

# Christmas Newsletter 2023

## From our Trustees

Christmas greetings to all our supporters!

At the start of 2023, Here For Cats was without its own dedicated boarding facilities, and we are both relieved and excited to have acquired cattery space which has now been up and running for six months (more on this later). This space has expanded our capacity to provide shelter to cats in need and complements the excellent care offered by our dedicated team of Foster Carers.

It has been another busy year with more pressure than ever on our resources, both in terms of homes available and animals and individuals needing our help. We are currently operating a long waiting list and doing our best to offer advice and support those in need of help whilst they wait. Our annual fundraising events at the RSPCA Funday at Millbrook and the Cranleigh Carnival have helped us to continue to fund our Golden Oldies Scheme, offer financial aid and help with neutering where appropriate.

Our hard work has been recognised again this year through nomination for the Petplan & ADCH Animal Charity of the Year Award. Thank you to our team whose tireless efforts have prompted this accolade.

Also, a big thank you to all our great volunteers who support us through fostering, transport, admin, accounting and fundraising, and to Louise and her fantastic team at Vets4Pets Bagshot, who continue to help us to respond swiftly to cats and kittens in need. We couldn't do it without you!

## New Cattery Space

Even with a dedicated team of Foster Carers, it is sometimes helpful to have the option to house rescue cats in pens for medical, behavioural or capacity reasons.

After a long search and one year on from the sad closure of Five Acres Cattery in Guildford, we now have a new partner cattery located on the Surrey/Hampshire border (for reasons of safety and security, we will not share the exact location). We have a separate entrance and exclusive access to three pens, one that has space for four cats and two others that can each accommodate two. Opaque panels separate the pens so that the cats being cared for are not able to see into each other's pens, thereby minimising stress levels.



Enzo settles in

## New Cattery Space *(continued)*

A kind volunteer built us a bespoke, low-level, waterproof shed on-site for storage of cat beds, litter trays, scratch-posts, food and knitted toys.

We have been re-homing from the cattery for six months now. All our cats, many of whom are anxious when they first arrive, receive support with socialisation from the cattery team and regular fuss and playtime *(always on the cat's terms)* with a small team of trained volunteers. Working together, we are then able to establish what each cat will need in their new home. News about activity at the cattery will continue be posted on our Facebook page in 2024.

Despite negotiating a discount, boarding costs have rocketed, so we would welcome your support in helping to cover these costs. You can do this by setting up a monthly donation through the DONATE button on our website; [www.hereforcats.org](http://www.hereforcats.org).

## Abandoned Kittens Rescued and Re-homed!

In October, we received an urgent request for help from a member of the public who had found an abandoned cat carrier full of kittens whilst walking her dog in a park. On arrival, we discovered nine kittens squeezed into the carrier; four tabbies, three black and two black and white. Estimated to be approximately six weeks' old, the kittens were hungry and soaked in urine and one kitten appeared lame on his front leg.

Concerned for their welfare, we whisked the kittens to our partner vet practice where we supported with bathing, sexing and naming the kittens and scheduled neutering, micro-chipping and vaccinations whilst the veterinary team undertook health checks.

At the end of a hectic day, we took the kittens to foster care in Cobham where they soon began to recover from their ordeal. We advertised an Open Weekend and invited successful applicants to visit to choose their kittens.

We sadly lost the smallest, black kitten of the litter after the weekend, leaving us with the unenviable task of sharing the sad news with the family who had chosen him. However, they returned to Cobham and felt able to choose another kitten as a companion for the kitten they had chosen.

Concerned about re-homing the kitten with the lame front leg appropriately, we returned him to our Vet for a further check where we received good news that that no further action was required as he was now racing around his foster home with no sign of lameness! Having received lots of applications for the kittens, we were soon able to match this kitten to a home, where he has a companion in another young cat and is doing well.



*Conifer & Oak in foster care*

## Cat Colony Living at a Skip Yard

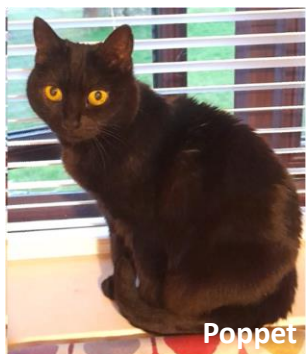
Since June, HFC has been collaborating with another animal charity to assist workers at a Skip Yard in Middlesex to care for a colony of over 25 feral cats who have taken up residence at their workplace.



We visit the site at regular intervals and have, so far, trapped, neutered and released nine males and seven females back to the site, with the intention of limiting the number of kittens being born into the colony and to protect their future health.

Two willing Skip Yard workers feed, water and monitor the welfare of the cats across two locations at the yard where the cats now have plenty of resources, including beds and shelters. The volunteers also keep us updated about any new cats who join the colony, litters of kittens being born and any vet care required. The colony will require our ongoing support with neutering and vet care and represents one of the ways that HFC supports cats living in the community.

## Golden Oldies



Although cats have a much shorter life expectancy than their human companions, sadly they can outlive their owners, often when they are advanced in years themselves. When they come into our care, we conduct senior health checks and seek to place the cats in suitable homes for their remaining years. Here are the stories of two such cats:

Daisy had lived with an elderly lady for seven years when her owner died. She was taken in by a neighbour where she lived happily for another few years. Sadly, this neighbour passed away and her original owner's niece took her in, but Daisy was not happy living in a young and busy household. Daisy now lives in a retirement village with Brenda who was looking for a companion after the loss of her husband. Daisy spends her days in a sunny spot watching passers-by, the evenings on Brenda's lap and heads straight for bed as soon as the TV goes off.

Salem was another senior cat who lost her owner. She was taken in by her owner's daughter but was not welcomed by the resident chihuahua. We found Salem, now renamed Poppet, a home in a first floor flat with Cathi who says that Poppet sounds like a corncrake and is the love of her life! Although wary of strangers, Poppet loves to watch the birds from the windowsill, sit on Cathi's lap at every opportunity and insists on sleeping wrapped in Cathi's arms.

## Lonely Tux finds his forever home

This is Tux, a 6-month-old, black & white kitten, aptly named for his tuxedo attire!

He was found strolling up and down a residential street in Kingston-upon-Thames, curiously following passers-by. Watching him from her window and becoming increasingly concerned for his wellbeing, one of street's residents encouraged Tux inside and offered him some food and water. He wasted no time in making himself at home, enjoying the meal and curling up on his finder's lap, purring!

Having swiftly established with a local vet that Tux was not micro-chipped and keen to reunite him with his owner, whom she felt must be missing this sweet-natured boy, his finder put up posters and posted his details on neighbourhood websites. Sadly, Tux was still not claimed.

Tux's finder was unable to care for him long term and HFC took the young kitten into foster care. We advertised lonely Tux's story which captured the heart of his new owner who applied to adopt him the same day.

His new owner tells us that friendly Tux has settled quickly into his new home in closeby Hersham, really enjoys his new-found company and is loving life!



*Tux enjoying life in his new home*

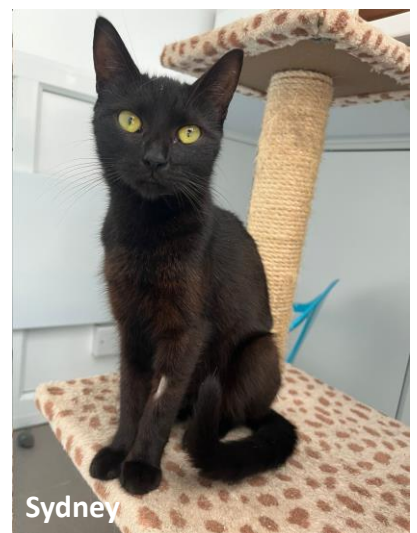
# Multi-cat Household

As Autumn set in, HFC became aware of a multi-cat house in Surrey. Whilst in the area to collect a kitten who was reported to be straying in poor condition, we established that they were one of many cats living at a neighbouring home. Besides having a detrimental impact on the health of the cats, the multi-cat home was also becoming a health hazard to local residents who were becoming concerned and had reported the issue to the local authority and RSPCA. A few of the cats had signs of cat flu, abscesses from fighting with each other and most of them had been long untreated for parasites, leading to overgrooming and allergies. The occupant of the multi-cat house had been feeding a small number of cats, which had then attracted a larger number of cats to join them due to the availability of resources, including lots of food that was being put on the floor in the entrance of the house.



Having established a good rapport with the care giver, HFC attended the home again, which enabled us to educate on cat care and help them to reduce the number of cats they were caring for. We agreed to support them by taking in nine cats and kittens who had potential for re-homing and worked with the care giver to decide who should be trapped for neutering and return. To prevent any more kittens being born and to protect the overall health of the colony, a further six cats were then FIV tested, neutered, treated for fleas and worms and returned back to the home.

The cats and kittens we took in for re-homing were all neutered, vaccinated and micro-chipped. Some cats received treatment for mild conditions before they were ready to be advertised and re-homed, including closely bonded sisters, Paris and Sydney (*opposite*).



## How you can support us

A single or regular donation will help us to:

1. Provide warmth and shelter to cats and kittens in our care through our new cattery space.
2. Prepare a cat or kitten for re-homing, to include veterinary checks, neutering, micro-chipping, vaccination and flea and worm treatment.
3. Provide a toy mouse or a tasty Christmas Dinner for a cat or kitten in our care!

You can send us a single or regular donation of your choice by clicking the DONATE button on the homepage of the Here for Cats' website (<https://www.hereforcats.org>) and completing the Direct Debit form or by sending a cheque made payable to 'Here for Cats' to Jan Watson, Treasurer, Here For Cats, Coach House Cottage, Knowle Lane, Cranleigh, Surrey GU6 8JN. No donation is too small to make a difference to the cats and kittens in our care.

If you are interested in adoption, you can find details of the cats and kittens currently available on our website above or on our Facebook page; <https://www.facebook.com/Hereforcats>

*Merry Christmas and a big thank you from the team at Here For Cats!*