



Annual Review 2015





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Founded in 1927, Cats Protection is the UK's leading feline welfare charity.

In 2015 we helped almost 200,000 cats and kittens (2014: 205,000) through our national network of over 250 volunteer-run branches and 32 centres.

That's the equivalent of helping 500 cats a day.

Our vision is a world where every cat is treated with kindness and an understanding of its needs.

Our values

- Cats and their welfare are at the centre of everything we do
- We never put a healthy cat to sleep
- We value and respect our volunteers, supporters and staff
- We are committed to providing a high-quality service
- We are open and honest

We have four strategic aims to help us help more cats

- 1** We will significantly increase awareness of Cats Protection and our work.
- 2** As the leading authority on cats we will help people better understand their needs in order to improve the welfare of all cats.
- 3** We will help to reduce overpopulation of cats:
 - through targeted neutering campaigns and education
 - by directing more resources to the promotion of early neutering
 - by doing more research and gathering better data on the impact of our neutering work
- 4** We will home more cats until our work on information, education and neutering reduces the long-term need for homing.

In the longer term our work will ensure that there will be fewer cats needing our help.

Helping us to get there

- We will significantly grow income and manage our funds to enable us to help more cats, now and in the future
- We will speak up for cats and represent their interests
- We will increase the extent and effectiveness of our collaboration with animal welfare charities and other organisations, for the benefit of cats

This report covers the period 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015 and was approved by the Trustee on 7 April 2016.

Chairman's report

*An introduction from Heather McCann,
Chairman*

In 2014 we undertook a major review of the charity's strategy and in 2015 we agreed plans for implementing that strategy. We remain true to our vision and values, and our main activities continue to be education and information, neutering and homing. However, one important addition included in our strategic aims is increasing awareness of Cats Protection and our work and by drawing attention to our work it will help us to help more cats. We believe these activities will improve the welfare of cats by helping people understand their needs.

I'm pleased at the results we're already seeing from the first year of implementing the strategy. We're starting to reach new audiences with our welfare messages which aim to ensure a better future for cats and we're increasing our neutering presence in communities. We're also continuing to find homes for cats in need and part of this is the development of new centres and the vital ongoing support and development of our volunteer-led branches, who currently carry out two thirds of our cat work. Without their continued support our charity simply would not function so successfully and I would like to thank each and every volunteer who so generously gives us their time and commitment.

Thank you also to everyone who supports the charity, whether that's donating or raising funds for our work, adopting a cat, or sharing a Facebook post. Together, you make a huge difference and allow us to help more cats in need.

Heather McCann, 7 April 2016

Chief Executive's report

*An introduction from Peter Hepburn,
Chief Executive*

Cats Protection is in a strong position. We have a solid financial base, we have growing numbers of supporters - both donors and volunteers - and most importantly we have the ambition to do more, to do better for the cats we care so much about. Our amazing charity helps the equivalent of 500 cats every single day and we are delighted that our new Mitcham Homing Centre helps to expand our cat work. It homed 226 cats in the first few months after it opened.

Every day we are telling people more about our work. We are building awareness for the charity in communities across the UK by creating new branches and developing our existing ones, planning centres and advertising the great work we do so that Cats Protection becomes the first choice for people looking for a cat.

The combined effort of every donor, supporter, member, volunteer and staff member is vital to our success on behalf of all cats in the UK. I'm excited about moving ahead and working towards a better world for cats.

Peter Hepburn, 7 April 2016



Performance against our strategic aims

Increasing awareness

Our strategy acknowledges that education and information for adults and children about cat welfare are essential to achieving our vision, so we have increased our emphasis on this part of our work.

Our national media campaigns helped to raise awareness of Cats Protection and the work we do. Our older cats campaign, for example, encouraged the adoption of older cats and highlighted that they take five times longer to home than kittens. We received some great national and regional coverage for the campaign including *The Sun*, *The Telegraph*, the *Sunday Express* and *Sunday People*, reaching over 12 million people. A video produced for the campaign reached 1.8 million people. The campaign also helped find a new home for one of our oldest cats, Pops, who was featured in the national story.

Meanwhile, our Feline Friend or Foe campaign helped cat owners to understand whether or not their cats get on. Our fun animation was watched over 300,000 times and articles appeared in the *Sunday Express* and the *Scottish Sunday Express*.

Across the country, week after week, we take part in shows, exhibitions and events, ranging from national shows to local fêtes and fairs.

We have five Community Education Officers who support our branches, adoption centres and our team of education volunteers to give talks to children and adults in school and community groups. We also work with other charities and local authorities to deliver our messages to a wide audience. We ran workshops for children in deprived urban areas at community project days in Methyr Tydfil, South Wales and at community events run by Leeds City Council over the summer. In addition, we developed a programme of workshops to be run over two six-week periods for local children from deprived areas of North West England, in partnership with Bolton Council and our Atherton & Wigan Metro Areas Branch.

In 2015, our 141 volunteer speakers (2014: 110) gave 1,142 talks (2014: 561) to 35,019 adults and children (2014: 15,761). Children and young people will be the cat owners of the future and by building their knowledge of cat welfare we can make the world a better place for cats.

We targeted specific audiences to raise awareness of cat welfare issues. Our Teignbridge & Totnes Branch, for example, ran a proactive campaign targeting local farmers to encourage them to neuter feral cats before their numbers got out of control. They distributed posters at local livestock markets, animal feed suppliers and agricultural machinery businesses.

We continued to “Speak up for cats” and campaign for change through our advocacy initiatives, working with and influencing politicians and decision makers across the UK and in the EU to create a better world for cats.

We continued to invest in digital activity to reach more people with homing and welfare messages. Our online rehoming service, Find-a-cat, allows members of the public to view cats in our care currently available for homing. Our Find-a-cat advertising campaign on TV and online saw search volumes rise from 2,270 in 2014 to 9,150 in 2015. Similarly, Find-a-cat enquiries rose from 7,086 by the end of 2014 to 29,159 during 2015. The advertising also featured targeted messages to help with homing older cats.

We launched a new homing tool, Find-a-home, which allows our branches to email a list of the cats in their care to local people who have expressed an interest in adopting a cat.

Our online following continued to grow: ‘likes’ on our national Facebook page increased to over 350,000 (2014: 200,000) and our national Twitter account had over 70,000 (2014: 53,000) followers by the end of the year. We have a regional social media following too, with over 200 of our branches,

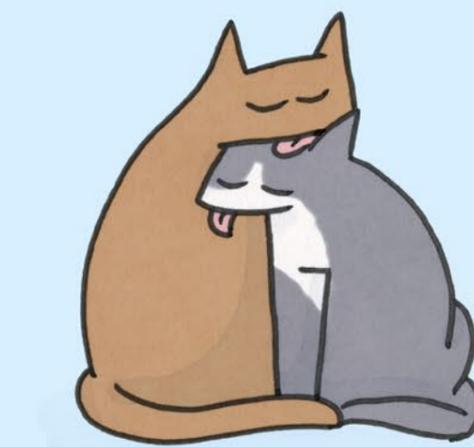
shops and adoption centres having a Facebook presence. Our branch, adoption centre and national websites combined had over 77 million page views (2014: 37 million) by over 3 million users (2014: around 2.7 million) and our *Meow!* blog had over 193,000 page views throughout the year (2014: 77,000).

We developed a strategy for using online video sharing website YouTube to deliver increased awareness of the Cats Protection brand and to help us establish ourselves as one of the key providers of high-quality cat videos.

National Black Cat Day, our annual celebration of monochrome moggies on social media was bigger than ever in 2015, with our video titled ‘Five misconceptions about black cats’ reaching 3.8 million people and our hashtag #BlackCatDay trending as one of the most popular topics on Twitter. Sadly, black cats are often overlooked when in our care so we’ll continue to champion them and find them homes.

We have continued to invest in the ongoing development of Cat Match, our app for mobile devices, in response to feedback from users of the game. Cat Match is a game designed for mobile devices in which players run a virtual adoption centre. The app is essentially a form of advertising which helps to raise awareness of our work with new audiences.

To continue to build the Cats Protection brand, we further developed our online system which enables branches and adoption centres to use a range of branded templates to develop their own for adverts and promotional materials to raise their profiles, ensuring that we present a consistent high-quality visual identity throughout the UK.





Helping people understand cats' needs

We began developing an overarching welfare strategy which will influence how we talk to people about cats and their needs, and how we treat our cats in care, because as a species they are very misunderstood. The strategy will be launched in 2016.

Working closely with the veterinary profession is vital to our charitable aims. We continued to develop our relationships with veterinary schools through giving lectures and arranging visits for students from the Universities of Nottingham, Bristol, Glasgow and Surrey to our adoption centres so they understand the challenges faced by charities. We took placements from students at the National Cat Centre's vet clinic who submitted reports for our Veterinary Student Awards.

We continue to work with the public to dispel the myth that cats should have one litter; there is no evidence to suggest that having one litter of kittens is beneficial. We also continue our work educating vets that the age at which we should routinely neuter cats should be around four months of age – before they reach puberty.

We spoke to vets working with rehoming charities to raise the profile of shelter medicine, which focuses on the health and welfare of animals in shelters or adoption centres. We were also involved in writing the first British textbook on shelter medicine which will be published in 2016.

We are developing targeted advertising with the aim of educating hard-to-reach audiences, such as those who might be more likely to buy a cat rather than adopt one, to raise awareness of important cat welfare messages.

We continue to educate the public on cats' needs through our national Helpline, where we introduced improved technology that enabled us to develop a network of home-based volunteers to handle calls. All skilled in customer service, the team uses online guidance software so they have instant access to accurate information. This innovative approach to running the Helpline has significantly helped to reduce the number of missed calls. Our Helpline handled over 38,000 calls and emails (2014: 32,000) and the team donated around 4,000 hours (2014: 1,400 hours).

Cat welfare is at the heart of what we do. A number of cat cafés have opened in recent years and we believe this type of environment is not suitable for domestic cats. Domestic cats have evolved as solitary animals and it is likely that some or all of the cats involved will become stressed as a result of being in a confined space with a continually changing group of visitors. We have expressed our concerns about cat cafés in the media.

Reducing overpopulation of cats

We will reduce the overpopulation of cats:

- through targeted neutering campaigns and education
- by directing more resources to the promotion of early neutering
- by doing more research and gathering better data on the impact of our neutering work

We run the largest single-species neutering programme in the world and in 2015 we neutered 159,000 cats and kittens including 19,000 feral cats (2014: 163,000 cats including 22,000 ferals). A feral cat is one that has not had adequate positive contact with humans as a young kitten and as a result will always remain fearful of people. They are not tame but live and act like wild animals. We run programmes of trap, neuter and return, or relocate if there is no possibility of returning to their original site, to control feral colonies.

As kittens can reach sexual maturity and become pregnant from four months, we recommend that owned kittens are routinely neutered at four months of age. The key to preventing more unplanned litters of kittens being born is to make neutering at this age the 'norm' for pet cats. The procedure can be performed earlier and kittens in our care may be neutered soon after their first

vaccination at eight weeks of age. We know we cannot achieve this without the help of vets, so we work closely with the veterinary profession. In 2015 we successfully recruited 100 Kitten Neutering Champions, who are vets that have volunteered as mentors for other vets to champion the kitten neutering message. We also wrote a feature for professional journal the *Veterinary Record*. We also updated *The Veterinary Guide*, a guide we issue to vets explaining our policies and ways of working, to include further information for vets on kitten neutering.

One cat that unfortunately wasn't neutered in time was Pickle (formerly Grace), who was still a kitten herself when she became pregnant at around five months old. She was seven months old when she came into the care of our Northampton Branch heavily pregnant. Following the birth of her litter, she became very ill with mastitis. Thankfully, after dedicated veterinary care she recovered and has found a new home. Diana Johnson, a volunteer at the branch says: "Pickle's story shows just how important it is to neuter cats from four months of age. Neutering has many health benefits and helps to reduce the number of unwanted cats in the UK."

We have been working with other charities under the umbrella of the Cat Population Control Group to maximise the effectiveness of cat neutering through collaboration on research, joint projects and coordination of activities. The group has been working to provide a 'one stop shop' for vets who are already neutering from four months or are keen to introduce four-month neutering. As part of this activity, we launched the Kitten Neutering Database (KiND) microsite and 'rebranded' our Early Neutering Register. KiND is a resource for vets where they can find scientific evidence supporting four-month neutering and videos which demonstrate and talk them through the surgery. In 2015, 146 vet practices joined KiND, meaning at the end of 2015 there were 1,322 practices on our database, which is one quarter of all registered veterinary practices.

We have five Community Neutering Officers who focus on community engagement, aiming to set up new neutering campaigns, make inroads into targeting harder-to-reach audiences, recruit volunteers as champions of neutering messages within communities and for Trap, Neuter & Return (TNR) work. Projects and campaigns will be mostly targeted in urban areas where deprivation is high and reports of feral and 'community cat' colonies are increasing, which often involve working with other agencies.

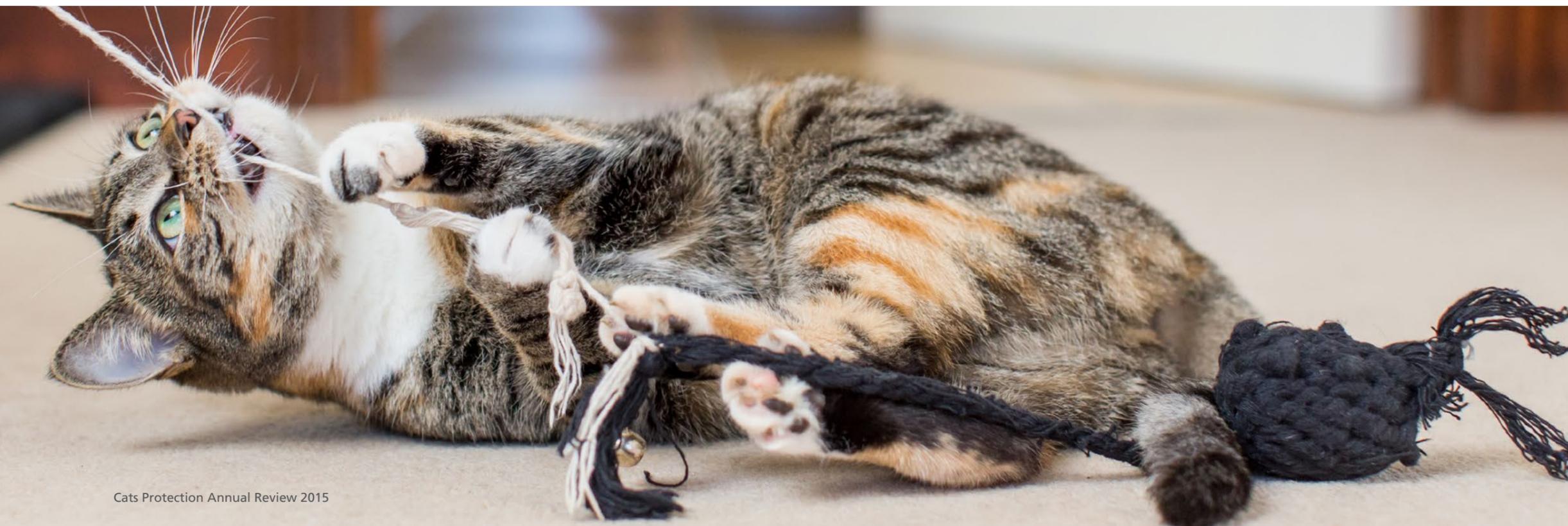
We're funding two Masters degree students at the University of Bristol, who are undertaking projects looking at barriers to neutering voucher redemption and assessing the effectiveness of our East Midlands neutering campaign.

Throughout 2015 we contributed to a number of collaborative initiatives with the RSPCA, including a scheme with their Kent North West Branch which provides subsidised neutering to people living in certain postcodes. A campaign offering subsidised neutering in North Wales was run collaboratively with RSPCA branches from February to April. We continued a Swansea campaign with the RSPCA Llys Nini branch which allowed eligible owners to get their cat neutered, microchipped and flea/worm treated for just £5.

We continued collaborating with the PDSA on a joint neutering scheme and continued to run our Protect Your Pet events in Wales, where owners can bring their cats for health checks, de-fleaing and de-worming, microchipping and neutering vouchers.

In London, we are members of the C4 Consortium, which together with other animal welfare charities and veterinary practices provides free neutering to eligible cat owners and delivers messages to the community to dispel myths about neutering.

Pickle has now been neutered and is enjoying life in her new home



Rehoming cats

In 2015 we rehomed 44,000 cats (2014: 45,000). The decrease is partly due to temporary closures at some of our adoption centres due to major refurbishments which limited our ability to rehome as many cats. In addition, we experienced a decrease of around 13 per cent in kittens being admitted to, or born in, our centres. In general, kittens find their new home quicker than older cats. We are confident that our developments and plans for new homing centres will allow us to home even more cats, with even better welfare and lower costs in the future.

Pops was just one of those lucky cats we found a home for in 2015. She was found abandoned by the side of a road in Radstock, near Bath. Worried she had been struck by a car, a passer-by rushed Pops to vets who found she was nearly blind. Overlooked time and time again because of her 'scary' eyes, 19-year-old Pops was adopted from our Midsomer Norton & Radstock Branch following national media coverage and over 200 offers of a home. Her new owner said: "When I saw the story about Pops in the paper I couldn't believe someone hadn't snapped her up already. I wasn't put off by her eyes and health problems. We think she is adorable, she is warm and cuddly and settling in well."

To help us find homes for even more cats in need, we're opening new adoption centres and working on ways to reduce the opening and running costs so we can develop at a much greater rate than in the past. Alongside these plans, we will be creating new volunteer-run branches based on the identified need in locations across UK.

We've invested in branch development roles to plan, recruit and induct volunteers and get each new branch off the ground.

In July 2015, we opened a homing centre in Mitcham, south London. The centre is the first to be built in a leasehold property under a unique flexible-building model which allows the internal structure to be moved to another leased building if necessary. As well as rehoming cats, the Mitcham Homing Centre will become a regional focal point for Cats Protection and other animal welfare organisations in the area to work together to tackle cat welfare issues in south west London. The centre will not only provide a host of volunteering opportunities to help local people develop their skills and experience but also provide cat welfare education programmes which will be open to schools and other youth and community groups, reinforcing the benefits of responsible pet ownership.

We've invested in rebuilding or refurbishing adoption centres in Haslemere, Evesham, York, Newbury and Bredhurst. The projects involved replacing the old pens with the latest walk-in style pens, upgrading ancillary facilities and improving welfare facilities for cats, volunteers and staff. We're also working on plans to open an adoption centre in Tyneside.

In addition, we're becoming more visible and have plans to locate new adoption centres and satellite centres in easily accessible locations. Satellite centres have a small number of pens for ready to home cats. Satellites will be linked to a nearby adoption centre and will be in locations identified as



After being missing for 18 months, Phoenix was reunited with his family

having high footfall, such as garden centres or shopping villages, to reach even more people.

In 2015, we laid the foundations of a new partnership with the Donkey Sanctuary which will see a new satellite homing facility for Cats Protection at their site in Sidmouth, Devon. Likewise, we will be looking after donkeys at our National Cat Centre in Sussex, attracting new visitors to the site who might then consider adopting one of the cats in our care.

As well as our online and TV rehoming adverts, we're researching virtual opportunities to promote cats and Cats Protection to the public in order to increase the number of cats rehomed. We're developing online videos and investigating the live streaming of cats in our care online and through TV screens in our shops and in vet practices, which is another way of reaching wider audiences and encouraging them to think about adopting from us.

During the year, we undertook research to better understand the motivations and attitudes towards adopting a rescue cat. The findings will help us in planning future projects and advertising.

As well as rehoming cats, we also help to reunite lost ones with their families. In 2015, we reunited 3,000 cats (2014: 3,000). Ten-year-old Phoenix, who had been missing for 18 months, was found by his owner when she visited our Derby Adoption Centre in search of a new pet. Although Phoenix was still registered to his owner with a microchip, the family had since moved home and since his details had not been updated, the adoption centre was unable to get in touch. The owner's five-year-old son Ronnie noticed Phoenix straight away, cheering with excitement at the sight of his 'best friend'. "He was purring as soon as we went over to him and it was amazing to be able to hold him," said the cat's owner, Michelle. This lucky reunion reinforces the importance of microchipping – and ensuring contact details are kept up-to-date.

Helping us to get there

Growing income and managing funds

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to all the caring and generous cat lovers who currently support us with their donations, which have a significant impact on improving the lives of cats that desperately need our help.

Our recent investment in fundraising is proving very successful, enabling us to invest new money into our work, so Cats Protection is now at a stage where we can grow to help more cats than ever before. The investment has helped our fundraising income grow by 26 per cent in 2015 (2014: 11.4 per cent).

We work with fundraising agencies to recruit cat lovers to become sponsors or take part in our weekly lottery, which enables us to work to a scale we would not be able to achieve in-house. This means that more money can go directly towards caring for cats in need of our help. We have a number of controls in place to try to ensure that the trust and confidence of the public and potential donors are maintained. The agencies we use are contractually obliged to follow our policy on vulnerable people and all donors are given every opportunity to opt out if they no longer wish to take part.

As members of the Fundraising Standards Board we follow the Institute of Fundraising's Code of Fundraising Practice and abide by all data protection legislation. Campaigns are a big part of fundraising and our team spends a lot of time planning, testing and analysing the best way to approach and engage with our supporters.

Our supporters have been very generous this year and we've seen rapid growth in the number of people giving to Cats Protection regularly – we now have over 100,000 people regularly donating via Direct Debit. Face-to-face fundraising is one of the most successful ways of finding new donors to support our cause and in 2015 we raised over £4m in this way to help the cats in our care.

Our cat sponsorship scheme has over 40,000 sponsors (2014: 30,000), and over 25,000 people are now playing our weekly lottery (2014: 13,000).

In 2015, 1,790 people pledged to leave a gift to Cats Protection in their will (2014: 1,870), which can help change the lives of thousands of cats and kittens for years to come, and our free Cat Guardians scheme saw 1,330 people register in 2015 (2014: 800). This service offers reassurance to cat owners that in the event of their death, we will give their cats all the love and care they need until we can find them a new home.

We expanded our network of shops from 75 to 89, as a step towards our plan to open 200 by the end of 2020. We have reviewed our approach to how and where we set up our shops, giving us a better presence on the high street in order to generate income and increase awareness of Cats Protection and our work. Our shops will also allow branches and centres to profile the cats in their care to a wider audience; this will often take the form of virtual homing screens in our shops, advertising local cats available for rehoming.

Our new shops boast a consistent, contemporary design and are located in more high-profile positions within towns. We've seen shop opening sales increase by 118 per cent in the first week compared to previous shop openings. Our new 'Catitude' shop in Bewdley, Worcestershire opened in December as a boutique selling premium and designer labels and made over £1,500 in its first weekend.

Gabby Hartigan-Jeremiah is a volunteer at our new flagship shop in Eastbourne. "I started volunteering for Cats Protection because I love working with people," she said. "My cats passed away and I wanted to do something in their memory. There are lots of positive comments from customers and there's never a dull moment!"



As well as opening new shops, we're maximising the potential of our existing shops by offering support, training and development opportunities for our volunteers. We fully refurbished two shops in 2015.

We have launched a new portfolio of international fundraising challenges, including a Great Wall of China walk and a Zambezi River canoe volunteering project in 2016. We took part in more challenge events, including an abseil of the Avon Gorge, a zip wire challenge in the North East and six people ran the London Marathon on behalf of Cats Protection. Brave cat-lover and volunteer 70-year-old George Russell scaled new heights to raise money for Cats Protection. He abseiled 160ft down the sea walls of the Avon Gorge and generated over £300 for our Swindon Branch. "Why did I do it? I'm mad!" said George. "I had never done an abseil before and it sounded like a challenge."

Thank you to our corporate partners, including Pets at Home and Support Adoption For Pets, for their ongoing support. Our third fundraising weekend with Support Adoption For Pets across all Pets At Home stores took place in February 2015. Over 125 Cats Protection branches and adoption centres worked with Pets At Home stores and raised more than £53,000. Together with the proceeds from the fundraising weekends in 2013 and 2014 we have now raised more than £120,000. We also continue to be supported through Pets at Home's Very Important Pets Club (VIP Club). During 2015, we received £49,500 in grants for projects from Support Adoption For Pets. Our branches and adoption centres also received over £54,000 in donations from bi-annual fundraising drives.

Thank you to *Simon's Cat* for their continued support in 2015 and for kindly granting us use of a *Simon's Cat* design for the pin badge at our Pets at Home fundraising weekend. Thank you to PURINA® for their continued support of our branches and adoption centres through the provision of subsidised food and for their support over the last 10 years through the World of Felix token scheme.

Thank you also to Ceva, who continue to support us through sales of their Feliway® diffuser and Magpie homeware brand who donate a portion of all their website orders to us. Thank you to the many others who support our work through corporate partnerships.

We work closely with pet insurance company Petplan, who provide owners with free insurance cover for the first four weeks after a new CP cat is homed with them. Adopters have the opportunity to continue their insurance cover and support Cats Protection at the same time through the commission we receive on new policies and renewals. Each year we receive about £500,000 this way.

We've been working with our partners to talk to their customers about our work. Thank you to MedicAnimal who promoted our Manifesto for Cats on their website and Facebook page and sent an e-newsletter of the manifesto priorities to their customer base of over 500,000 people. They also supported us by promoting some of our key fundraising messages such as our cat sponsorship scheme.

We released a strategy for our adoption centres and branches which outlines how social media can be used to reach and inform supporters by providing information on cat care and welfare, promoting neutering and encouraging rehoming. It also provides an opportunity to generate income for our branches and adoption centres. Fundraising is essential to help us achieve our charitable aims and social media is ideally placed to reach and attract younger donors in order to achieve longer-term sustainability.

Seventy-year-old George Russell bravely abseiled 160ft to help cats in our Swindon Branch



Speaking up for cats

A highlight of 2015 was our advocacy work around the General Election in May, putting cat welfare on the political agenda. We launched our Manifesto for Cats to an audience of MPs, other charities and professional organisations in the House of Commons. We unveiled the manifesto at a reception hosted by Neil Parish MP, Chair of the EFRA (Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) Committee and supported by Petplan. The event was attended by 40 MPs and Lords including the then Minister for Animal Welfare, Lord de Mauley,

and the then Shadow Minister, Angela Smith MP. The manifesto comprises 10 issues of longstanding concern to Cats Protection and the aim is to keep cat welfare issues high on the political agenda. The launch generated significant media coverage in *The Times* and *The Independent* and over 1,000 letters were written by the public to MPs in support of the manifesto. The print and online press coverage reached 25 million people while our manifesto video was viewed 45,000 times.



Photo: Philippa Gedge Photography

Currently, there is no legislation in the UK specific to the breeding of cats for sale and we're concerned about kittens sold under poor conditions, for example, if they are underage or unwell. We conducted a survey of 150 of our branches who collected evidence of breeding of kittens for sale. We worked with the Canine and Feline Sector Group (CFSG) to prepare a report looking into what is known – and what is not known – about the breeding and sale of cats, with an emphasis on kittens. We led a working group including Battersea Dogs & Cats Home, RSPCA, PDSA, Wood Green Animal Rescue, Blue Cross and the British Veterinary Association. The findings will form the basis of future discussions with government on the topic and we shall also be raising this issue in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland ahead of the devolved elections in May 2016.

Our parliamentary work included briefing MPs on areas of concern and raising parliamentary questions on topics including the importation of kittens, air gun attacks and the microchipping of cats in Scotland. We worked with Lord Black to introduce, for the second time, a Private Members' Bill proposing regulation of cat breeding in order to tackle the welfare problems often associated with unscrupulous breeders driven by profit motives.

We submitted responses to Government consultations on the 2021 census proposing a new question on pets in households, which would give us better data on the population of owned cats in England and Wales.

We helped to update the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Cats, which came out as guidance under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. The document explains the duty of care on pet owners to ensure they care for their animals properly.

We offered representation and shared information at the Scottish and Welsh animal welfare cross-party groups and gave input into a review of the Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 2011.

At European level we supported the Protect our Pets campaign launched by Eurogroup for Animals and backed their proposals to ensure all breeders and sellers of pets are registered from 2020. The Protect our Pets campaign tackles the illegal pet trade and online sales across the EU. It is also calling for the harmonisation of pet microchip databases, making it easier to trace where an animal has come from. Our press work on this campaign had a circulation of over 71,000 which helped to raise awareness of its importance. We frequently posted about the Protect our Pets campaign on our Facebook and Twitter pages. We were delighted to help generate almost 92,000 emails to MEPs from the UK, which is 21 per cent of the total 435,000 emails sent from EU member states over the five months of the campaign.

We're pleased to see the Transport Minister at Westminster requiring the Highways Agency to scan cats that are victims of road traffic accidents. The Government also encouraged but did not compel Local Authorities to scan which is important as their cleansing departments have responsibility for the more minor roads where sadly many of the road accidents involving cats occur. We're pressing for the administrations in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland to make the same requirements on Transport Authorities and to encourage Local Councils to scan cat victims of road traffic accidents.

Throughout the year, our advocacy campaigns were frequently in the media commenting on dog attacks, snaring, shootings and poisonings of cats. The media circulation figures relating to all advocacy campaigns throughout the year was 420 million (2014: 418 million).

Partnership working

Working with other authoritative and knowledgeable animal welfare charities and organisations will increase our influence and help us to further improve conditions for cats. In addition to our corporate partners mentioned earlier, during 2015 we worked effectively with the Pet Advertising Advisory Group (PAAG) on raising standards of online advertising of pets, alongside advertising websites such as Gumtree, Preloved and Friday Ad.

We worked with the CFSG which reports to Government on areas of animal welfare concern. The group has members from a number of animal charities, veterinary organisations and industry stakeholders and helps us to have a more effective partnership with Government. We are a member of The Cat Group, a collection of professional organisations dedicated to feline welfare; and the Association of Dogs and Cats Homes (ADCH) which promotes best practice in animal welfare for dogs and cats. We provide input to these groups which helps promote the overall message of cat welfare.

We attended the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) congress 2015 and participated in a new shelter medicine stream and contributed to surveys with the Pet Food Manufacturers' Association (PFMA), which will be detailed later in this report.

We are often asked to advise outside the UK. We make our expertise and resources freely available and, by attending and speaking at conferences, we share our knowledge for the benefit of cats and people internationally. We also host visits from those engaged in similar work in other countries and give a very limited amount of equipment overseas through a scheme administered by SNIP International, a UK charity that promotes neutering overseas. We also promoted cat welfare on an international level by representing the charity at the International Companion Animal Welfare Conference (ICAWC) 2015 and supporting Eurogroup for Animals, chairing their cats and dogs working group throughout 2015.

Infrastructure and support systems

The number of cats we've helped is thanks in no small part to the tireless passion and commitment from our 9,800 volunteers all over the UK (2014: 9,700), who gave up an estimated 4.9 million hours in 2015 (2014: 4.8 million hours). The work we do simply wouldn't be possible without their invaluable links to local communities, their experience, knowledge and skills and we would like to offer our sincere thanks and appreciation. We're likewise very thankful to our staff who are also vital in helping us to achieve all that we do to help cats.

Information technology

We developed a number of IT systems to help our volunteers and staff with their roles. A new customer relationship management system will improve communications across the charity. We also introduced Microsoft 365 cloud-based technology, which is free and gives our volunteers access to Cats Protection-branded email addresses and Microsoft Office software such as Word, Excel and Outlook. This will be made available to all branches in 2016.

We also began offering technology which will enable branches to print their own neutering vouchers, reducing administration for our volunteers. We launched a new internal system which offers us an easy way to share information across the charity, particularly to our volunteers all over the country.

Learning and development

We provide training and support to our volunteers and staff, to help them fulfil their roles to their full potential; and in 2015 we began offering a Volunteer Assistance Programme which supports volunteers through the challenges faced within work, at home and in their volunteering roles.

We developed an online programme for training volunteers and staff, covering topics as varied as cat care, project management and IT skills, which until recently were only available as face-to-face modules. The cat care course covers infectious diseases, disease control and health checking with interactive quizzes. With thousands of staff and volunteers to support, e-learning saves vital funds for the charity and is becoming an essential part of training in cat welfare issues.

Delivering the cat care module online, for instance, saves the charity around £2,000 for every 60 learners.

One of our interactive training modules reinforces the importance of where we put a cat's vital resources within a pen in the rescue environment, which can have an impact on behaviour, stress and risk of disease. We're very pleased that this activity won the Charity Learning Award 2015 for the 'Best eLearning module design'. The awards recognise charities who create innovative resources with limited budgets. Another internal e-learning course called Understanding Feline Origins was completed in full by 500 staff and volunteers, while the external version of the course was accessed by members of the public over 30,000 times.

The e-learning portal also offers social media training for branches and adoption centres, and we're developing an online version of our fosterers' induction which we aim to launch in 2016. One cat owner said of the course: "Having had cats for over 20 years this session gave me so much information that will mean that I make significant changes to the way I do things in the future."

Better information to help us do our work

We know the importance of undertaking research and gathering information to inform our future work, which will ultimately help us to rehome and neuter more cats and further raise awareness of feline welfare and our work.

The PFMA is the leading trade body for the UK pet food industry. We contributed questions to their annual survey reporting on the UK's pet population, which will give us useful information about household cats; and jointly conducted a survey with them which discovered that nearly half of the UK's owned cats are not microchipped.

The findings supported our campaign during National Microchipping Month in June and helped us to drive home the importance of microchipping pets.

We conducted some research to better understand the demographic profile and the motivations of our adopters, both existing and potential. Findings from this homing research project showed that over half the population would consider getting a rescue cat and those sampled had few concerns about getting a rescue cat. The information is helpful in giving us confidence that our plans are on the right track and that there is a lot of interest and goodwill towards adopting rescue cats among the UK population.

We provided support to our volunteers to introduce them to new technology – including an online banking tool and a system which allows us to track all the cats that come into CP care through to adoption. Both systems allow us to capture vital data and ensure the smooth running of our operations.

Into the future

Our strategy is a long-term one and in the years ahead we will continue working to realise each of our strategic aims and objectives, including:

- launching an overarching welfare strategy to help people better understand cats' needs
- recruiting volunteers for our new Bereavement Support Service, new shops, branches and centres and for many other roles across the charity
- recruiting regional press officers to help our branches and adoption centres gain extra media coverage for their appeals and success stories
- developing cat welfare advertising campaigns and promoting them on a large scale
- investigating the potential for creating a cat census to give us a better picture of the population of stray and feral cats in the UK
- opening new branches, satellite centres, adoption centres and undertaking refurbishments
- opening new shops and growing them in clusters so they can support each other and stock can be rotated
- launching cat manifestos to improve feline welfare in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
- continuing the development of centralised IT services and customer service technology to further expand our capacity to handle calls and emails
- working with local authorities to improve cat welfare

Our impact

Cats Protection is the UK's leading feline welfare charity. The impact of our work addresses cat welfare issues across a range of timeframes. Our rehoming addresses the immediate issue of helping cats in need. Since 2010, we have rehomed and reunited more than one quarter of a million cats. In the medium term, our neutering work will help control the population of cats so there are fewer unwanted cats. Since 2010, we have helped to neuter over one million cats, preventing millions of unwanted litters. Our education and information work has the long-term impact of changing attitudes within society so that people take a more responsible view of cat ownership and welfare. Since 2010, we have delivered over two thousand educational talks.

Public benefit

The Directors of the Corporate Trustee have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. This is reflected in the review of the activities undertaken by the charity contained in this report.

We believe that our vision of a world in which every cat is treated with kindness and an understanding of its needs benefits society as a whole. Cats play a huge part in the lives of millions of people in the UK. According to recent research, a quarter of UK households has at least one pet cat (Source: PDSA, 2015). By supporting cats, we are providing a benefit to owners, carers and other people who come into contact with cats.

We provide public benefit by:

- reassuring cat owners that their cats will be cared for and rehomed if they become incapable of looking after them either through illness, death or for other reasons
- helping to control the incidence and spread of disease and suffering in cat populations through vaccination, neutering and education, benefitting both human and animal health
- assisting those on low incomes with the cost of neutering through our voucher scheme
- assisting local and housing authorities and local communities by taking in and rehoming stray, lost or abandoned cats and by controlling feral populations
- assisting local authorities by taking in cats from multi-cat households
- providing volunteering opportunities for those who wish to support our work, including through the Duke of Edinburgh programme
- providing advice to governments on animal welfare legislation, in partnership with other animal welfare organisations where appropriate
- providing educational talks and other activities to both children and adults to increase awareness of cat welfare
- commissioning, undertaking and disseminating research into matters affecting cats and the human population
- helping people experiencing domestic abuse by providing temporary care for their cats under the Freedom Project, in liaison with the Dogs Trust
- enhancing the quality of life for people in care homes both by homing cats into care homes and encouraging care homes to welcome residents' own cats
- educating vets, vet nurses, vet students and other animal professionals and giving them practical experience as part of and beyond their formal training



Financial review

2015 was another successful year for Cats Protection. Our income grew by 21 per cent to £55.9m. This was mainly due to a £6.3m increase in legacy receipts and a £3.4m increase in donations and event income, the latter resulting from significant new investment in fundraising activities since 2012. We have used the additional income to increase our day-to-day expenditure on our charitable activities by £3.1m. We also spent a further £5m on our buildings and other assets, including the major refurbishment of a number of our existing adoption centres as well as fitting out the new Mitcham Homing Centre. We invested an additional £5.3m in fundraising to help ensure we have the income to support our work well into the future.

A summary of our income and expenditure for 2015 is presented below. These figures are based on the income and expenditure figures included in the full audited and unqualified accounts for the year ended 31 December 2015. Copies can be obtained from our website www.cats.org.uk or by applying to the National Cat Centre.

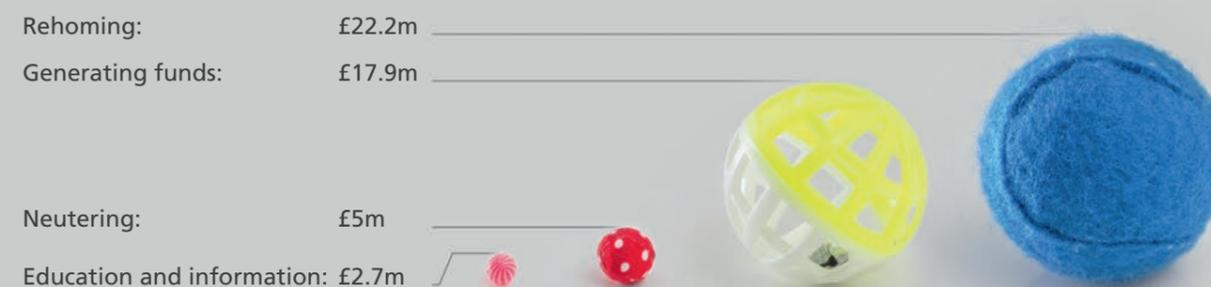
Where our money came from

Total income in 2015: £55.9m



How we spent our money

Total expenditure in 2015: £47.8m



Our network

- Over 250 volunteer-run branches
- 32 centres
- 89 shops
- 9,800 volunteers

Support us

There are lots of ways you can help us, from adopting a cat to making a donation, leaving a legacy or following us on Facebook. For more information on how to help, see our website www.cats.org.uk/get-involved

Contact us by phoning our Helpline on 03000 12 12 12, or email helpline@cats.org.uk.

You can also visit www.cats.org.uk or write to us at: Cats Protection, National Cat Centre, Chelwood Gate, Haywards Heath, Sussex, RH17 7TT.

Thank you, on behalf
of the cats!

*Our vision is a world where every
cat is treated with kindness and
an understanding of its needs.*



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