



We are building  
a section for people  
passionate about  
rescue cats

### Get in touch...

If you're involved with rescuing cats then we want to hear from you! Share your stories with us and we will publish them on these pages. Email [editorial@yourcat.co.uk](mailto:editorial@yourcat.co.uk) with the subject 'Cat Rescue.'

## HAMPSHIRE

### Cats come first

Helping UK Dogs and Cats is a not-for-profit rescue that was set up by Kirsty Wrightson in August 2018 and is based in Basingstoke, Hampshire. She runs it with Hayley Doyle and is supported by 20 dedicated volunteers who are either foster carers, mentors, fundraisers, or help with administration.

They support the local community in Hampshire by rehoming and rehabilitating dog, cats, and other small animals by arranging shelter, transport, veterinary care, microchipping, spaying, and neutering. In addition to their work in the UK, they also help dogs and cats in Romania.

Hayley said: "Aside from fundraising, one of the biggest challenges we face is finding more foster homes for the cats. As fast as we rehome, there are more cats waiting to come in. We will help if we can, we never turn them away."

Kirsty and Hayley have

been friends for over 20 years. They are passionate and completely dedicated when it comes to helping animals and they share the stress when it comes to running the rescue which is seven days a week, 365 days a year. In August 2020, it all caught up with 43-year-old Kirsty who was fit and healthy with no underlying health conditions — she suffered three heart attacks in a day. Thankfully, she recovered but it was a wake-up call as to how stress can affect a person.

They both share the same vision when it comes to helping animals in need but said "we have so many opportunities but are held back by not being able to find land and also premises in which to sell the many donations we have. We have been donated a whole cattery that could house another 20 cats but finding land has been problematic; it can be so frustrating at times."

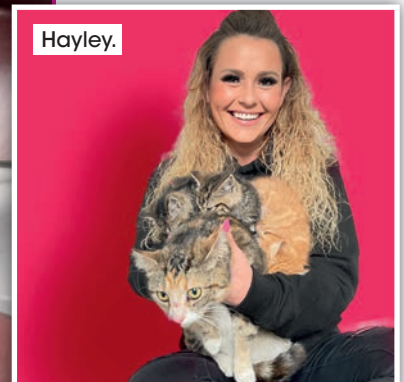
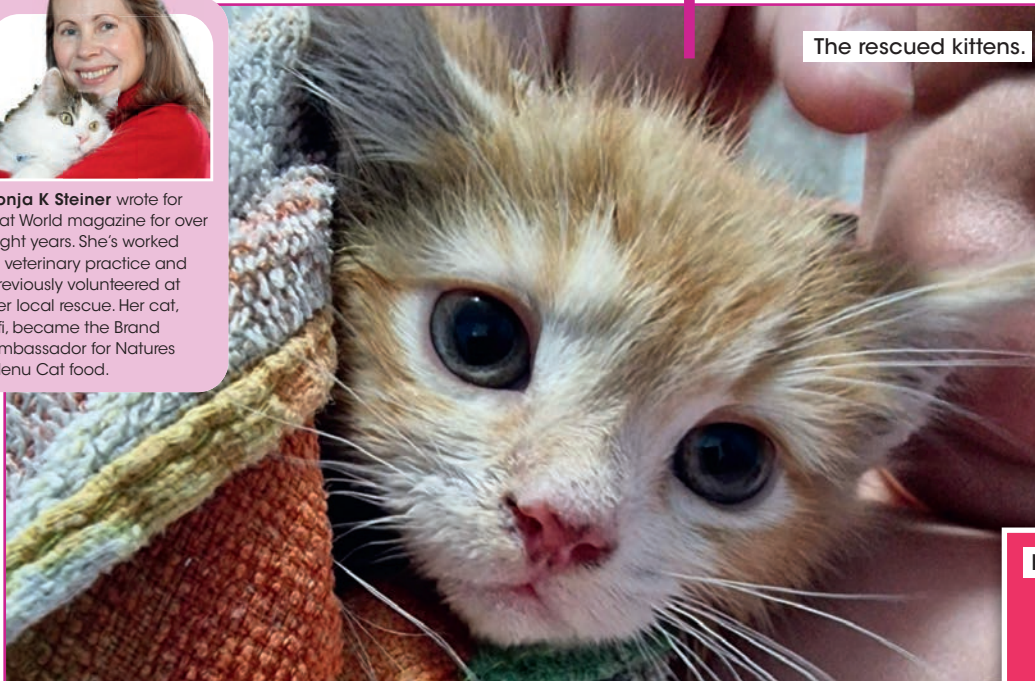
Any potential adopter goes through a thorough vetting process so that the cat is matched up with their perfect family. Hayley said: "We charge the same adoption fee whether the cat is a pedigree or a moggy; no one cat's life is worth more than another. While a £200 adoption fee may seem high, the cat/kitten is fully vaccinated, either neutered or on a neutering program, microchipped, and had a comprehensive health check which includes a blood test and any treatment. They

The rescued kittens.

Hayley.



Sonja K Steiner wrote for Cat World magazine for over eight years. She's worked in veterinary practice and previously volunteered at her local rescue. Her cat, Fifi, became the Brand Ambassador for Natures Menu Cat food.



also leave with five weeks free insurance. We are their voice, and we try to think of everything to make life as easy for everyone concerned."

The rescue pays more to have a dual microchip which means that the rescue's details are on the database as well as the owner's. In the event the cat goes missing and the owner's phone number is inactive, then the rescue can be contacted, and the cat reunited.

In April, the rescue was alerted to a mother cat and her kittens who urgently needed rescuing from an abandoned and derelict house that had previously been involved in a fire and was severely damaged.

Despite requesting assistance from the larger rescues, no help was forthcoming so Hayley contacted the local police to request permission to enter the property herself.

She entered the house and the stench was overwhelming. She discovered cages with deceased animals in, litter piled floor to ceiling, and filthy cat boxes. She ascertained that there was a family of cats in the property and set traps with food and water in for them. Over the next three days, she managed to rescue kittens Todd, Elijah, and Gypsy with mum cat Joleyn being the final one to be rescued. It is only when Hayley looked back did she realise that she put her own life on the line to save them.

The rescue is always coming up with schemes to help owners and their animals, especially as the cost of living has escalated. If someone is struggling to feed their cat, they will donate food to help to keep the cat in the family home. In June, they are offering a discounted neutering scheme and prior to this they offered microchipping at a reduced cost. Hayley said: "We would like to be able to offer a lot more, but we are limited with funding, but we always do our best."

● **For more information, please visit their website [www.helpingdogsandcatsuk.org](http://www.helpingdogsandcatsuk.org) or their Facebook page: [Helping Dogs and Cats UK Rescue](https://www.facebook.com/HelpingDogsandCatsUKRescue).**



## NORTH YORKSHIRE

### Rooftop rescue

Yarm Cat Rescue (YCR) is a not-for-profit rescue that was set up over 16 years ago by Janey Cunningham and David Davies. It is run entirely by a team of dedicated volunteers and has eight foster carers, one of whom is Becky Hart.

One weekend in May, Becky received a phone call to alert her about a mother and kittens who were seen on the roof of a bungalow. The person had originally contacted a large national rescue who simply passed on Becky's number saying they could not help. Since this was not something the rescue had any experience with and no equipment, Becky asked another large rescue for help, but they declined.

She and her son went to the property to assess the situation and contacted Stockton Fire Brigade for their assistance. Within five minutes, they arrived at the property and provided the ladders needed to climb on to the roof. Becky and her son climbed up and after a while they managed to get two of the kittens, and some scratches thrown in for good measure, but the third kitten disappeared with mum.

Mum and kitten have been seen close by but so far have not been lured by food in the trap, but kindly neighbours are monitoring it. The kittens' father has been located and trapped and is now in the rescue.

The rescue has always been actively involved in TNR (trap, neuter, release) and had always worked closely with Pat, a volunteer who headed up the Teesside branch of Cats Protection for over 25 years. She was highly respected and well liked and her leaving has had an impact on small rescues who do a lot to help feral colonies.

Becky said: "Previously, Pat would supply

the rescue with neutering vouchers for the feral cats but now there is paperwork to complete, and the process can take anywhere between 4 — 6 weeks (if they are agreed) by which point the nursing queen could be pregnant again. There is too much red tape, and we could not adhere to some of the policies within their Feral Guide document as it goes against our own policies so consequently, we will have to pay for the neutering ourselves which will put a lot more pressure on to our already stretched finances as often the colonies can be anywhere between 10 to 50 cats."

She added: "It is really important to YCR that the feral cats are only returned if we feel it is a suitable and safe location for them and if not, we would endeavour to relocate them elsewhere. Likewise, we would not return a 9 — 10 week-old kitten to the colony when we could socialise it and it could be rehomed."

"The biggest challenge we face is the number of calls and emails from people wanting to surrender their cats. I would say that based on what the rescue has seen, only 40 per cent of people see them as members of their family, the remaining 60 per cent just as a commodity and are not bothered if the cats have to fend for themselves on the street — it is so sad."

It has reached a point where the rescue is only able to deal with emergency situations, for example injured or sick cats, and pregnant cats and their kittens. There is only so much they can do, despite wanting to do more, especially when their vet bills range from £2,000 — £3,000 per month.

● **For more information, please ask to join their Facebook page [Yarm Cat Rescue](https://www.facebook.com/YarmCatRescue) or visit their website [www.yarmcatrescue.org](http://www.yarmcatrescue.org).**