



**BACK FROM
THE BRINK
HENRY'S TALE
OF SURVIVAL**

**HEALING TOUCH
FURRY FRIENDS
TO THE RESCUE**

**WINTER WARMERS
TIPS ON LOOKING
AFTER SMALL PETS
AS IT GETS COLDER**





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welcome



Welcome to the Autumn 2013 edition of *Blueprint*. I'm often used to writing about how you wonderful people have helped transform the lives of sick, injured and homeless pets at Blue Cross, so it was very special for me to hear the other side of the story, too. I've been finding out about how some of our rescue pets are supporting poorly and vulnerable people when they need it most – from Kiki the cat, who helped her owner recover from a stroke, to dog Kira who has transformed her owner Wendy's life. You can read their inspirational stories on page 14.

It's been great to catch up with some familiar faces, like Heath, who was born at Blue Cross five years ago. We've watched him grow into a gorgeous young pony and he is now loving life in his loan home with Kerrie and her two young sons. Check out his story on page 11.

With winter looming just around the corner, we've also got some advice for rabbit and guinea pig owners to help you prepare for the cold months that

lie ahead, and some tips to help your pets cope with the upcoming fireworks season.

I hope you enjoy this edition –

I've certainly loved putting it together for you and, until next time, I wish you and your pets all the very best.

Happy reading,

Natasha

Natasha Boydell **Editor**

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Our vision: every pet will enjoy a healthy life in a happy home.

Our mission: we find happy homes for abandoned or unwanted pets, and we keep pets healthy by promoting welfare and providing treatment.

Blue Cross is a charity registered in England and Wales (224392) and in Scotland (SC040154).

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your news update

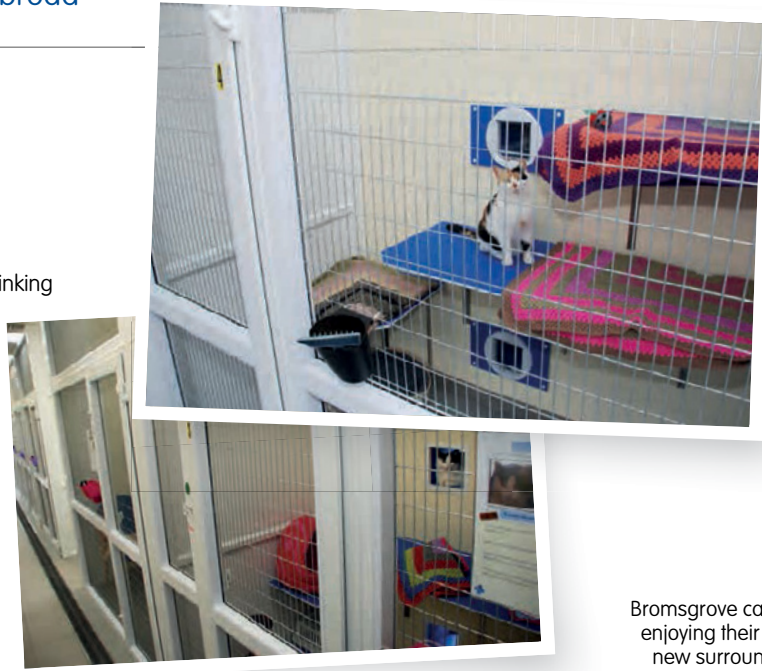
Rehoming successes and fantastic fundraising activity from our centres, teams and supporters across the UK and abroad

New cattery at Bromsgrove

Cats at our Bromsgrove rehoming centre can be forgiven for thinking they've checked into a swanky hotel after the cattery got a refurbishment earlier this year.

Work to replace the outdated accommodation took three months and has brought the cattery up to modern welfare standards, giving each cat its own private indoor and outdoor area, space to keep food, litter and bed separately, and room for the cats to climb if they want to.

Neil Edwards, Blue Cross Centre Manager, said: "We were delighted to welcome the first cats into our new cattery. We hope that by offering conditions that meet their welfare needs while they stay with us they will be happy and relaxed and find new owners as quickly as possible."



Bromsgrove cats are enjoying their plush new surroundings



Bestselling author and his cat Bob support Blue Cross

Street cat Bob and his author owner James Bowen have raised more than £13,000 to help pets after choosing Blue Cross as their charity of the year.

The duo, who are now global stars after their bestselling book *A Street Cat Named Bob* was published around the world, have been fundraising for us throughout the year. They chose to support Blue Cross after we cared for Bob during their early years together. They attended our weekly mobile clinic in Islington Green, London, where James enlisted our help to microchip Bob and give him general health checks.

James, who has since written a sequel, called *The World According to Bob*, and a children's version of his original book, says: "2012 was a life-changing year for Bob and I, and I'm keen to give something back. That's why we chose Blue Cross to be the initial focus of this new chapter in our lives."





National Equine Health Survey

With the Household Cavalry helping Blue Cross to launch our National Equine Health Survey (NEHS) this year, it proved to be the most successful survey to date.

The total number of horses recorded in the survey went up by 34 per cent, so thanks to all of you who took part. NEHS is the only survey in the UK that looks at the general health of horses, ponies, donkeys and mules. It aims to spot trends so that we can see the main problems affecting our equine friends in an effort to prevent them in the future.

Find out more about NEHS and see the latest results at www.bluecross.org.uk/nehs



Happy anniversary to our Torbay centre

Our Torbay rehoming centre is celebrating 25 years of helping abandoned and unwanted cats in Devon.

The centre opened in October 1988, and since then it has helped more than 10,500 cats to have a happy, healthy future, including tiny kitten Henry who you can read about on page 8. Torbay has had a few refurbishments over the years, such as the introduction of a new cattery and client facilities in 2000 and another cattery in 2004.



Right: Torbay rehoming centre is celebrating 25 years of helping cats in Devon



RAFFLE WINNERS

Well done to all the latest winners of our Paw Draw raffles. The top winners were:

New Year raffle

Mrs C Luff from Middlesex
– Ford Fiesta Zetec or £12,500
Mrs S Dunn from Hertfordshire
– £1,000
Mrs S McClellan from Essex – £500
Mrs D Line from Oxon – £500
(super seller prize)

Spring raffle

Mr J McClymont from Glasgow
– Ford Fiesta Zetec or £12,500
Mrs J Harwood from Yorkshire
– £1,000
Mr T Calder from West Midlands
– £500
Mr P Allen from Liverpool – £500
(super seller prize)
Mrs Holmes from Yorkshire – £500
(subscription-only extra prize)

Paws for Tea raises more than £27,000

Thanks so much to everyone who took part in our Paws for Tea event this year – your Blue Cross tea parties raised more than £27,000 to help pets.

It was a fantastic year for our annual fundraiser and, judging by the photos you sent us of your events, it looks like you all had a fabulous time. Tracey Chittock, Blue Cross Fundraising Events Manager, said: "So many people across the country joined in the fun this year and held a tea party for Blue Cross – from new supporters to regular party planners. We're really grateful to you all for your support because we couldn't help so many poorly and abandoned pets without you."

It's not too early to start planning for 2014. Visit www.bluecross.org.uk/teaparty to find out more, or fill in the tear-off slip on the back page of this magazine.



Tribute to Trustee



It is with great sadness that we report the passing of one of our Trustees, Julie Hyde.

Julie joined the Board of Trustees in 2003 and, more recently, founded and was the Chairman of the Audit Committee.

She spent most of her career in the health service, beginning work as a nurse and later holding senior roles in the NHS and the Department of Health. She was passionate about training and education, and was a great believer in encouraging people to meet their potential. Julie was also a great animal lover, and a passionate supporter of Blue Cross.

At her funeral in July, we were touched that her family had requested that flowers not be sent, but that donations be made to Blue Cross. Julie was a larger than life character with a great sense of humour, and she will be sadly missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing her.

SAMSUNG DONATES £20K TO HELP DOGS

Blue Cross has received an incredible £20,000 from Samsung to help provide health checks for 2,000 unwanted and abandoned dogs in our care.

The money was raised thanks to our supporters rehoming virtual dogs via the Help-A-Dog-A-Thon Facebook app during Crufts week. Every time the game was played, Samsung promised to donate money to help the poorly and homeless dogs at Blue Cross.

We were absolutely delighted to receive this generous donation and we'd like to thank Samsung, and everyone who played the game, for their support.

Blueprint competition winners

Congratulations to the winners of our *Blueprint* Spring 2013 competition who win goodies from the Dinner Date range of homeware products, designed by Ann Edwards.

The winners are:

- 1) William Davies, Runcorn
- 2) Gwen Thomas, Walsall
- 3) Mrs T Gilling, Lutterworth

The five runners up were:

- Mrs L Sykes, Essex
 Esther Hollister, Cornwall
 Pat Webb, London
 Hollie Clark, Essex
 Nicola Harrison, Cleveland

Have a look at our latest competition on page 26 to win an **Adaptil collar** or **Feliway spray** for your dog or cat.



Above: Dog Fenn at an education talk in one primary school

PUT ANIMAL WELFARE ON THE CURRICULUM

Blue Cross is calling on the government to make animal welfare and staying safe around dogs a compulsory part of the national curriculum.

We have submitted a response to the government's consultation and we recently met with ministers from the Department for Education to discuss the importance of educating children about good animal welfare from an early age.

MINISTER VISITS VICTORIA HOSPITAL

Animal Welfare Minister Lord de Mauley and Neil Parish MP visited our Victoria animal hospital to see first hand some of the problems we face as numbers of stray and abandoned pets reach crisis level.

Irresponsible breeding and the unregulated sale of pets online were high on the agenda – both are big problems contributing to the growing number of sick and unwanted pets at our hospitals and rehoming centres. The practicalities for the introduction of compulsory microchipping in April 2016 were also discussed.



Kim Hamilton, Blue Cross Chief Executive, said: "We were pleased to welcome the Minister; it was a valuable opportunity to talk about the challenges we face. There are many issues to be tackled before every pet can have a healthy life in a happy home, and discussions like this are an important step towards reaching that goal."

Above: the number of abandoned pets has reached crisis level

Fresh start for Friday

A stray, injured cat who was nursed back to health at Blue Cross is enjoying a fresh start after we found him a happy home.

Two-year-old Friday came to us from a local vet after he was hit by a car. He had a broken rib and injuries to his chest and face, and the poor cat was struggling to eat. The team at our Northiam rehoming centre made sure that he got all the care and attention he needed and he was soon on the mend.

Friday is a charming boy who has so much to give. He loves to meet everyone



Above: Friday was nursed back to health by Blue Cross

he sees, just as long as they stop to play and make a fuss of him, and we're so happy that he's found a home of his own now.

Christmas shop is now open

You can't avoid it – Christmas will be here before you know it, but at least with our help shopping doesn't need to be a chore.

Our Blue Cross shop is full of fabulous goodies for you to buy, from Christmas cards and wrapping paper to presents to suit all your family, friends and pets. They include Christmas accessories, calendars, clothes, stationery, games, ladies', men's and pet gifts, and much more, from as little as £1.25! The money raised from sales will go towards helping sick, injured and homeless pets at Blue Cross.

If you haven't received a catalogue and you'd like to order one, call us on **0844 324 8530**. Alternatively visit and order online at www.bluecrossshop.org.uk



BLUE CROSS GOES RETRO

If you've got a passion for vintage, then check out our new charity shop in Summertown, Oxford. It's the first of our shops to specialise in retro goods, from clothes to homeware, books and quality old china.

We've also opened new charity shops in Nantwich, Great Malvern, Cannock and Wilmslow, taking our total to just over 40 across the UK, with more openings planned. Our shops raise vital funds to help us care for poorly and unwanted pets.

There are many ways you can support your local shop – whether it's shopping, volunteering or donating stock, we'd really appreciate your help. Find your nearest Blue Cross shop by visiting www.bluecross.org.uk/shops or calling **0300 011 2310**.

A SORRY LITTLE KITTEN... BUT JUST LOOK AT HENRY NOW



Henry was one of the sorriest little kittens we'd ever met. Poorly, weak and knocked around by his siblings, we didn't know if he had the strength to survive. But Kelly Hennequin, Blue Cross Animal Welfare Assistant, was determined to help plucky Henry pull through. She tells his story



“When I first met Henry he was half the size of his brothers and sisters – he looked so weak and his eye was badly infected and sore. It was very sad to see and, as much as we wanted him to recover, it didn't look very hopeful. But we were determined to do our best for him.

Henry and his four siblings came to our rehoming centre in Torbay after being

abandoned by their mum when they were a few weeks old. We hand-reared the kittens night and day, but after a few days it became clear that Henry was accidentally getting knocked around by his stronger littermates. After much discussion, we decided to separate him so that he could have special one-to-one attention, and I took him home with me.

ABOVE: Henry is now a happy and relaxed cat

INSET: Henry as a scrawny young kitten

The few nights following were very touch and go, and one night I thought we were going to lose him. However, we persevered and he finally started to make some improvements.

He put weight on and grew a little bit, but his eye was still very sore.

Over the weeks that followed, Henry's siblings grew into happy, healthy kittens, but he was still quite

a way behind them. He was allowed back with them under supervision during the day so that he could learn important cat social skills, and at night he came home with me.

To all of our joy, it became clear that he was going to pull through – but we still didn't know whether he could see out of his bad eye and, until he was older, we wouldn't be able to tell the scale of his problems. Every day he got better and stronger until, at nine weeks old, he became a typical cheeky little kitten. He really was a special boy and followed me everywhere, always wanting to sit with me and have cuddles. He would then have what I called 'mad hour' when he ran around everywhere.

Although I was attached to Henry, I knew I couldn't keep him. I felt he would really like a family home as he loves people so much, and I knew he would enjoy living with children.

When I got a call from a colleague telling me they had just spoken to the perfect family for Henry and they were really interested to meet my special little boy, I was very excited. Their two young sons were gentle and caring with him, and it seemed like the perfect match.

Before Henry could be rehomed he needed to be checked out by the vet. His eye had improved and he could see out of it, which was great news. However, he was still a little poorly and, until he was completely better, he couldn't leave us. I knew I was going to have to disappoint his new family as they were really hoping they could take him before Christmas. But they totally understood that it was for Henry's wellbeing and, to my surprise and relief, they said that they would be happy to wait for him. I was over the moon as I knew it would be hard to find such a perfect family again.

Finally the day came when he got the all clear from the vet and he was ready to go to his new home. It was very hard for me to say goodbye to him. He really did bring a lot of enjoyment and pleasure into my life, and I will miss the little fellow, but I had to let him go.

I made up a box of his favourite toys and wrote a letter to let his new family know his little habits, likes and dislikes. They promised to keep in touch with me and let me know how he was getting on, and I've since heard that he's settled in perfectly. They send me

"Henry had chosen us as his family as much as we had chosen him"



regular updates and pictures, and they can now see for themselves just how special he really is."

HENRY'S NEW OWNER, JESS WHITELOCK, SAYS:

"We were so sure that Henry was the one for us as soon as we met him that we didn't even look at another cat. We'd decided to get a pet because my husband James and I felt it was the right time for our sons Theo, six, and Sonny, eight. Two of my friends had rehomed cats from Blue Cross so I already knew about the charity and I got in touch with the Torbay centre to see if they could help.

I explained that we were a family with two children and that we wanted a cat who would enjoy lots of attention and cuddles. The lady I spoke to told me: 'We've got a very special cat and you sound like you might be just the family for him.'

I went on my own to meet Henry at first because I didn't want to get the boys' hopes up. He was absolutely tiny and he looked a little sorry for himself, but he was incredibly affectionate and nosy, and he was a very determined little kitten. I'm not surprised he survived

ABOVE: Henry has a fantastic new home with a young family

against all the odds – he's got this tenacity about him.

A few days later the whole family went to meet him and the boys were so excited. The introductions went well and we couldn't wait to take Henry home, so we were all disappointed when we found out that he wouldn't be coming back for a while. But it didn't even cross our minds to give up on Henry – he had chosen us as his family as much as we had chosen him.

It was fantastic to finally be able to welcome Henry into the family and within a day he was quite at home. He is such a sociable cat who adores being around people; wherever we are, whether it's eating at the table or getting ready for bed in the evening, he's always somewhere nearby."

HAVE YOU REHOMED A BLUE CROSS PET?

We'd love to hear from you. Email your stories and photos to editor@bluecross.org.uk or write to Editor, *Blueprint*, Blue Cross, Shilton Road, Burford, Oxon OX18 4PF.



REPAIRING A BROKEN HEART

Healthy and happy Millie with her owner, Lisa
INSET: Millie following her live-saving operation

Lisa George had only owned Millie for six days when she was told the shocking news that her new puppy had less than two weeks to live

It only took a few seconds for Lisa George to fall in love with eight-week-old puppy Millie and, after six days of owning her, she couldn't imagine life without her. So finding out that her beloved new pet could die at any minute was absolutely heartbreaking.

Lisa got Millie from a breeder after seeing her advertised online and was told that she was perfectly healthy. But less than a week after taking her home, she discovered that Millie had worms and rushed her to the vet for a check-up.

It was during this visit that she was told the devastating news that Millie had a suspected grade six heart murmur and wasn't likely to survive. Further tests confirmed the diagnosis.

Lisa says: "I was in such shock I had to call a friend to come down, I simply couldn't take it in. They said that Millie could drop down dead at any moment. Had I not seen that Millie had worms, I never would have known anything was wrong.

"The vet warned me that Millie was extremely poorly and talked me through all of the options, including having her put to sleep, but I couldn't bear the thought of Millie's life ending so soon. The only chance for Millie was to have surgery, which would cost £3,000, and I simply didn't have the money to pay for it."

Distraught, Lisa contacted Blue Cross to see if we could help. When the team at our Victoria animal hospital in London found out about Millie's plight they offered to do the heart surgery. It was a risky operation, but it was the only hope Millie had if she was to survive and, thanks to Blue Cross Veterinary Surgeon Jee Young Shin and the team at our hospital, the procedure went very smoothly.

Lisa says: "I'll never forget the moment I got the call to say she had made it through the operation – it was very emotional."

A few days later Lisa was able to take Millie home. She says: "She looked so tiny when I went to pick her up – she was

wearing a little jumper and feeling sorry for herself but she was so pleased to see me. Within just a few weeks it was like Millie had never been poorly – she grew bigger and stronger every day, and now she's a typical, energetic puppy."

A few months on, Millie has made a full recovery and is full of beans. She loves playing in the garden and going for walks. Lisa says: "The vet says that her heart is perfect now. I thought I was getting Millie from a reputable breeder but when we contacted her she didn't want to know. I will never buy a pet online again and I would never recommend it to anyone. I'm so glad that Blue Cross saved her life."

"I will never buy a pet online again and I would never recommend it"

ONLINE PET SALES

Online pet sales is a growing industry but there are no regulations. We have been working as a member of the Pet Advertising Advisory Group (PAAG) to encourage websites to change this.

We have drawn up minimum standards and have been working with the government to gain their endorsement. For more information, visit www.paag.org.uk

Flying the nest

Although his mum was found in a terrible condition, Heath the pony had a surprisingly good start to life. But the time came for him to leave home and find a new family of his own



We've known Heath since the day he was born and, as you can see, he's grown into a very happy, healthy and rather handsome young pony.

Heath was born at our Burford rehoming centre after his pregnant mum Minnie was found living in a

ABOVE: Heath getting some exercise

TOP RIGHT: As a young foal

RIGHT: Enjoying some tasty treats

BELOW: Heath and his mum, Minnie

rundown field next to Heathrow Airport. She was underweight, infested with lice and worms, and had badly overgrown hooves. The field was a very dangerous place for horses, littered with rusting scrap metal and poisonous ragwort.

Despite the terrible living conditions she had been exposed to, Minnie had a healthy little foal in April 2008. Under our wing, Heath had a great start to life – he was handled and prepared for his future from an early age. Once he turned four, he started his training to become a riding pony and he had the confidence to face the new challenge with ease.

Heath was rehomed in August 2012 as a lead rein pony and, although we'll miss him, it was lovely to see him fly the nest and find his place in the world.

Jenna Martyn, Acting Horse Manager, says: "I was lucky enough to be doing night checks when Heath was born and I've had a lot of involvement in his life so far. He's a fantastic pony and he's very special to me."

Heath was rehomed on our loan agreement to Kerrie Edwards and her sons Harry, eight, and Oscar, four, from Cirencester. He's also ridden by close family friends Holly, seven, and Bella, four. Kerrie says: "Heath gets lots of love and attention, and the children adore him. He responds really well to them, too, and is very gentle and sweet with them."

Kerrie adds: "The riding is great but it's not just about that – the children look after Heath and care for him, and they're constantly learning. We're all really enjoying having him in our lives."



take me home

Can you offer any of these Blue Cross animals the companionship and attention they deserve?



LEXI

Felixstowe rehoming centre
0300 777 1480

One-year-old Lexi is a playful staffie type who loves to fetch and have a go on our agility course – as you can see, she’s pretty good! She would really like to find a family of her own.



DUSKY

Southampton rehoming centre
0300 777 1530

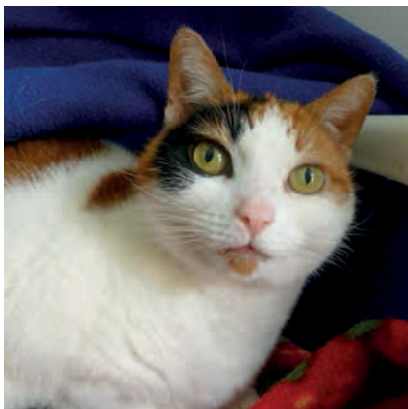
Dusky is a real gentleman. The seven-year-old can be a bit shy, but once he gets to know you, he’s got a lot of love to give. He’d like a quiet home where he can relax and be pampered.



DEGUS

Burford rehoming centre
0300 777 1570

We have a number of degus looking for new homes. Degus can make great pets – they are active and sociable and they love to explore. Get in touch to find out more today.



ELWOOD

Northiam rehoming centre
0300 777 1510

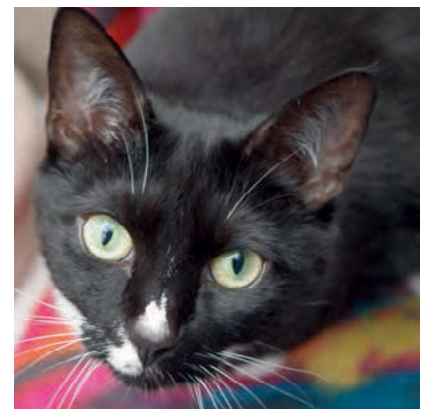
Elwood is an inquisitive lady, although she’s a bit sensitive. The nine-year-old isn’t a fan of being stroked, but she enjoys sitting beside you and loves to play games. Can you rehome Elwood?



PEARL

Burford rehoming centre
0300 777 1570

Pearl is a 12hh, two-year-old mare. Since being with us, she has come on leaps and bounds. Pearl is looking for a short-term home until she’s four, when she’ll be assessed as a riding pony.



MOLLY

Felixstowe rehoming centre
0300 777 1480

Four-year-old Molly enjoys exploring the great outdoors and then coming home for a fuss and a snooze on a warm bed. She loves her toys and now just needs a new family to play with.

OUR ANIMALS ONLINE

To learn about all our pets available for rehoming, visit www.bluecross.org.uk

IN A FLAP

This worried young rescue dog got herself into a pickle about houstraining, until we found an unusual solution – and she hasn't looked back since



Poor little Pickle really hadn't had the best time of it in her short life so far. Originally found as a stray at two months old, she had a chronic skin condition causing her to lose patches of her fur and needed intensive treatment to help her recover.

Sadly, Pickle also had houstraining issues that were preventing her from finding her forever home, and everyone was worried about what would become of this sweet, fun-loving, but nervous terrier crossbreed, who had so much love to give but was struggling to find her feet in the world. We decided to ask one of our dedicated respite foster carers, Lesley Davis, if she could help. Lesley, who's based near our Northiam rehoming centre, has looked after many pets who need a little extra-special care. Pickle was the perfect candidate as it gave us a chance to monitor her behaviour in a home environment and see if we could help with her problem.

PICKLE IS TRANSFORMED – HER FUR IS GLOSSY AND HEALTHY, AND SHE'S A HAPPY, CONFIDENT AND MUCH-LOVED PET

It ended up being thanks to a nosy squirrel that Lesley and her husband Peter realised poor Pickle was suffering from "stage fright" and that an easy solution was staring right at them. She explains: "It all happened by accident really. One day Pickle saw a squirrel on the other side of the cat flap and she was out like a shot.

"That's what gave us the idea to teach her to use the cat flap – we'd noticed that she didn't like to perform in front of people so, with the aid of some tasty treats, she was soon happily popping in and out of the cat flap whenever she needed to go and that was it – she's been as clean as a whistle ever since."

It was an ideal solution but now we had to find new owners who would understand Pickle's needs and we weren't sure how easy they would be to come by. So the team at our



Northiam centre couldn't believe it when they found Julian and Erica Britton, from East Sussex, who already had a dog flap leading out to their secure back garden.

Julian had spotted Pickle's rehoming profile on the Blue Cross website, and a few days later he and Erica went up to see her. They were smitten and Pickle's past problems didn't trouble them at all.

Erica says: "We've owned small dogs for years and we've always had a dog flap so it's perfectly normal to us. We had managed a whole year without a dog after our last one passed away, but we both decided that we couldn't do without a pet in our lives and we knew as soon as we met Pickle that we wanted to take her home."

These days Pickle is transformed – her fur is glossy and healthy, and she's a happy, confident and much-loved pet who adores meeting other dogs, watching the world go by and playing with the couple's grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Erica says: "Pickle pops in and out of the dog flap whenever she needs to and is very happy. She is well settled and we just love her." *Would you like to become a volunteer respite foster carer for Blue Cross? Visit bluecross.org.uk/volunteering or call us on 0300 777 1897.*

Healing touch

Research has long shown that owning a pet can have many health benefits, including reducing the risk of high blood pressure, heart attacks, depression and stress. So it's no surprise that they can also be therapeutic for people living with illness or disability. We caught up with some Blue Cross rescue pets who have helped people when they needed it the most



KIRA

After losing her husband and then her rescue dog Jade, Wendy Hellier, 68, had never felt more alone. Living with multiple sclerosis, she didn't think she'd ever be able to get another pet.

She says: "When I lost my husband nine years ago Jade was there for me and she got me through the worst. But when she died, I came home to an empty house and there was no one to comfort me or keep me company.

"Jade had been my lifeline and her death left me feeling extremely low, but I have limited mobility and, without my husband to help, I had been spending a fortune on a professional dog walker for Jade. I couldn't afford to do that again."

Finally, after 18 months of living without a dog, Wendy sat down one Sunday afternoon and decided that she'd had enough of feeling low. Before she

could change her mind, she picked up the phone and called the Blue Cross rehoming centre in Tiverton.

It just so happened that we had the perfect match. Two-year-old Staffordshire-bull-terrier-type Kira had come to us because her owners didn't have enough time for her anymore. She is a very gentle, loving dog who enjoys cuddles and attention, and we thought she'd be ideal. While some people have been put off staffies because of their reputation as a "status dog", Wendy had owned them before and knew what great family pets they can make.

Lauren Chilton, Blue Cross Animal Welfare Assistant, says: "Wendy adores dogs and was very upset that she wouldn't be able to get another one. But she had an excellent support network of friends, family and neighbours who were happy to help, and a big garden for a

"Kira is a very affectionate dog who loves to cuddle"

dog to play in, so with our tailor-made rehoming, I had no problems in finding her the right pet."

Just two days after making the call, Wendy came to Blue Cross to meet Kira and she left knowing that she'd found her perfect dog. A few days later she came back to pick her up. She says: "She made herself at home very quickly and she has been brilliant with everyone. She goes out for long walks every day and when she comes back, we play in the garden together for hours. She is a very affectionate dog who loves to cuddle."

Wendy adds: "Kira has filled the emptiness for me and made me feel better about myself. My advice to anyone who wants a dog but doesn't think that they can have one is to never say never. Don't be too proud to ask because there are people out there who will help you."

PEACH, APRICOT AND PLUM

Remember rabbits Peach, Apricot and Plum? The French lops went to live at Enstone House residential care home back in 2010 after they became homeless when their owner fell ill and wasn't able to look after them anymore.

The team at our Burford centre were looking for the right home for them where they would get a lot of space and attention; they found their perfect place at the care home in Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire. The bunnies love all the fuss they get and are a huge hit with the residents, who enjoy stroking, brushing and watching the rabbits as they hop through their tunnels and nibble on their toys. Staff often open the French doors so the rabbits can hop inside from their secure section of the garden during the daytime and say "hi" to the residents in the lounge.

Now, three years on, they're still having a very positive effect at the care home. Manager Caroline Dyett says: "They are still as popular – and huge! – as ever. Our residents have dementia and, at times when they aren't having a good day, we take them outside to see the rabbits. Whatever has happened to upset them is quickly gone. They really have made a big difference here."

Research has shown that animals can have a really positive effect on people with Alzheimer's Disease and, as well as providing companionship, they can make a difference when people are feeling anxious or upset. Several Blue Cross pets have gone to live at care homes and others have been trained as therapy pets, where they visit homes, hospitals and hospices to meet people living with illness or disability.

LEFT: Kira provides comfort to her new owner, Wendy
RIGHT: Kiki is part of Rita's physiotherapy routine
BELOW: French lop rabbits keep residents happy at Enstone House

"Kiki is a great companion and she does cheer me up when I'm down"



KIKI

When Rita Thorp had a stroke, a long and tough road to recovery lay ahead. But thanks to her beloved cat Kiki, she always had someone by her side.

Rita woke up one morning and instinctively knew something was wrong. She says: "I went to bed one night perfectly all right and I got up the next morning and knew something had happened. My daughter called an ambulance and, as soon as they arrived, they told me I'd had a stroke."

The stroke affected Rita down the left hand side of her body. She spent 10 days in hospital before she returned home to recover. She says: "I was given the option of staying in hospital to have treatment and physiotherapy but I had Kiki to think about so I wanted to go home."

Over the months that followed, Kiki, who was rehomed from our Northiam centre two years ago, played a big part in Rita's recovery. Grooming and stroking the exotic shorthair cat became an important part of her physiotherapy routine, and having to feed and look after her kept her busy and active. Rita, from Longfield, Kent, says: "She's a great companion and she does cheer me up when I'm feeling down."

Rita's daughter, Kimberley Hampshire, adds: "When mum came out of hospital, Kiki greeted all the carers and doctors as if they were there to visit her, played with the lifeline cord around her neck and sat at the bottom of her reclining chair waiting for mum to press the button so that she would arrive on her lap. Mum can get really frustrated, but Kiki always makes us all smile."



PREPARE YOUR PET FOR GUY FAWKES NIGHT



As firework seasons kicks off with a bang, Petplan offers advice on keeping your furry friends safe

November is that time of year when anxiety descends on many homes and lingers there for several weeks. There are jitters, sudden starts and attempts to hide under the bed! The cause of this seasonal nervousness is, of course, Guy Fawkes Night.

While the rest of the family are looking forward to the fireworks, your pet is probably dreading it. An estimated 60 per cent of all pets become distressed because of the loud noise and light from fireworks, which can lead to injuries and even long-term behavioural problems.

So what can we do to calm our pets and help prevent accidents? Here's Petplan's guide to keeping your pet relaxed and safe when the big night comes around.

ACT NORMALLY

If your pet starts feeling anxious – stay calm and act normally. It's natural to want to comfort your pet when they show signs of distress, but fussing over them just makes them think there really is something to worry about.

Pets are highly tuned to our moods, so if we're worried, they will be, too. If your pet wants to hide, let them – but don't fuss.

KEEP THEM INDOORS

"Missing" posters seem more common in the aftermath of Guy Fawkes Night, especially for cats.

A cat may be scared away from their normal route and end up in unfamiliar territory, or be too frightened to make their way home. Remember to close windows and cat flaps. If your cat is used to going out, provide a litter tray.

Make sure your pet is wearing a form of identification and is microchipped so you can be easily contacted if they do escape. Then all you need to do is close the curtains, turn on the TV to drown out some of the noise and try to relax.

FOR PARTICULARLY NERVOUS PETS

For some pets, distress caused by fireworks can be severe and you may need to take further steps. Ask your vet for some dog appeasing pheromone, a synthetic version of a chemical produced by female dogs that has a calming effect. A possible longer-term solution is sound therapy, which helps to reduce your pet's sensitivities and fears over time. Using sound therapy from a young age or as preparation can stop your pet's fears from developing in the first place.

WITH RABBITS AND SMALLER ANIMALS

Small pets that live outside, such as rabbits and guinea pigs, should be brought inside to a quiet room, unused garage or shed. If you cannot move their hutch, turn it away from the open garden to face the house, cover it with blankets and give them extra bedding so they can hide.

REMEMBER, REMEMBER THESE TIPS FOR THE FIFTH OF NOVEMBER

- **Stay** home with your pet – your presence will reassure them
- **Walk** your dog during the daytime when fireworks are less likely to be let off
- **Don't** take your pet to a fireworks display
- **Keep** fireworks away from children and animals
- **Think** of wildlife, too – check bonfires for hedgehogs and don't leave litter about

If you are worried, please seek veterinary advice well before fireworks season.

Petplan[®]

Pet insurance is an important part of responsible pet ownership and that's why Blue Cross works with Petplan, the UK's favourite pet insurer, to provide four weeks' free insurance to all their rehomed dogs, cats and rabbits. What's more, when you take out a policy, Petplan will give 10 per cent of your premium to Blue Cross to help their sick, injured and homeless pets. Visit petplan.co.uk/bluecross today for a quote and more information on Petplan policies.

Whatever happened to..?

We visit some familiar faces from the past to see how they're doing now

ALAN

Alan and his two siblings, Penelope and Virgil, were born at Blue Cross after their unwanted, pregnant mum was taken into our care. They were three of 1,591 homeless kittens that we cared for last year.

Under our wing, Alan became more adventurous every day and grew into quite a little character. We found him a home together with his sister, Penelope. The pair, now known as Otis and Pie, are having a wonderful time with their new family.

Their owner, Marianne Standen, says: "Every morning Otis jumps up on my bed and paws gently at my face to wake me up, and Pie is very girly – always meowing. They are very playful and I love them to bits."

LOTTE

Lotte's owner had been threatening to drown her if they couldn't get rid of her – thankfully the helpless little puppy was rescued by a passerby and brought to Blue Cross, but we don't know what happened to her siblings.

We gave Lotte lots of care and attention before finding her a new home. She now lives just down the road from our Burford rehoming centre with Angela Forrester, her husband and her two daughters, aged five and eight. Angela says: "Lotte has come such a long way. She has settled well into family life and she is a very exuberant little dog who loves to keep busy. She absolutely adores the girls and follows them everywhere. When they come home from school it's the highlight of her day."



ABOVE LEFT: Alan, now called Otis, is happy in his new home
LEFT: As a kitten
ABOVE RIGHT: Cracker has a bright future

CRACKER

Cracker was very thin and had clearly been neglected when he was rescued by the RSPCA and brought to Blue Cross. His bad start to life had left him feeling weak and he looked much younger than his four years. The team at our Burford rehoming centre put him on a special plan to build up his weight and prepare him for his future.

Over the past few months, Cracker has been in training to become a riding horse. Annalisa de Carteret, Horse Welfare Supervisor, says: "Cracker is doing well and taking everything in his stride. We'll continue to progress with his ridden work and education, while looking for a suitable home where he can carry on with his training."

Cracker is one of 191 unwanted horses that we took in between January and June this year. He has a really bright future ahead of him thanks to your support.



ABOVE: Lotte has settled well into family life

Alan, Cracker and Lotte all featured in Blue Cross mailings over the past year. We'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone who donated – we really couldn't give so many pets like them a happy, healthy future without you.

ask the panel

Our Blue Cross experts answer your questions on rabbit welfare, horse diet and cat behaviour



BUNNY BLUES

Q A couple of weeks ago my three-year-old rabbit went off her food. When I took her to the vet they said they were worried about her teeth and kept her in. Then she had an anaesthetic and had her teeth trimmed. She's fine now but they say she should go back for another exam under anaesthetic in a few weeks. I now wonder whether she was just constipated – she wasn't passing any poo. Should I really take her back? **Via email**

A **Caroline says:** Dental disease is common but it can be surprising when it affects a rabbit with no previous problems. Like many other small pets (for example guinea pigs), rabbit teeth grow lifelong to cope with continual wear from chewing plants. Abnormal tooth wear produces sharp edges that rub painfully on the tongue and cheeks.

Dental disease isn't always easy to spot. Like people, the front teeth – incisors – in rabbits are easy to see, but the back teeth – molars – are hidden by the cheeks. The incisors can

sometimes overgrow into long tusks, but the majority of dental problems involve the back teeth. Sometimes, by using an instrument, a vet can look at these in a conscious rabbit but, even in the calmest rabbit, a full examination is difficult without anaesthetic.

Some dental problems are inherited. In dwarf and lionhead rabbits this mainly affects the incisors. Sometimes rabbits are not being fed enough fibre so the teeth don't wear down adequately. Poor diets can cause softening of the skull so the teeth move in their sockets, changing the angle of wear.

Tooth pain prevents rabbits eating, which stops normal gut contractions (so they don't pool), and can be very dangerous. Any rabbit not eating should see a vet within 24 hours. Other signs of tooth problems include weight loss and drooling, which may be seen as wet or stained patches on the front legs.

Overgrown incisor teeth can be extracted but extraction of molars is difficult. The usual treatment is to burr down the sharp edges, but continual tooth growth means this is likely to need repeating regularly. The best prevention is

ABOVE: Rabbits on low-fibre diets are prone to dental problems



a high-fibre (lots of hay and grass), well-balanced diet (fresh foods and pellets). Avoid breeding from affected families.

HUNGRY HORSE

Q I think my horse is overweight. How serious is this and what can I do? **Via email**

A **Kath says:** You are not alone in struggling to manage your horse's weight; obesity is one of the major welfare problems affecting horses in the UK. A horse being overweight can lead to long-term, sometimes irreversible, conditions, which really affect their health and welfare. Laminitis is one of our main concerns, but joint problems and heart conditions can also occur.

In the wild, horses will travel for many miles a day, often eating poor and sparse forage. They will lose weight in the winter and then gain it the summer, storing fat in preparation for the next winter. These days we generally keep horses on rich grass in a confined area and supplement their diet with concentrate feed. We like to see our

horses look the same all year round, which goes against their natural cycle. Using rugs can help a horse to maintain weight as they are using less energy to keep warm.

Speak to your vet about a suitable diet plan. Try and feed little and often – not only is this better for your horse's digestive system but it will also help to prevent boredom. Soak

? HAVE A QUESTION?

Do you have a pet question that you would like answered by our experts? Please write to: **Ask the panel, Blueprint, Blue Cross, Shilton Road, Burford, Oxon OX18 4PF** or email editor@bluecross.org.uk. Due to the volume of mail we receive, we regret we cannot answer every letter. For urgent enquiries, please contact your vet.

MEET THE PANEL



Asha Sells is an Animal Behaviour Assistant and advises on changes in pet's activities.



Caroline Reay is Chief Veterinary Surgeon at the Blue Cross hospital in Merton, London. Ask her advice on any aspect of pet health.



Kath Urwin is Manager of our Rolleston rehoming centre. She can help with your horse concerns.

hay for at least an hour, but preferably 12 hours, and consider supplementing a third of your horse's hay ration for oat straw. We all like to feed our horses, but consider if they really need hard feed. Most horses will get all the extras they need from a broad supplement or lick. Using a muzzle when your horse is turned out will also help. Once you have reduced your horse's weight you will find it much easier to manage.

LITTER TRAY WOES

Q I've had my two ragdoll cats since they were kittens and recently the male has decided to do his poo on the floor in the kitchen and not in his litter tray. He still uses the tray for wee but, especially at night, poos on the floor. I am now using two trays, each with the same cat litter they have always used. The female cat uses the tray but Alfie chooses not to. I do let them out in the garden most mornings and have spotted them doing their business okay. Both cats are neutered. **Jan Cooper (via email)**

A **Asha says:** There could be many reasons why this has started to occur – changes to your cat's routine, a response to pain or unseen changes to health, conflict within your cats' relationship or intimidation from neighbouring cats.

The most common reason is that cats are particular when choosing their toileting area – they prefer somewhere that is clean, quiet and private, and preferably somewhere that only they use. A cat might prefer to urinate in one tray and defecate in the other, so as you have two cats, it is possible Alfie has opted to toilet on your floor after using the remaining tray for his urine.

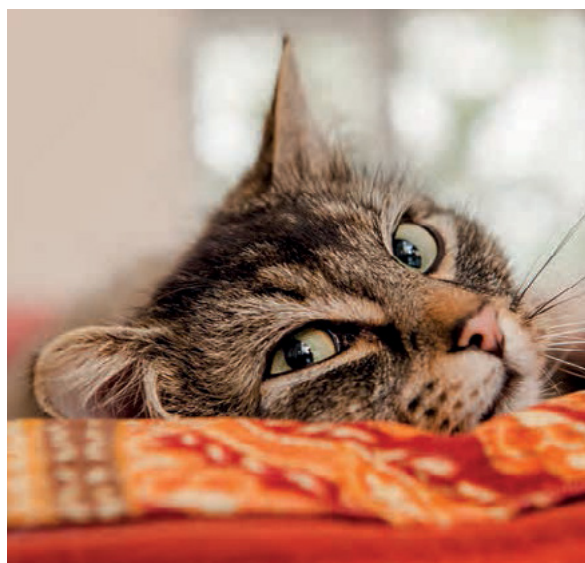
I would suggest providing another tray and possibly moving it away from the other trays (even if you have litter trays slightly apart, it could still be viewed as a shared toileting area). To make it more private, you could put a three-walled cardboard box around the trays to see if this helps, before spending money on a covered tray.

The cleaning products we use on litter trays can leave a strange scent that puts some cats off, so it's best to use warm water and a small amount of biological washing powder if necessary. The same cleaning method should be used when cleaning up after Alfie on the floor. Read our leaflet 'Spraying and soiling indoors', which you can find on our website at www.bluecross.org.uk/factsheets.

I would recommend seeking veterinary advice, too, as it's best to rule out any underlying medical issue. I would also recommend the use of a Feliway product as this may help with calming Alfie's stress levels while this issue is resolved. This can be bought from your local Blue Cross centre or at your vets.

"Cats are particular when choosing their toileting area"

BELOW: Cats prefer somewhere clean, quiet and private when going to the toilet



FIGHT THE SIGNS OF AGEING...

Everyone wants the golden years of their life to be full of joy and why should things be different for your cat? Hill'sSM Science PlanTM Mature Adult 7+ range and new Senior 11+ Healthy Ageing supports your cat as they get older, meaning that, regardless of age, nothing will stand in the way of them enjoying life to the full.

The scientific team at Hill's Pet Nutrition realised long ago that the nutritional requirements of cats alters significantly with age, which led to the development of their 'life stage' pet foods. Senior 11+ Healthy Ageing is formulated to fight the common ageing changes. Developed to complement the existing Mature Adult range (ideally suited for cats aged 7-10 years), Senior 11+ contains a specialised antioxidant formula that helps defend the brain and body against ageing. The formula is supplemented with L-Carnitine, proven to support lean muscle mass, which is typically lost as a cat gets older, and a careful balance of protein and minerals supports a healthy urinary tract, including the kidneys. Essential amino and fatty acids maintain healthy organs and promote a soft glossy coat and healthy skin to keep your cat looking and feeling their best.

On top of all that, Senior 11+, like all Hill's pet foods, comes with the Hill's promise of excellent and complete nutrition delivered with a great taste that cats will love. Available in delicious chicken flavour, the smaller, easy-to-chew dry kibbles perfectly suit the more delicate mouths of mature cats. Senior 11+ is also available in pouches, satisfying even the most particular of palates.

Feeding according to life stage is one of the best ways to ensure that you and your cat can continue to enjoy life together for as long as possible. For more information, visit www.hillspet.co.uk/seniorcat



RECOMMENDED
BY VETERINARIANS
WORLDWIDE

Blocked bladders

The cold and wet autumn weather often brings a rise in cats with blocked bladders. Find out more about what can be a life-threatening condition for your pet

Last year our Victoria animal hospital cared for 92 poorly pets who needed treatment for a blocked bladder. Each one needed to have a catheter fitted, drips, antibiotics, pain relief and at least three days' stay in hospital. It costs between £500 and £1,000 for us to treat and look after every pet with a blocked bladder.

Once a cat has suffered from this problem it's very likely that they'll have repeated bouts, so it's always better to try to prevent it from happening in the first place.

WHAT CAUSES A BLOCKED BLADDER?

It's not just humans who look forlornly out of the window when autumn brings cold and wet weather. Some cats that usually go to the toilet outside become reluctant to brave the great outdoors,

and the vets and nurses at our animal hospitals always see a surge in pets with blocked bladders after the summer.

But other things can cause bladder problems, too – male cats tend to be more prone, as do cats that are stressed, overweight and inactive. It's also seen much more frequently in households with two or more cats.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- Inability to pass urine
 - Passing bloody urine
 - Agitation/meowing when urinating
 - Showing pain or difficulty when passing urine
 - Going back and forth to the litter tray but not producing anything
 - Aggression or grumpiness
- If your cat isn't going to the toilet it's really important to call your vet immediately.



The earlier your cat is seen, the easier it is to treat them.

CAN I PREVENT BLADDER PROBLEMS FROM DEVELOPING?

There are a few things you can do:

- Feed a specially formulated wet food.
- Encourage your cat to drink water. If they don't drink much you could try using a drinking fountain or flavouring water with cooking juices of chicken, white fish or drained spring water of tuna.
- Cats prefer to drink out of metal, glass or ceramic bowls that are full and have a large diameter.
- Put the litter tray in a secluded area and clean it regularly. If you have more than one cat you need to have several litter trays. We recommend one litter tray per cat plus an extra one in each household.
- Avoid sudden changes to litter as this can put your cat off from using it.
- If your cat doesn't like going outside in bad weather make sure they're familiar with using a litter tray before the winter months set in.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY CAT HAS BLADDER PROBLEMS?

Your vet may recommend some of the following to help control the condition once your cat has been diagnosed:

- A wet food diet to prevent the build up of crystals or bladder stones
- Feliway diffusers to help to alleviate stress
- Urinary acidifiers to prevent the formation of crystals and stones
- Drugs to relieve muscle spasms
- Multiple litter trays to encourage your cat to use them
- Drinking fountains or flavoured water to encourage drinking

Visit www.bluecross.org.uk/petadvice for more pet care and health advice.

IF YOUR CAT ISN'T GOING TO THE TOILET IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT TO CALL YOUR VET

Winter survival guide

Read our top tips to keep your small pet safe, warm and happy this winter

When the temperature drops it can be particularly tough on small pets, such as rabbits and guinea pigs, who often live outside. But here are some things that you can do to make sure they remain happy bunnies over the winter months.

- Position hutches so that wind, rain, snow or sleet can't blow in.
- If the weather's particularly bad, move the hutch into an unused garage or shed if it's possible, but don't put it in the garage if you park your car in there as the fumes can be fatal to small pets. For guinea pigs, it's always better to keep them inside in winter, in a conservatory or unused garage.
- If your pets do need to stay outside, help keep them snug as a bug by covering the front of the hutch with an old blanket or sacking and adding extra straw for them to snuggle up in.
- Check their water bottle regularly because the little ball freezes easily. Press the ball every few hours to keep it moving – you can get bottle covers but you'll still need to do regular checks.
- Add extra vegetables as a treat too, which will give them extra moisture.

- Even if the weather is cold and wet your pet still needs to have access to their run during the day so they can get their regular exercise.
- Cold pets need more calories to keep warm so give them lots of good-quality hay to nibble on.
- During the winter, foxes and badgers get even hungrier, which makes them bolder than usual. Make sure your hutch is sturdy enough to survive the attention of a determined predator.

BLUE CROSS – KEEPING 'SMALLIES' HAPPY AND HEALTHY

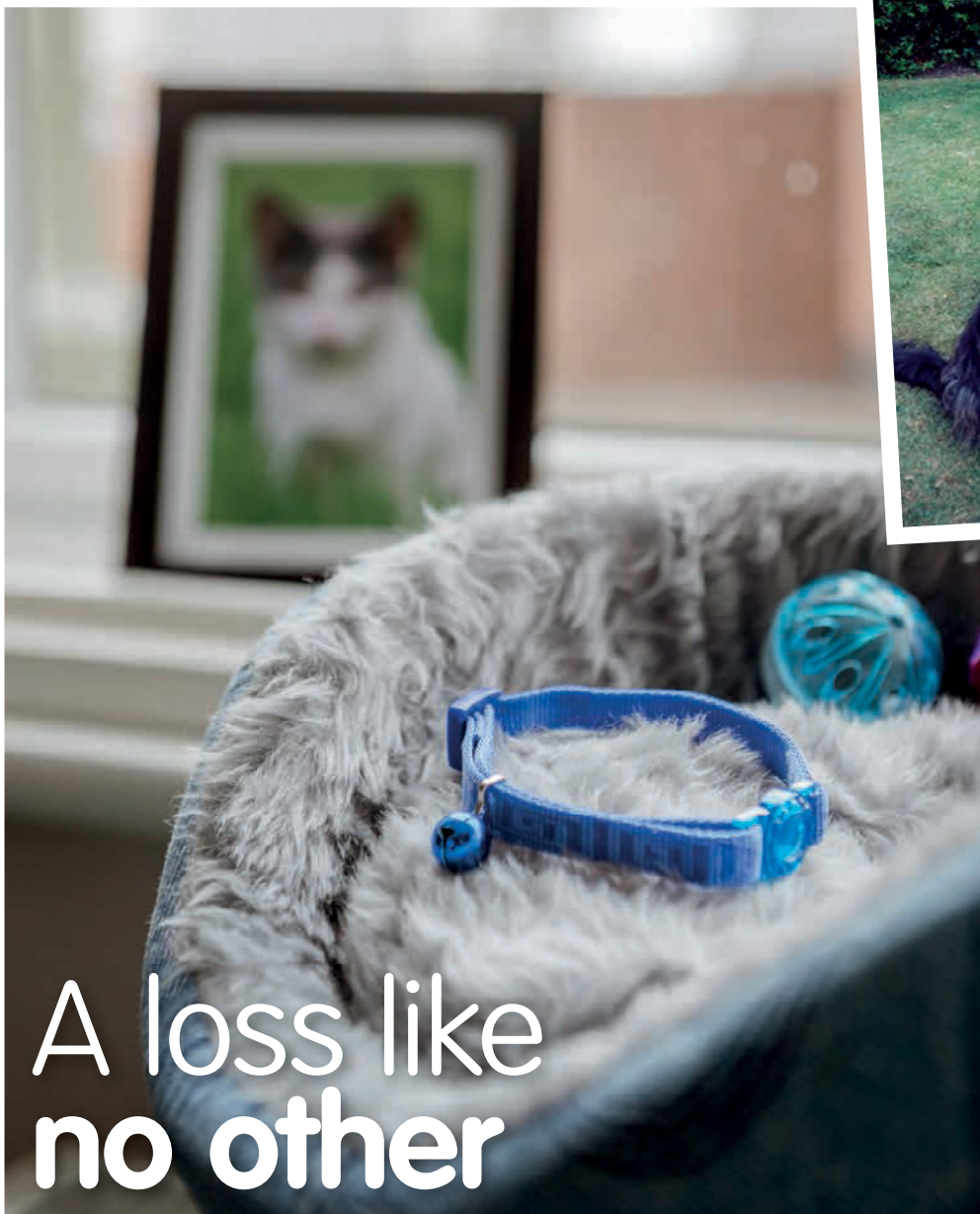
Last year Blue Cross took in 305 rabbits and 338 other small pets, of which 155 were abandoned and 46 were stray. Between January and May this year alone we took in more than 200 unwanted smallies, including a family of five young bunnies and their mum and dad, who were all found abandoned at a local nature reserve.

LAST YEAR BLUE CROSS TOOK IN 305 RABBITS AND 338 OTHER SMALL PETS

Sadly the male rabbit was very poorly and didn't survive, but the kits, who were around four weeks old, were all in good health and so was their mum. We looked after them all until they were ready to be rehomed and gave them essential veterinary care to keep them healthy.

We also cared for two guinea pigs, Comet and Vinnie, who were dumped in a bin, thrown away like rubbish during the cold winter spell. Thankfully they were rescued by a passerby and taken to their nearest Blue Cross rehoming centre in Hertfordshire. Emma Winter, Animal Welfare Assistant, says: "They were soon settled into a cosy, warm hutch and became firm favourites with the team here. Unsurprisingly, the boys were a little shy, but they slowly got used to being handled, enjoying trips to the staffroom at break-time while they waited for their new homes."

Comet and Vinnie have now been happily rehomed, too. It's because of you that we're able to help pets in urgent need like Comet, Vinnie and the rabbits, so thank you for your support.



A loss like no other

When Marion Laurence's beloved dog Oliver died, her world fell apart – but our Pet Bereavement Support Service helped her piece it back together again

Marion Laurence prided herself on being a very strong person. Throughout life's ups and downs, and the challenges that were thrown at her, including the death of both her parents within 18 months and her divorce, she picked up the pieces and moved on.

So when her border collie crossbreed Oliver died at the age of 15, she wasn't prepared for the effect it had on her life. She says: "It felt like the end of my world. It was the hardest thing I have ever had

to cope with and, like a lot of people, I've coped with quite a few problems. Although I'd had other pets before Oliver, nothing affected me like this."

Oliver had been Marion's constant companion throughout many difficult times. They shared their home together and Oliver was an integral part of Marion's life and daily routine. Making the decision to have him put to sleep after he became very poorly was absolutely heartbreaking, even though she knew it was the right thing to do.

She says: "I thought that I'd be okay after a few weeks but I wasn't. Even my friends, who were so supportive when Oliver died, thought I would be back to normal in a reasonable amount of time. I decided that I needed some help, so I looked online and found the Pet Bereavement Support Service (PBSS)."

PBSS is run by Blue Cross and was set up to help people just like Marion who are struggling to cope with the loss of a pet, or are facing the prospect of saying goodbye to a pet – whether through death or separation. The telephone support line is open 365 days a year and our volunteers are also on hand to help people via email. Last year we responded to 6,670 calls and 1,001 emails.

Marion says: "I had email support from PBSS for nearly a year and it was invaluable to me that somebody understood what I was going through and didn't judge me for the way that I felt."

Marion was so inspired that she later decided to join PBSS as a support line volunteer so that she could help others who are going through what she did.

She says: "It has been nine years since I lost Oliver and I still miss him, but something good has come out of what happened because I joined PBSS and I have been supporting other people for more than five years. PBSS provides a unique service for people and I have found it to be a privilege to be a part of it."


"It was invaluable to me that somebody understood"

Coping with the loss of a pet? Call us on 0800 096 6606 (UK only including Northern Ireland) or email pbssmail@bluecross.org.uk. The line is open from 8.30am to 8.30pm every day, and calls are confidential and free from a landline.

have your say

We love to hear from you – please send us your news and pictures of your pets

FIND US ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER – JUST SEARCH FOR BLUE CROSS




A HAPPY RETIREMENT

This is our dog Brandy. We rehomed him in 2006 from your Tiverton rehoming centre. Since then he has made himself at home claiming the sofa for his own personal use and gets very sulky when we have visitors and he has to sit on the floor. He loves his walks and has done about half of the South West Coast Path. He also helps with shredding mail and newspapers if he can get his paws on them. He has been such a joy and given us hours of fun, plenty of exercise and a very happy retirement.

Dot and Ken Hooper

As writers of the star letter, Dot and Ken Hooper have won £100 of Love2Shop vouchers, provided by Petplan, the UK's largest provider of animal health insurance. For more information on Petplan, visit www.petplan.co.uk



LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

My springer spaniel Jack is the most amazing dog I have ever known. He is so well behaved and lives to please anyone he meets. He came into my care as a four-month-old pup. I was working as a Veterinary Nurse in Sheffield. He was rushed in as he had jumped off a small wall and broken both of his elbows. I fell in love with him the moment they placed him on the consulting table and later rehomed him. He never complained throughout all of his treatment. He is such a lovely, loyal dog and now he has new elbows he lives to go for a walk. I would love to see his photo on this page, he certainly deserves some praise.

Sally Briggs, South Yorkshire



THANKS FOR TIPEY

For more than 15 years our lives have been enhanced by a Blue Cross pet. His name was Tipey, and he recently died quietly at home, aged almost 18. Tipey had been rescued at the age of three by Blue Cross in Cambridge. He had not been expected to live, and it is thanks to the care of the team there that he eventually was rehomed with us. He was a beautiful cat, and we loved him immensely. My family and I have become lifelong supporters of Blue Cross. Thank you.

David Otter, Cambridge

NOSY PARSON

I just had to send in this photo of Oscar, my sister-in-law's parson russell terrier, who lives near Middlesbrough. We were all out in the garden and, of course, Oscar didn't want to miss out so popped his head through the cat flap to see where we were. He is a real character and is the reason why my daughter, Stephanie, and her husband, Tom, now have two parson russell terriers! There is one thing you can guarantee with pets – you will get some brilliant photos.

Bill Richardson, Worcester



WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE YOUR PET ON THIS PAGE?

Email a photo, along with brief details, to editor@bluecross.org.uk or write to *Blueprint* editor, Blue Cross, Shilton Road, Burford, Oxon OX18 4PF. We reserve the right to edit any letters as necessary.



ON YOUR BIKE!

Taking part in one of our cycling challenges is a great way to raise money for Blue Cross and it's good exercise, too. To help you get started, we've got some advice, courtesy of Sustrans, to help you find the right bike

TYPES OF BIKES

Road bikes: also known as racers, these are lightweight and fast with skinny tyres. Good for road racing and nipping around town. Touring bikes are sturdier versions of racing bikes, suitable for long-distance rides.

Mountain bikes: these have sturdy frames, knobby tyres and highly effective brakes. Good for off-road riding, but change to slick tyres and they're also comfortable for road riding.

Hybrid bikes: a cross between the speed of a road bike and the strength and gearing of a mountain bike. A good everyday option for cycling in traffic and commuting.

Folding bikes: these have smaller wheels and fewer gears so they fold down compactly and are easier to carry. Good for people who commute on public transport but use their bikes at either end of their trip.

Women's bikes: women can use any type of bike, but on a classic women's frame the crossbar is dropped. This makes it more practical if you cycle in a skirt or a dress.

Dutch-style bikes: the upright sitting position of these fashionable bikes makes them great for traffic, as you can see what's happening around you. The low crossbar makes it easy to mount and dismount gracefully, too.

RIDE BEFORE YOU BUY

Always try to test ride your bike before you buy. Once you're happy with your choice, the handlebars, saddle height and tilt can be adjusted for comfort, pedal-power and control. Reputable bike shops will normally do all of this for you. Saddles are a personal choice, so try a few out before deciding which one is best for you.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT SIZE

When you're choosing a bike, the most important thing is to buy the right size frame.

Consider how much clearance you need from the cross bar – this is the main tube that runs from the saddle to the handlebars.

If you need to stop quickly you'll be glad that you chose a frame size that gave you clearance from the cross



ABOVE: Rob and Clare Archer took part in the Nightrider challenge in London to raise money for poorly and unwanted pets

"Saddles are a personal choice, so try a few out before you buy"

bar of at least an inch. If you cycle in traffic, this could be an important consideration. For mountain biking you'll need even more clearance since you'll be putting your feet down a lot.

Frames for women tend to be shorter as, on average, women have longer legs and shorter torsos and arms. Female-specific saddles are wider at the back and narrower at the front to accommodate women's bone structure.

CYCLE LONDON BY NIGHT

A team of 10 pet lovers raised £3,000 after taking part in Nightrider in June. This annual cycling event takes riders on a 100km route around London by moonlight.

We have places available for 2014 so, if you'd like to sign up to this fabulous event and raise money for pets at Blue Cross, fill in the tear-off form on the back page or visit www.bluecross.org.uk/activechallenges to find out more.

dates for your diary



From dog walks to survival challenges, there's plenty going on at Blue Cross – so get your diary out and schedule in some time to join in the fun over the next few months as we raise money for sick, injured and homeless pets

BLUE CROSS RAMBLE

22 September 2013 and 21 September 2014. Enjoy a rare insight into life at our Burford rehoming centre with a 5km walk around our grounds. Dogs are welcome. Registration is at 10.30am with the walk starting at 11.00am – tickets are £5, children under 16 go free. Join us afterwards for a bring-your-own picnic in our meadow.

TEA PARTY

9 May 2014. Join us as we host our popular annual tea party. Whether you want to hold your own party, attend one of ours or even just donate a virtual cuppa, there are so many ways to get involved in this fun event.

BUPA LONDON 10K

26 May 2014. Make it your new year's resolution to train for this fun run around London – a great way to get fit and work off those extra Christmas pounds!

WILDERNESS CHALLENGE

6-8 June 2014. Leave modern life at home for the weekend and set up camp in the middle of the woods, with only the bare minimum of provisions to keep you company, as you put the survival skills you've been taught to the ultimate test.

BELOW: Blue Cross supporters had fun at the Bupa London 10K



NIGHTRIDER

7-8 June 2014. Cycle past the historic landmarks of London, including Tower Bridge, Canary Wharf and the London Eye, on this 100km circular moonlit ride.

LONDON TO PARIS BIKE RIDE

23-27 July 2014. Imagine you're in the Tour de France cycling alongside Bradley Wiggins on this iconic fundraising event. The 300-mile route takes four days as you make your way from the UK's capital to the heart of Paris.



To find out more about any of these events, please fill in the tear-off form on the back flap of this magazine or visit www.bluecross.org.uk/activechallenges

LOCAL CENTRE EVENTS

FELIXSTOWE

Dog walk, 13 October 2013.
Christmas fair, 23 November 2013.
Call 0300 777 1480 for more information.

NORTHAM

Family fun day and dog show, 8 September 2013.
Christmas fair, 9 November 2013.
Call 0300 777 1510 for more information.

THIRSK

Coffee morning, 13 November 2013, Northallerton Town Hall.
Call 0300 777 1540 for more information.

OTHER EVENTS

Visit us at any of these events to meet some of the Blue Cross team and find out more about our work:

Paws in the Park

21-22 September 2013

British Veterinary Nursing

Association Congress

11-13 October 2013

Your Horse Live

9-10 November 2013

Discover Dogs

9-10 November 2013



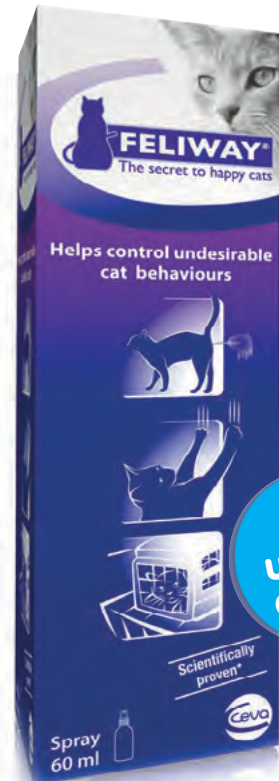
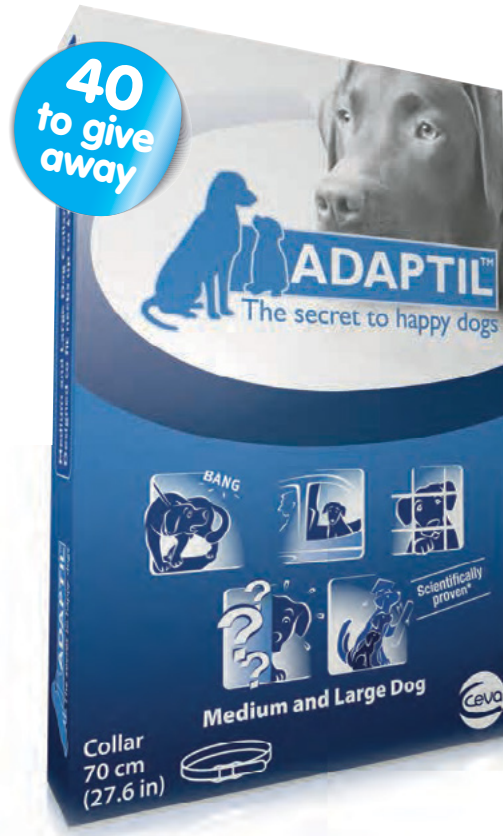
ADAPTIL™ AND FELIWAY® PRODUCTS FOR YOUR PETS

Help your dog or cat cope better with new situations or challenges with Adaptil and Feliway. We have 40 Adaptil collars to give away to dog owners, worth £20 each.

Adaptil is a synthetic copy of the natural comforting pheromone released by the mother dog to reassure her puppies. Adaptil has been scientifically proven to help dogs of all ages through potentially difficult times such as: fireworks, car travel, moving house, loud parties and stays away from home.

The collars are available in two sizes – medium/large fits necks up to 70cm and puppy/small dog fits necks up to 45cm. Each collar lasts for four weeks and can be replaced as required.

For cat owners, we have 15 Feliway sprays worth £18 each to give away. Feliway helps cats to cope with stressful situations such as changes in environment, new pets entering the household and trips away from home. Feliway mimicks the natural facial pheromones that cats place around their territory, making them feel more safe and secure.



HOW TO ENTER

Answer the following question for a chance to win.

In our news update we told you one of our centres had just reopened its new cattery after a three-month refurbishment – but which one was it?

- A) Hertfordshire
- B) Cambridge
- C) Bromsgrove

Answer

You can enter online at www.bluecross.org.uk/blueprintcompetition

Alternatively, write your answer on this coupon, along with your name, address and telephone number, and send it to:

Blueprint competition,
Blue Cross, Shilton Road,
Burford, Oxon OX18 4PF

Strictly one entry per household.
Closing date: 30/11/2013

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

From time to time we may wish to communicate with you by phone or email. If you are happy for us to do this, please fill in your details below.

Email: _____

- Adaptil collar (medium/large)
- Adaptil collar (puppy/small)
- Feliway spray

Tick here to receive emails about Blue Cross.

Tick here to receive phone calls about Blue Cross.

find us

Locations of Blue Cross services

FIND US
ON FACEBOOK
AND TWITTER –
JUST SEARCH FOR
BLUE CROSS



Blue Cross animal hospitals

- 1 Victoria animal hospital
- 2 Hammersmith animal hospital
- 3 Merton animal hospital
- 4 Grimsby animal hospital

Associates

- 29 Mayflower Sanctuary

Partner Charities

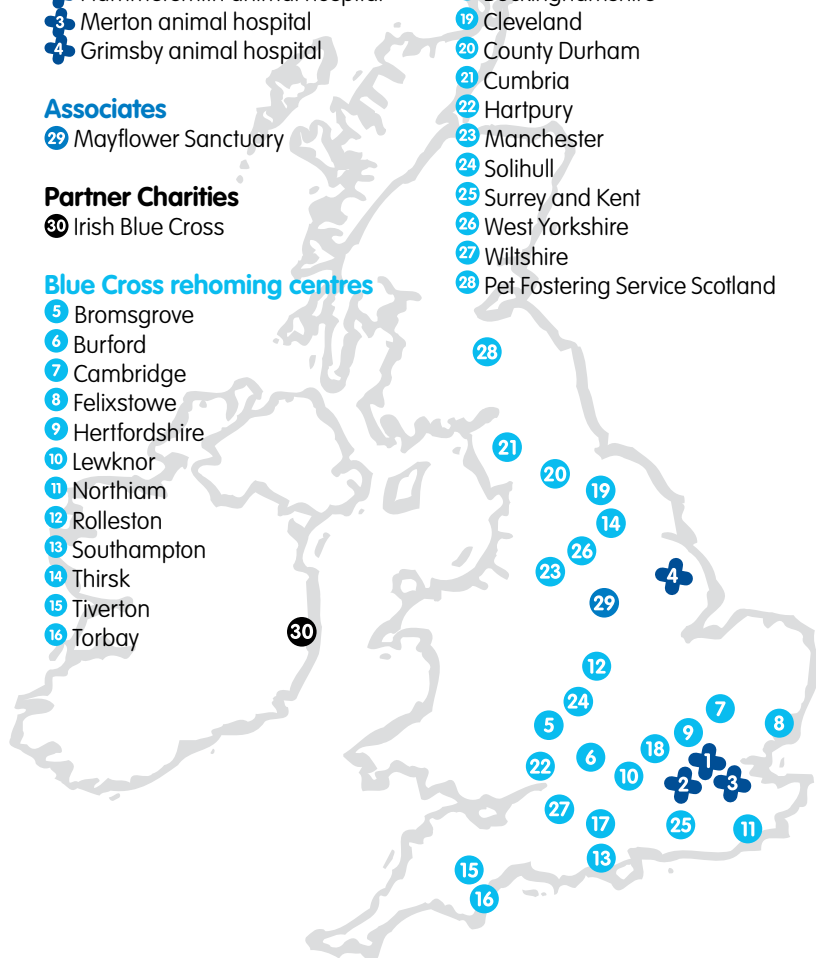
- 30 Irish Blue Cross

Blue Cross rehoming centres

- 5 Bromsgrove
- 6 Burford
- 7 Cambridge
- 8 Felixstowe
- 9 Hertfordshire
- 10 Lewknor
- 11 Northiam
- 12 Rolleston
- 13 Southampton
- 14 Thirsk
- 15 Tiverton
- 16 Torbay

Pet fostering

- 17 Andover
- 18 Buckinghamshire
- 19 Cleveland
- 20 County Durham
- 21 Cumbria
- 22 Hartpury
- 23 Manchester
- 24 Solihull
- 25 Surrey and Kent
- 26 West Yorkshire
- 27 Wiltshire
- 28 Pet Fostering Service Scotland



Blue Cross shops

Abergavenny, Andover, Banbury, Bridgnorth, Bromsgrove, Cannock, Cheltenham, Chippenham, Cirencester, Droitwich, Dursley, Fleet, Frome, Great Malvern, Henley-on-Thames, Hereford, Hungerford, Kidlington, Leamington Spa, Ledbury, Ludlow, Marlborough, Monmouth, Nantwich, Newbury, Pershore, Royal Wootton Bassett, Stow-on-the-Wold, Stratford-upon-Avon, Summertown, Tewkesbury, Trowbridge, Warminster, Warwick, Wells, Wilmslow, Witney, Wokingham, Worcester, Yardley

SUPPORTER CARE 0300 790 9903

Coping with the LOSS OF A PET?

CONTACT OUR PET BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT SERVICE

0800 096 6606

pbssmail@bluecross.org.uk

The support line is open everyday **8.30am-8.30pm**

MOVING HOUSE?

Please don't forget to let us know if you have moved home recently or are in the process of doing so. Updating us in this way is enormously important because, without your new address, we would be unable to claim Gift Aid on your donations, which is worth 25p for every pound you donate. Giving us your new address also means we avoid the unnecessary cost of contacting you at your old address and ensures you continue to receive your copy of *Blueprint*.

To inform us of a change of address, please call our Supporter Care Team on 0300 790 9903, email info@bluecross.org.uk or fill in and return the coupon.

Thank you!



Please write your old address below
(including postcode):

(Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms)

Name

Address

Postcode

Please write your new address below
(including postcode):

(Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms)

Name

Address

Postcode

Please cut out this coupon and return it to the following FREEPOST address:

**Tracey Nadin, Blue Cross,
FREEPOST OF224, BURFORD OX18 4BR**

Please note that since we select our mailings up to two months in advance, it is possible that you may receive one or two further mailings to your old name or address before this amendment takes effect. We sincerely apologise for any inconvenience this may cause you.

SEND US YOUR SHARES AND HELP ANIMALS IN NEED

Many of us don't often consider the different ways we can support our favourite charities. As well as giving money, volunteering or engaging in fundraising activities, Blue Cross can benefit from donations of shares. So you can help even more animals without it affecting your monthly outgoings!

Donating shares can be an extremely tax-efficient way of giving to Blue Cross and we can turn your contributions into much-needed funds. We also work with ShareGift, the charity share donation organisation, which specialises in aggregating shares, selling them and using the proceeds to make donations to charity. Since 1998, Blue Cross has received almost £75,000 from ShareGift. For more information about how you can donate your shares, please complete the form overleaf, or contact Selina Williams at Blue Cross, Shilton Road, Burford, Oxon OX18 4PF, on 01993 822651 or by email at sharegiving@bluecross.org.uk

Save even more animals by making your gift worth 25% more with Gift Aid

giftaid it

I want Blue Cross to treat all gifts of money that I have made in the past four years and all future gifts of money that I make from the date of this declaration as Gift Aid donations.

Date / /

You must pay an amount of UK income tax and/or capital gains tax for each year (6 April one year to 5 April the next) that is at least equal to the tax that Blue Cross and any other charities and community amateur sports clubs you support will reclaim on your donations for that tax year (council tax and VAT do not count). Blue Cross will claim back 25p for every £1 gift aided. Please tick the box.

To make a donation by phone or for supporter enquiries, please call **0300 790 9903**

You can also give online by going to www.bluecross.org.uk



We don't just look after pets – we look after your donations too

Less than **2p** in every £1 we receive is spent on administration, so we make sure your donation goes exactly where you want it to go – on giving pets a healthy, happy future.

Thanks to you, we can be there for pets long into the future.



In 2013...

Between January and June this year, we took in **3,926 abandoned or unwanted pets** – that's **2,144 cats, 1,279 dogs, 191 horses, 139 rabbits and 173 other small pets**. We cared for **519 homeless kittens and 171 puppies**. And we carried out **32,427 clinical consultations and operated on 5,191 pets**.

We need your help

We've been dedicated to the health and happiness of pets since 1897. Abandoned or unwanted, ill or injured – we do what's needed to give every pet a healthy life in a happy home. We're a charity, so the more help you give us, the more help we can give pets.

Please use this form to donate to Blue Cross. Alternatively, you can donate online at www.bluecross.org.uk

From time to time we may wish to communicate with you by phone or email. If you would like us to do this please fill in your phone number and email address below.

Title: First name:

Surname:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

Email:

Please accept my donation of:

£10 **£20** **£35** **£50** or other (please specify) **£**

I enclose a cheque / postal order made payable to Blue Cross

Please debit my Maestro / MasterCard / Visa Debit / Visa Credit / Charity Card

Card no.

(If applicable) Valid from / Expiry date / (Maestro only) Issue no.

Signature Date / /

Return to: Blue Cross, Freepost OF224, D13BP2, Burford OX18 4PF

For more information, please call **Supporter Care** on **0300 790 9903**



Find out more about fundraising for Blue Cross

Please send me further information on the following:

UK challenges Running Overseas challenges Fundraising pack Tea party Shares

For more information on these challenges, please complete the form below or email events@bluecross.org.uk

Title: First name:

Surname:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

Email:

Return to: Events Team, Blue Cross, Shilton Road, Burford, Oxon OX18 4PF

For more information, please call **Supporter Care** on **0300 790 9903**





If animals
have a place
in your heart...

...find a place for them in your Will

We've been dedicated to the health and happiness of pets since 1897. Abandoned or unwanted, ill or injured – we do what's needed to give every pet a healthy life in a happy home. We're a charity, so the more help you give us, the more help we can give pets.

**A gift in your Will can help secure the future for thousands of animals.
If you need us, we can also be there for your special companion.**



www.bluecross.org.uk

 Return the coupon or write to the address below to receive our free advice and information pack on Will writing.

Please send me your FREE advice & information pack on making or amending a Will and leaving a gift to Blue Cross.

Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms)

Address

Postcode

Telephone No.

Send to: Stacey Calladine, Blue Cross, FREEPOST OF224, Room B213, Shilton Road, Burford, Oxon OX18 4BR
For gifts in Wills enquiries, please call 0300 777 1757 or email legacy@bluecross.org.uk and quote B213

Registered charity no: 224392 (England and Wales), SC040154 (Scotland)

FR7128/0513