

RSPCA West Gwynedd

❖ BRANCH NEWSLETTER ❖

Issue 17

April 2013

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Cats and Caravans

Over the years we've received many calls regarding problems with cats at campsites, caravan sites and holiday parks from visitors, residents and owners. Being a largely rural area with a lengthy coastline and beautiful beaches, we have many such sites within our Branch area. The suspicion is that some visitors bring their un-neutered pets with them, but when ready to leave, their beloved cat cannot be found and gets left behind. Cat-loving visitors may also feed stray or feral cats that have come on-site – especially if they have kittens. This builds up the adults for breeding condition, and increases the numbers that the site can support – until the visitors go home at the end of the holiday season when the cats must fend for themselves. Un-neutered cats also have a tendency to mate with their relatives, increasing the risk of genetic problems and diseases.

At one caravan site, a kind-hearted neighbour looks after the cats all year round. Since 2005 we have paid for the neutering of 30 cats to control their numbers, and the lady feeds and cares for them on her own premises, with names for each and every "guest". A concerned manager at another site approached us for assistance, saying that they had at least 7

mother-cats with an average of 2-3 kittens each. He agreed to capture and transport them to a vet if we could provide traps and pay for the operations. When we arrived, there were cats and kittens scattering everywhere in the hay-barn. Judging by their speed and vigour, they were all in good condition, but very feral. They were dry and warm, and well-fed by the manager. So far, he has succeeded in catching 13 cats, which should at least help keep the numbers down. By neutering the cats their numbers are kept under control, and reduces the chance of outsider cats joining the colony.

Our most recent case was at a large holiday park where a resident contacted Cats Protection concerned about the welfare of the cat population over Winter when the site is closed to the public due to licensing restrictions. Cats Protection passed the call over to us, so our first action was to ensure that the management were willing for us to get involved. They were happy about our welfare proposals and accepted the cats as a form of natural pest controllers. Between Christmas Eve and March 1, we visited almost every day to feed the cats and check on their welfare. During the milder spells, we managed to trap and neuter 17 of the 19 cats we'd identified at three different locations on the site. Each neutered cat was ear-tipped while under anaesthetic for future identification....(turn to back page)



Working Together for Animals



In previous editions of our newsletter we've mentioned joint projects and we

continue to make the most of joint resources where possible. This year the National Society forged ahead with a new initiative with Pets at Home and local RSPCA branches were encouraged to contact their local store to make the most of fundraising opportunities. The primary focus is to support our animal welfare by providing the Society with an opportunity to raise funds, to let people know about the good work the RSPCA does, to encourage people to help us and to try to find good and loving homes for the animals in our care.

Some concerns have been raised about the Society being seen to be supporting the sale of animals from pet shops, however meetings are held between representatives from Pets at Home and the RSPCA every eight weeks, providing a forum to discuss how best to address issues such as impulse buying, early neutering of rabbits, provision of suitable advice and support, together with specific matters raised by our Branches and inspectors. The matters discussed and the outcomes will be recorded so that we can see over a period of time the very real improvements we are able to make in the lives of companion animals.

West Gwynedd Branch contacted Pets at Home at Bangor and despite them having already made their own arrangements to support another local animal charity, they were happy for us to hold collections at the store and to promote the work we do. The collection on February 16th raised £182.94 primarily due to Steve bringing along his lovely

German Shepherd rescue-dog Duke. We will be there again on Saturday, September 28th so come along and help us if you can.



The Society's arrangement with Tesco to allow us to collect at their stores during RSPCA Week has continued to be a major source of income to the Branch. In 2012 we raised £4,170.46, a phenomenal amount considering these difficult times. Unfortunately, due to the demand from charities nationally to hold collections at Tesco, they have decided that they have to reduce the number of collection days allowed to local Branches in future, unless local negotiations can be made. Luckily, committee member David has managed to arrange a whole week of collection days at the Bangor store from Friday 3rd May to Thursday 9th May. Collections at Tesco Caernarfon and Porthmadog will be from Friday 3rd May to Sunday 5th May. Again if you can help, please contact David on **01248 353933** or Ann on **01248 671304**. We really need your help to make this event a success.



MORRISONS

The Branch is grateful to the staff and generous customers of Morrisons stores in Bangor and Caernarfon, who continue to donate pet food in the collection boxes at these stores. The tins, boxes of biscuits and treats help to feed the dogs and cats at RSPCA Bryn y Maen Animal Centre and Branch Secretary Freda's collection of strays and semi-feral cats looking for good homes.

Working Together for Animals (continued)

The Original Factory Shop, Pwllheli

Each year, branches of The Original Factory Shop can nominate a local charity as their Charity of the Year. In 2013, The Original Factory Shop at Pwllheli has been kind enough to select RSPCA West Gwynedd Branch as their nominated charity. As well as donating the monies raised from carrier bag charging and charity box collections they are hoping to hold regular fundraising events in-store. So look out for our raffles, name the fluffy animal competitions, tombolas etc. Thanks to the manager Helen Pluhar for accepting our nomination and we look forward to our joint venture throughout the year.



National RSPCA Door-to-Door Campaign

Each year the National Society runs a door-to-door fundraising campaign. The fundraisers call at homes across England and Wales, giving people the chance to find out about our work and become a regular supporter. This campaign has proved to be an essential source of much-needed funds. We've also discovered that our door-to-door campaign brings us new supporters who we might not have had the opportunity to reach in other ways. Initially Branches were a little reticent that the National Society was doing this in their areas as it could be seen as competition. However, 50% of the profits made across England and Wales is shared equally between the Branches – in 2012 we were given £37,992. So if one of the Society's fundraisers calls at your door, please be friendly!



The Mobile Clinic

Our neighbouring Aberconwy Branch is very kindly continuing to provide the use of their mobile clinic with weekly visits to the Maesgeirchen estate on the outskirts of Bangor and also to Blaenau Ffestiniog Community Centre. Vet Jim Mason offers free advice, and a variety of treatments including vaccinations and flea treatments for pets whose owners are in receipt of a number of means-tested benefits. Committee member Ann visited the clinic at Maesgeirchen in September and was impressed with the excellent work being done by Jim and his band of volunteers and received very positive feedback from clients. It was decided to raise our contribution towards the clinic to £8,000 per year. The clinic is at the Community Centre, Blaenau Ffestiniog on Tuesdays 1:00 - 3:00pm and at 24 Llys Dylan, Maesgeirchen on Thursdays 3:00 – 4:30 pm.



The Branch has been fortunate to continue working with the Dogs Trust on their neutering and micro-chipping campaigns. Dogs Trust offers a subsidized neutering scheme in specific regions in the UK, for those who receive means tested benefits. The Branch has been able to purchase their neutering vouchers at £30 each allowing us to offer dog neutering and micro-chipping free at Cibyn Veterinary Surgery in Caernarfon, Milfeddygon Deufor at Four Crosses, Pwllheli. Bodrwnsiwn Surgery, Llandegai, Bangor and Milfeddygon Dolgellau at Dolgellau. All dogs are also micro-chipped at the same time.

National Cruelty Hotline
0300 1234 999

RSPCA WEST GWYNEDD BRANCH

Shop at: 54 High Street, Pwllheli
Open 10:00 - 16:00 Tue, Wed, Fri & Saturday

Phone: 01758 750356 (Freda)
07900 597891 (Freda)
01248 671304 (Alun)

Email: Enquiries@RSPCAWestGwynedd.org



West Gwynedd Branch
Reg Charity 226126

We do what we can to help

We're on the Web!
www.RSPCAWestGwynedd.org

Branch Statistics for 2012

Animals given veterinary treatment funded by Branch voucher

Dogs	Cats	Rabbits	Other	Total
788	565	23	17	1,393

Animals neutered by Branch voucher

Dogs	Cats	Rabbits	Other	Total
123	380	3	3	509

Animals re-homed by Branch

Dogs	Cats	Rabbits	Other	Total
-	309	-	-	309

Total spent on vet bills: £51,013

Total spent on fostering: £4,181

All money spent locally has to be raised locally.

**We receive no lottery, nor government funding
nor grants from RSPCA HQ.**

We **urgently** need fundraisers to help out on collection days and to organise fundraising events, people willing to work on a regular basis in our shops, home-checkers for animals being adopted, people willing to help trap and to transport feral cats to veterinary surgeries. We also need regular donations of good quality clothes and bric-a-brac for the shop and temporary fosterers for cats and kittens.

Can YOU help in any way?

Cats and Caravans (continued)

Although they all had their preferred habitat there was a lot of overlap of their territories. It became fascinating watching the social interaction of the different colonies and individuals and we became very attached to them. Now the visiting human population has returned, we have explained to them what we have done and most are happy to carry on with their care – until next Winter when the responsibility is back to us.

Sadly not everyone likes cats, however. At another large site we spent from 1996 – 2005 helping a local lady support a huge feral colony. During those ten years we paid for neutering 51 cats, treating 56 and euthanasing 13 that were too sick to survive or be treated. In 2006, the management of the site changed hands and they called in a pest

control company which trapped and destroyed most of the colony.

