tortoise-shell and Molly is the ginger one. Misty was our other cat in the photograph, but sadly we lost him last year at the grand old age of 18 and both Millie and Molly really missed him. I can still remember when Millie and Molly arrived. They were so timid and had been rescued from an industrial site in Haywards Heath and Philip, my husband, had to build a shelter for them in our lounge, so that they felt really safe. It wasn't too long before they came out of their shelter, though, for food and a play around with a toy mouse!

They have a very different life now, as we have a wild meadow close to where we live and they go off for the day in the Summer - we know they have spent the day in the meadow, as they are covered in seeds when they come home! Winter is a very different routine for Millie and Molly, as it is spent in front of the log burner, which they have to share with Mutley our dog and they just venture into the back garden now and then for exercise and fresh air.



Anne Godley

Purrfect evening with friends



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From Subway to Sofa Way!

When my foster cat Wilson first arrived, he was terrified. He'd been "sleeping rough" in a subway, during the dark and lonely days of Lockdown, before WCWT rescued him from a perilous life on the streets.

Although not aggressive, Wilson flew behind a sofa in my garage conversion and only crept out during the depths of night. Just the mere sight of a human made him hiss and hide. To start with, we thought he might be better suited to an outdoor life on a farm.

As with many things, patience and perseverance were key. For two, long weeks, I barely saw the lovely boy, although his dishes were emptied and he was incredibly clean. I used to sit in the same room and quietly read a book and also chatted to the "invisible" cat, acclimatising him to my voice. Slowly but surely, Wilson started to emerge. Initially, he decamped from his hidey-hole to a cat bed, partially hidden by the sofa. Then he sat right next to me and, miraculously, started to purr, allowing me to stroke his head. The day, he crept on to my knee brought pure joy! Wilson had learned that humans *could* be trusted and maybe a whole new destiny was unfolding.



Life on the streets was no fun



Sofa life suits just fine

We then progressed in leaps and bounds and I couldn't bear to say goodbye, so he joined my lovely band of cats. He now lives very happily in the house, sleeps on beds (including the dog's) and is a friendly, incredibly affectionate boy. Sunbathing in the garden is his particular pleasure. Seems Wilson is here to stay! This story proves that fostering cats is incredibly rewarding and I'd recommend it to anyone with a love for cats. I've subsequently fostered others, who have gone on to secure loving and secure homes. Put simply, it's heart-warming and fabulous to make a difference.

Joss Loader

Junior - the Bruneian Jungle Cat

During my military posting to a town called Seria in Brunei in January 2010 it wasn't long before "I was adopted" by a homeless feral cat that was also heavily pregnant. After kindly feeding her just a couple of times, she decided she was moving in with me and - with two years to push - I was looking forward to the joy of some playful kittens to break the monotony of Army life.

Around five weeks later we were blessed with four beautiful multi-coloured kittens, born during a fierce tropical monsoon in the bottom drawer of my footlocker! Eventually, all the cats were homed out and that left me with Junior, who could only be described up until that point in her young life as "the runt of the litter"! Now, I guess you are all familiar with the rhyme, "There once was an ugly Duckling" and never could a truer word be spoken in regards to Junior's amazing blossoming into a striking, confident, feline companion, sporting gorgeous almost fox coloured fur and brown cheetah style stripes running down her cheeks.



Mum Spicey with Junior and siblings born in tropical storm

Every afternoon when on my way back from work, Junior would ambush me from the sanctuary of her hideout bush, where she'd been sheltering from the midday sun. At dusk we'd spend our evenings in the nearby equatorial jungle, where Junior loved to climb trees, chase Gecko Lizards and on one memorable occasion, get chased ourselves by a 5-foot Monitor Lizard! Back at the Condo under the humid starlit nights, she would patrol on the balcony ready to fend off any inbound Macaque Monkeys that were always up to mischief.

Forever a little rascal herself, on one occasion while out exploring, Junior managed to get herself locked into the Garrison Sergeant Major's office over a Bank Holiday weekend and I could hear her cries for help while out searching for her. A crowbar from my trusty toolkit made short work of an air-vent to get her out; anything to avoid the GSM's wrath!

Junior from the jungle ...

While out there we also set up a small cat sanctuary in a compound behind our work office, helping homeless, starving kittens, which always seemed to venture onto the camp. We fed them up and then re-homed about a dozen of the needy little fellas, which was extremely rewarding. As the months flew by, our friendship grew ever stronger and so did my time left in Brunei, but I realised I could never board the plane back home and leave my little friend behind no matter what the cost.

I made arrangements with her Malaysian vet, who kindly jacked up all of the documents and health checks ready for her long 8,000 mile flight back to England. On a freezing cold January morning we were tearfully reunited at the Heathrow Animal Reception Centre and we headed to Aldershot for the next three year chapter of our lives. I will never forget her look of sheer bemusement when she stepped out of her travel carrier into five centimetres of snow, certainly one hell of a culture shock from the steamy tropics of South East Asia to a Baltic Hampshire, but she adapted quickly enough.



Big Boots to Fill



When Army life finished we settled in my home town of Lancing, where Junior saw out her years, chuffed to bits to finally have her own garden and a settled life. Sadly, she recently lost her brave 18-month battle with illness, but her star will always burn brightly in my memory. I hope soon to adopt another little furry friend and just know that this next journey together will be as rewarding as the last.

In Junior's twilight years she'd love nothing more than to snuggle up and watch exotic wildlife shows on TV, no doubt reminiscing about her long lost past; okay, admittedly she was only a short-haired tabby, but to me she was my best friend and the greatest Jungle cat in the world.

lan Smith

The Risk Business – it's Serious!

Insurers and Bookies are actually in the same business - we go to both of them likewise to place wagers. Main difference is that with Bookies we bet on anticipated good news, e.g. your *Fireball Freddy* romping home first at Haydock Park, but with insurers we bet *against* bad news, e.g. your car being nicked or your house catching fire.

For both Insurers and Bookies, their challenge is, of course, to ensure that in aggregate *we* pay *them* more than what they pay out to *us* (maybe that is why one particular insurance company – based not far from Worthing - trades under the brand name *More Than?*). Those Insurers and Bookies, who get their sums wrong, share the same fate in the longer run – they go out of business. The common denominator behind all of this is, of course, Risk and how we all cope with it.



As soon as you acquire something of value there is the risk that it will be taken from you and so we rely upon the insurance industry to protect us. The more valuable the asset, the more seriously we need to consider insurance cover and for animal lovers like us, surely the most valuable asset is our pet.

Whilst all living things are taken from us eventually, we don't want them taken before their rightful time, so illness and accident are the big dread. In an inflation-ridden, modern world with eye-watering veterinary costs, there is the constant danger that puss's treatment will be much more than what we can afford, so taking out Pet Insurance could be the best thing you ever did. It is for this reason that Worthing Cat Welfare Trust has just launched an initial pet insurance scheme to cover all cats which are adopted from the charity. At the end of five weeks, our insurer will then contact adopters with a guarantee of cover, albeit at the prevailing premium rates. The adopter has the choice of continuing the cover, shopping around the market for whatever they feel to be the best deal or otherwise simply accepting the ongoing risk personally.





It is at this point that pet owners need to do a bit of realistic self-appraisal. How do we compare with:

Gilly has just won £10 million on the lottery, while **Billy** has steady, secure income and has been a committed regular saver ever since he got his first Half Crown of pocket money. If you are not a Gilly nor a Billy, however, you may need to consider pet insurance very carefully.

One last thought: **Zilly's** cat was injured in a road accident and taken to a veterinary practice. Prognosis was that the injuries required surgery and the cat would make a good recovery. Cost of operation £2,500. Zilly simply cannot afford a fraction of that. The vet says the alternative is euthanasia for £100. Zilly can afford that. What a heart-rending thing to have to say goodbye to the thing one loves most in life, because of lack of resource. Indeed, it's a harsh world, but the time to think about it has to be now, not when tragedy calls.

Another Home Run of Epic Proportion

Readers may recall the tale in our Spring 2021 edition about the amazing Houdini and his hair-raising escape and evasion. (Incidentally, we have a lovely update on Houdini on page 27 of this newsletter!). For another amazing story of uncanny feline navigation **turn to page 17** for the equally amazing story of Thomas.



Distant Purr - from distant Surrey

Always good to hear from old friends - and the longer they've been gone the nicer it is.



**Contented Pensioners
Tom (above) and Roxy**



Tom and Roxy came to me from Worthing Cat Welfare Trust way back in 2011. When I got them they were four years old and they are now 15 year-old pensioners, but still going very strong. Tom was called Spike when I got him, but he didn't seem to like the name! His sister, Roxy, always suited her name perfectly though.

We lived in Worthing for eight years, but we all moved up to Guildford in Surrey three years ago. They are such affectionate little cats and I have always been grateful to the charity for doing such a great job in rescuing countless cats like these two, keeping them safe and finding them new lives.

Caroline Boxall



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Thomas's Amazing Home Run

For more than a year, a very kind cat lover near Durrington Cemetery had been reporting to us that a black and white stray had been wandering around her garden on the cadge for food. Could we help catch him and identify him maybe? In parallel to this, another concerned neighbour at the top of Offington Lane had been reporting a similar sounding fugitive and, gradually, it became apparent that the two were one and the same.

Regular efforts were made at both houses to set traps, but although puss was happy to make a social mealtime visit, he certainly wasn't in the business of being caught. No fool this one. Then in July he mysteriously vanished. For a fortnight.

When he reappeared, he seemed hungrier than ever and finally this was his downfall. He wandered right into the kitchen, the door shut behind him, puss was in the bag and taken immediately to one of our sanctuaries, pending publicity on social networks to find a possible owner. This is when the bizarre story really unfolded.

His true owner got in touch from Goring, two miles away! Apparently, they had been living close to Durrington Cemetery until a fortnight previously and had then moved. All the time we had been thinking he was a stray, he actually wasn't, he was merely a crafty, local neighbourhood cadger.



**Regular Doorstep
Visitor Returns**



Pending deportation

When he had moved to his new home in Goring, he had taken a look around, sniffed the air and consulted his Sat-Nav. Nope, this ain't home! Then began his two-mile epic hike right across Worthing to get back to his old stomping ground. His owners were distraught at his disappearance, but beside themselves with joy when they saw our post. He was taken to his rightful home for a month of indoor life to re-programme his perception of Home. Truly a rival to Houdini's tale of escape and evasion!

**Germaine Conroy-Schneider
Lost & Found Coordinator**

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