

# WISCKers

News for supporters of Western Isles Support for Cats and Kittens (WISCK) (Edition 4, August 2020)



## Lockdown foster heroes

You could describe 2020 in many ways, but normal isn't one of them. We weren't alone in wondering what was coming next as lockdown dragged on.

Of course, kittens always come next ... a whole generation of kittens has been born, socialised and re-homed during lockdown and they'll never know how unusual their start in life was.

One result of the situation created by Covid is that we've expanded our foster team. We've found loving homes for LOTS of kittens, but with vets on reduced services, the pens have filled with feral adult cats who can't be moved on until they get a chance to be neutered.

So, we absolutely depend on our team of dedicated volunteer foster-carers, who accept kittens into their homes and into their lives. Kittens help them with homework, kittens hide under coffee tables, there are kittens in the bathroom, on laps, on shoulders and hiding in kitchen cupboards.

Yes, we enjoy it - we hope that you do too!

## Poster boy Parsley

Regular supporters of WISCK and followers on our Facebook page will be familiar with the story of Parsley, the cat found abandoned on a pier at Carloway in Lewis. Parsley (formerly known as Pier) had to be shaved to deal with the horrible tangle of mats in his fur.



He's turned into a bit of a poster-boy for WISCK now, with a floofy new coat, a new home in Ness, owners who adore him, his own Facebook page and a whole new life to enjoy. He's a natural poser too, isn't he? This is why we do what we do, and why we appreciate your support so much. It means we can help more cats to a happy ending like this.



# Picture purr-fect!

When we ran our 'Piseag Pageant' earlier this summer, we were lucky enough to be able to offer a top prize of a personal portrait of the winning piseag, painted by Art by Seonaid.

Best in show was this handsome boy, 18-year-old Midge, who won the golden oldie category and then topped the lot to get his paws on the prize, as well as his splendid rosette.

During lockdown it's been fascinating to see Seonaid at work and the portrait of Midge emerging in all his glory.

We're sure you will agree it's a prize worthy of the winner, and he's a winner worthy to have his portrait captured so purr-fectly!



# Kitten-soft - it's official

We get a lot of very generous and kind donations, thanks to ordinary people who are willing to shop for an extra packet of cat-food, browse our Amazon wishlist or forward us a cash donation to spend on what we need.

But we have to admit this donation from an eco-friendly toilet paper company did give us a lot of fun, as well as scoring high points for cute-factor.

The box of 24 rolls of toilet paper was used as a prop for a photo-shoot before the contents got distributed among our foster carers - for use on the unglamorous end of the fostering job.

Five semi-feral kittens from the west side of Lewis were very obliging when it came to providing the 'aaah' moments that we needed for the PR.



**DONATE:** PayPal: [wisck2020@gmail.com](mailto:wisck2020@gmail.com) | RBS SC:83-27-12 | AN: 15988656

**AMAZON WISH LIST:** <http://bit.ly/wisck-wishlist>

**EASY FUNDRAISING:** <http://bit.ly/WISCK-ef>

Any donation, big or small is hugely appreciated!



Follow us on Facebook & Instagram to keep up to date with our work & fundraising events:

[@westernislessupportforcatsandkittens](https://www.facebook.com/wisck2020)

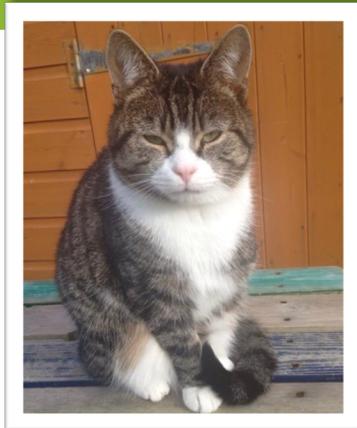
We currently have several cats in care who would make **AMAZING** mousers for a barn or stable.



## Meet the kitty committee

It's time to meet the top cat at WISCK, operations director at Cat Central and the right paw of our vice-chair and cat care supremo Karen.

Mr Tumble was a rescue kitten who came to cat central aged six weeks. He should have been adopted and moved on, but after being rejected a couple of times, Karen put her foot down and he stayed (which was his plan the whole time, so that worked out).



*Mr Tumble has had his portrait painted more than once, including this capture by political cartoonist Neil Storrance.*

Mr Tumble used to have four paws, until he got caught by a nearly-shut window. The vet tidied up the damage with a neat amputation of his left front leg, and the next day Mr Tumble was a sprinting tripod, showing no signs of slowing down.

Karen said: "He has never missed his leg, there's nothing he can't do. In fact our next door neighbour used to frequently wake up with him in bed beside her in her first floor bedroom."

Mr Tumble agreed to this profile on condition that we make it absolutely clear that he's the boss, running Cat Central with an iron paw and allowing nothing to get done without his supervision. He loves the volunteers and regularly checks on the pen cleaning - although he may have an ulterior motive there. Karen says: "He does like stealing treats from the cat sheds. Every volunteer knows to check if he's in there before locking up to go home, as he's a three-legged ninja when it comes to thieving treats."

The only thing Mr Tumble isn't keen on is the kitten guests. Karen says his tolerance levels have dropped over the years and, although he won't actively hurt a kitten, he's not above shoving one off a table if he thinks he can get away with it.

Despite that mean streak, Karen has turned down several offers from visitors to adopt him. As she says: "I had to say no as, although he's an annoying idiot, he's our annoying idiot and we love him."



## We're the working girls



They're not cute, they're not pretty, and they don't even like us all that much, but these ladies have a job to do, and they can't wait to get their teeth into it!

Female feral cats often come to us pregnant and, though their kittens can be socialised and matched with great new homes, the mothers have to be neutered before being found a suitable place to live. We place these girls, in pairs or threes, as barn cats, with bed and board in exchange for keeping vermin down on crofts, farms and industrial sites. They'll spend the rest of their lives in a barn, shed or an outbuilding, with plenty of outdoor access but very little interaction with the humans who supervise their well-being. No frustrating pen to feel trapped in, no more kittens and no annoying attempts to pet and cuddle them. And that's not because we don't care - it's because we do.

In an eight-year lifespan, one unspayed female cat, producing two litters a year, with an average 2.8 surviving kittens, could be the maternal ancestor of 2,072,514 kittens (Figures: Feral and abandoned cat society).

## It's a cat's life *in the Hebrides*

We spend a lot of time telling you how we care for our cats and kittens, the ways in which we raise funds and the issues we deal with every day. It's not often that we tell you about the lives our rescue cats lead after they leave us, but believe us, there's nothing ordinary about a cat's life in the Western Isles of Scotland. While some may thrive on the peace, comfort and company of a nice safe home and a family who love them, others are suckers for the outdoor life and the activities only the islands could offer them.



*Tiny Luci (left) has all this to come - she's still enjoying kitten time with her lovely new family in North Lewis, having only left our care in July. Her new home is on a croft with sheep, acres of open space and a sunny polytunnel to explore, as well as laps and cuddles. It's going to be a dream life, Luci!*

Here's some of our neighbours from around the town of Stornoway, all rescue cats who found their new homes after being in care at Cat Central. Top right: Rosco is 12 and enjoys solitary walks in the croft, as well as family rambles with his cat, dog and human family. His sister Binky (centre) is often along for the walks, finding interesting new spots to explore, from derelict tractors to the walls of the nearby pier. She's a close neighbour to Dubhi (left) who shares a house with two brothers and enjoys the fact that his front garden also happens to be the seashore. And even less worried about getting her paws wet is Lilly (right) who has taken up kayaking and will swim to shore on her own if her family are too slow getting the kayak onto the beach.

## WISCK's hero of the summer

We don't usually give individual accolades, as we have so many generous people who donate time, money and effort to support our cats and the important work we do.



But we've made a special exception for 11-year-old Catherine Donner from North Dell in Lewis, who has spent her lockdown summer running two miles EVERY DAY for 50 DAYS to raise funds split between us and her local community centre, Sporsnis.

Catherine aimed to raise £500 in total, but before she even finished the 50-day marathon she was up to £1,100. She got wet, cold, hot, bitten by midges and fed up of the whole thing a few times and she even ran on her 11<sup>th</sup> birthday, before she had cake. To us she is an absolute star.