

PO Box 236 Newtownabbey BT36 9NE

**Accepted as a charity by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland
Charity Registration number NICC 100721**

THE CAT SUPPORT GROUP

(Founded in 2001)

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2022

(1st January 2022 to 31st December 2022)

Chairperson

Mrs Kate McGowan

Hon. Treasurer

Miss Sandra Johnstone

Hon. Secretary

Mrs Heather Cammock

Membership Secretary

Mr Richard Brown

Committee Members

Mrs Valerie Skelton

Mrs Carol Dougan

Mrs Jean Dykes

***We call them dumb animals, and so they are, for they cannot tell us how they feel,
but they do not suffer less because they have no words. Anna Sewell (1820 - 1878)***



HISTORY OF THE CAT SUPPORT GROUP

The Cat Support Group was formed in 2001. We were accepted as a charity by HMRC in 2004 but now have been registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland with Reg. No. NIC100721.

At present we have a membership of 90, with a membership fee of £15.00 per annum.

We do not have a shelter but our volunteers work from their own homes to look after kittens and cats which come into our care; with the aim of re-homing as many of these animals as possible. Our “no-kill” policy ensures that no healthy animal is ever put to sleep.

We have a Management Committee to oversee and approve the running of our affairs, consisting of a Chairperson, Hon. Secretary, Membership Secretary, Hon. Treasurer and up to five other non-office bearing Committee members.

To generate income, we have various fund-raising events throughout the year.

OBJECTIVES OF OUR CHARITY PLAN

1. To rescue stray and unwanted cats and kittens and to rehabilitate and re-home
2. To promote the neutering and spaying of all cats and kittens not required for breeding.
3. To help and advise the people on the care of cats and kittens, especially in a rescue situation.

We endeavour to meet these objectives by ensuring: -

All sick cats/kittens are given appropriate veterinary care and brought to a clean bill of health before being put forward for re-homing.

All rescue animals are neutered or spayed when rescued or, if too young then this will be carried out as soon as they are old enough.

Feral cats are trapped where possible and are neutered /spayed as appropriate. At this point they are also de-fleaed/wormed before being returned to their colonies. Ferals are provided with food as regularly as possible and a watch is kept for any cat which appears to be ill. If the animal can be caught it will be taken to a vet for examination.

We help and advise people who get in contact with us and people tend to find this useful, if not indeed comforting, if they are in a difficult or worrying situation.

THE CHARITY TEST

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland requires the Cat Support Group

To show how our charity is of benefit to the public: -

1. We are the only cat charity that is ‘open all hours’; indeed, our volunteers often receive phone calls late at night or at weekends when other help lines are closed. Cliftonpark Avenue Shelter volunteers earned a lot of respect for long years of service in an area where others feared to tread particularly when “The Troubles” were at their height. This has resulted in people who would not otherwise consider asking for assistance from ‘outsiders’ feeling comfortable enough to pick up the phone or indeed call with one of us for help.
2. Vets ring us for help as they know we will respond promptly if at all possible - we do not make empty promises.
3. Not having the financial, physical and mental stress associated with having a shelter frees our volunteers up to give the most valuable resource of all - time. We get calls from people wanting ‘rid’ of cats but if we take the time to talk to them, we find that actually we can help them to keep their cats.
4. Sometimes they cannot afford to feed them, so we help with funding. Maybe they need to go into hospital or have been forced to seek alternative accommodation and have

nowhere for the cats to go in the interim - we can, either try to find a volunteer to board them, or go into the house and feed them.

5. A colony of feral cats that grows month on month due to kittens being born is very stressful and can cause conflict in a neighbourhood. If we get the cats neutered not only does the breeding stop but the objectionable odour of tom cat spray disappears too.

6. Many friendships are forged through neighbours jointly feeding cats - older people make contact with people who not only get involved with feeding the cats but end up helping the pensioners themselves when the need arises. By helping the cats and occasionally a small dog, we have helped not only the person directly involved with the animals but the wider community.

COMMITTEE'S REPORT for 2022

Dear Members

Here we are again at the end of another year in the life of the Cat Support Group and can you believe it, the group had its 21st anniversary on 6th October, our inaugural meeting on that date in 2001. That historic meeting was held in the Cooke Centenary Church Hall. Funds were limited so we worked on a wing a prayer never thinking the group would still be carrying on 21 years later.

Even as the new year dawned and in the wake of the lockdown the committee wasn't sure when we would be able to have our first sale but eventually formalities were sorted out and our first sale in three years was held on 25th June. We are happy to meet and greet again our members and friends but to be honest the turn out wasn't great. We guess folks were still gathering themselves together after the pandemic, the lockdown and the slow process to get back to normality. Our AGM and two further sales were held in September and November and committee meetings have resumed as normal. The group held two lunches throughout the year, the first being a memorial lunch for Georgina Mollison who died the previous year as we were honouring her wishes. The second was the ever popular Christmas lunch, both held in Fortwilliam Golf Club Restaurant.

The welfare work has continued throughout the year with cats and kittens being trapped, neutering and/or spayed and there were some very noticeable rescues. An injured cat was rescued from the M2 Motorway near the Glengormley flyover. It was taken to a Cornerstone Veterinary Practice where it was treated for a broken pelvis and was treated over a period of four days. The owner was traced through Facebook. Another rescue involved a cat which was deemed to be a community cat just wandering about. A concerned person was contacted again through the social media and the CSG became involved. The cat whom we named Sidney was in very bad shape with sore eyes being a primary concern. This was caused by a condition called entropion where the eye lashes have turned inwards causing pain and infection. This required surgery to correct it and this cat is still in our care with a fosterer. There are many other incidents involving trapping, treating and neutering as required, and other stories of rescue too numerous to mention here. Thankfully, a small but expanding band of rescuers continue to do this vital welfare work. Many work as individuals or run small rescue centres; some obtain charitable status, some do not but they all make significant differences to improving the welfare of needy animals. The social media has been and is, very effective in helping to find lost or stolen pets and highlighting cases where an animal is in need of help.

Sadly, two of our members died during the year, firstly Norma Patterson in September and then Lorna Gulston MBE in November.

We hope you all find this report interesting and useful and finally, a big thanks to you all who have given the group your continuing support throughout the year.

Yours sincerely, Kate, Sandra, Heather, Val, Richard, Jean and Carol

Report from the Honorary Treasurer

This has been my sixth year as Treasurer of the Cat Support Group, and I am pleased to report that we have continued to provide help to animals and their carers in need or distress.

A Statement of Accounts for the Year Ending 31st December 2022 which has been subject to independent examination by the CSG Auditor is attached, and I would encourage you to study it. Receipts for the year came to £14,391. Following the fallow years of the Covid pandemic, we held 3 fundraising sales in 2022, contributing £2,041, a further £8,633 being from Membership Fees or Donations.

However expenditure increased greatly, from £17,424 to £27,120, that is by over 55%. Almost 70% of the total, £18,916, was for payments to Vets (all across Northern Ireland). The corresponding figure in 2021 was £10,987.

Sixteen people, half of whom are members of the Group, received financial help with feeding feral colonies or cats being fostered, a total of £5,383, an increase on the previous year of 8%.

You can see from the Statement of Accounts the range of other receipts and payments.

You will realise that the annual expenditure for 2022 significantly exceeded income, by £12,729 or 88%. Although we usually report a deficit, this shows a very sharp increase. Our Group has been able to sustain this position because of generous legacies received in the past. At 31st December 2022 the balance of Investments totalled £77,806, which was still a healthy position, but any suggestions from members for increasing income or reducing expenditure would be welcomed.

Sandra Johnstone

(Honorary Treasurer)

Cat Support Group (NI) - Charity Registration number NIC100721