Introducing our Cat Friendly Principles

2021 Annual Review
A cat friendly world

Our vision:
A cat friendly world where each cat, owned and unowned, is treated with respect, compassion and understanding.

Our mission:
To enable more people to act in a cat friendly way to improve cat welfare.
A message from Lynne Hill, Chair

The past two years have been difficult for all charities, however, trying times bring resourcefulness, and I believe Claire and her team have shown this in abundance. They have been able to focus on developing the Cat Friendly Principles that now define everything that the charity stands for and how it will focus and develop into the future.

International Cat Care (iCatCare) has grown from a UK charity into a global one, and this is seen in the collaborations with international organisations, where iCatCare can support and assist using the years of knowledge gained through its research-based information to enhance the lives of cats.

Great strides have been made in understanding the needs of cats, whether owned or unowned, and iCatCare ensures that this knowledge is spread widely. For a small charity, it has played well above its size.

This year has seen the organisation moving back into our offices following the devastating fire of the previous year. The staff are now working in a hybrid manner following the working practises of today. All staff are to be commended on their resilience in the face of the pandemic and the fire, as they have continued to ensure that iCatCare goes from strength to strength. The recent veterinary conference was a testimony to this.

The Board has spent part of this year recruiting a new CEO, as very sadly Claire is leaving the organisation this August. It was vital to get the right person to take on the mantel and forge the future of iCatCare. The impact that Claire has had on cat welfare and bringing cats onto the agenda of governments, pharmaceutical and other commercial companies, as well as veterinary practices, surgeons and nurses cannot be over-emphasised. She has made a real difference and has formed a great team of experts working to educate professionals and the public on cats.

Cats owe Claire a huge debt of gratitude. iCatCare has grown immensely under her stewardship and we believe that Nicola is the right person to take her mantle forward to the next stage of the charity’s development.

The Board all thank Claire for her outstanding contribution and wish her well for her bright future.

‘Chairing International Cat Care is always a delight knowing that cats worldwide are better off because of iCatCare’s activities.’
A message from Claire Bessant, Chief Executive

We’re excited to bring you this annual review which celebrates the launch of our Cat Friendly Principles and all of the work which has led up to their creation. After a couple of challenging years for us all, we are out meeting people again and continuing to move forward with our activities. We have always been a difficult charity to put neatly in a box with a short snappy sentence to explain our work in the veterinary sector, with owners and caregivers, with other organisations and with sponsors, and with those working with unowned cats on such a wide variety of subjects. Over the past two years, we have taken the time to articulate what we have instinctively done over the years in our approach to cats. The resulting Cat Friendly Principles cover both how we consider cats and how we work with people and, in this review, we will show how some of our activities and ideas fit into these Principles.

This is a poignant time for me as I am retiring in August this year after 28 years at the helm, so this will be my last annual review. I am so proud of the charity and its dedication to the welfare of cats. I am also proud of and grateful to all the people who have helped iCatCare over these many years. There is a common denominator to all of the people I have met and worked with

‘Each person can make a difference and every cat matters’

CAT FRIENDLY PRINCIPLES

Keep cats well
Give equal consideration to the cat’s physical health and mental wellbeing

Be solution driven for cats
Find evidence-based, pragmatic and sustainable solutions for cats

Collaborate for cats
Work together, locally, internationally and with people from different backgrounds, always supporting and valuing each other

Respect cats
Respect the diversity of the species and understand the individual cat

Do cats no harm
Ensure cats are never worse off as a result of people or their activities

Communicate for cats
Communicate considerately and share knowledge generously for the sake of cats

Evolve for cats
Be innovative, remain curious and keep learning for cats

The Cat Friendly Principles cover both how we consider cats and how we work with people.
‘We are driven by considering activities from the cat’s point of view and with as much understanding and respect for cats’ needs as we can.’

— such an unswerving enthusiasm and generosity towards this fascinating species and patience in working out how to understand it better and improve its welfare. This includes not only experts and researchers, but also our trustees, those who work with cats, and our supporters and members who put cat welfare ideas into action with their own or with other cats. Each person can make a difference and every cat matters. But we have not simply taken the easy route. Sometimes our thoughts on what is best for cats don’t coincide with what people want or with strong opinions on some subjects, but we are driven by considering activities from the cat’s point of view and with as much understanding and respect for cats’ needs as possible. Thank you to those who have followed our reasoning and been supporters for change.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to Nicola Martin who is taking over as Chief Executive. Please continue to work with her and support her as she will be implementing all of these Cat Friendly Principles. I hope she enjoys the people, the challenges and the achievements she will make as much as I have.

Claire Bessant will retire as Chief Executive in 2022, after 28 years at the helm of the charity.
An estimated 25 million cats’ lives are touched by the work of iCatCare each year.
Key achievements in 2021

- Development of 7 new Cat Friendly Principles
- **4.5 million** website views to www.icatcare.org
- Reaching over **7,000** veterinarians in **113** countries
- Over **1 million** article downloads from our *Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery*
- Accreditation of **421** more Cat Friendly Clinics across the world
- Online learners from over **46** countries
- International Cat Day **#BeCatCurious**
- Working with National Partners in **23** countries
- **3,100** delegates attend ISFM Virtual Feline Medicine Congress from **96** countries
A message from Lord Guy Black, patron

iCatCare makes us think about cats in a different way, holistically and from the cats’ point of view – what cats themselves need. This is sometimes challenging because cats also fulfil many of our human needs, and these can influence our relationships with them, not always to the benefit of cats!

The adaptability of the cat also means that it can survive and breed even in difficult circumstances, making population management of unowned cats a challenge which is often tackled inhumanely across the world. The Cat Friendly Principles move us forward in the way we live and work with and for cats, and how we work with each other for cats. As people, we have a moral responsibility to protect cats from suffering, both physically and mentally.

‘With an estimated global population of 600 million cats, half of which are thought to be unowned, humane management is essential, and with more cats being kept as pets, good veterinary care and owner understanding are vital. As a result, International Cat Care’s work has never been more important.’
Understanding that individual cats have unique needs and preferences for physical contact from people is key to respecting the species.

Unowned cats will vary in the way they choose to live or interact with humans (or not) which must be respected when providing care.
Cat Friendly Principle 2
Keep cats well
Give equal consideration to the cat’s physical health and mental wellbeing

By providing evidence-based educational resources, International Cat Care enables and inspires people worldwide to expand their knowledge and understanding of what it means to keep cats well, from preventing and responding to ill health to respecting and nurturing mental wellbeing. With over 4.5 million visits to our website in 2021, it’s clear that the demand for this information has never been higher.

We have seen

4.5M
website views in 2021

+54%
increase in website traffic compared to 2020

Top countries for website traffic (’000s)

Top webpages (’000s views)

- Your cats age in human years
- Thinking of getting a cat?
- Difficult birth
- Homepage
- How to tell the sex of a kitten
- Helping your new cat/kitten settle in
- FIP
- Introducing an adult cat to your cat
- Elderly cat special considerations
- The pruritic itchy cat
Trusted by vets and nurses, our veterinary division the International Society of Feline Medicine (ISFM) provides a worldwide resource on feline health and wellbeing. This includes publication of the world-renowned Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery (JFMS).

In 2021, ISFM continued to grow its global audience, with over 7,000 veterinarians as members and committed to improving the veterinary care of cats worldwide.

The CatCareforLife healthcare programme sits alongside our Cat Friendly Clinic accreditation programme. It provides a partnership between owners and veterinary clinics for the lifelong health of cats.
Cat Friendly Principle 3
Do cats no harm
Ensure cats are never worse off as a result of people or their activities

Since 1958 we’ve challenged cruelty, ignorance and misunderstanding by inspiring and enabling people to understand cats and make positive changes to their lives. This includes Cat Friendly handling and interactions, as well as the prevention and treatment of pain or illness. The publication of two new guides Recognising and managing acute pain and Transfusion of blood and blood products empowers owners and caregivers with the information they need to recognise and manage medical conditions that, if left untreated, cause serious harm to both mental and physical wellbeing.

‘2021 continued to be a busy year for ISFM, our work predominantly focuses on the first three Cat Friendly Principles, with the Cat Friendly Clinic programme improving the veterinary profession’s respect and understanding of cats as a species and individuals, and JFMS, Feline Focus, protocols, webinars and congress providing the profession with the knowledge to keep cats well and cause them no harm. However, to successfully extend the reach of these materials to improve cat welfare we need to communicate, collaborate and continue to find evidence-based pragmatic solutions for veterinary professionals to put into practice. We do this through working with other international veterinary societies, National Partner groups and through our ISFM and ISFM academy members. 2021 has been a very successful year in ISFM’s evolution.’

Nathalie Dowgray
Head of ISFM

11,388 visits to webpage for downloading cat carer guides:
- Recognising and managing acute pain in cats
- Transfusion of blood and blood products in cats
2021 also saw the creation of the new International Unowned Cat Welfare Group, with monthly meetings of vets, researchers, and professors of shelter medicine from USA, Canada, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand, and Slovakia discussing hot topics within the unowned cat world and whether these are helpful or harmful to cats, including exploring the longer-term outcomes for kittens homed as pets from free-roaming, unowned cats.
Cat Friendly Principle 4
Be solution-driven for cats
Find evidence-based, pragmatic and sustainable solutions for cats

Improving cat welfare on a global scale means creating innovative solutions that are accessible to our wide audience of cat caregivers, owners, and other key stakeholder groups.

Providing online educational content targeted to our various audiences, including translations into multiple languages, has made feline learning more accessible and truly international. In 2021, 697 learners from over 46 countries joined us for our expert-led feline courses.

2021 also saw the first uptake of our new unowned cat learning courses designed to educate anyone with a desire to help unowned cats. It was also a landmark year where extensive research and collaboration with cat welfare groups worldwide led to the creation of the Cat Friendly decision-making documents. These documents were designed to support those working with unowned cats in navigating the complex issues they face daily and were made possible due to a legacy from Tony Welsh which enabled iCatCare to create the Tony Welsh Educational Fund.

• Creation of 3 new Cat Friendly decision-making documents (published in 2022)
• 498 learners completed the free Bringing Cat Friendly Solutions to Life online course
• First cohort of learners for the new Cat Friendly Homing Course began in September

We have welcomed 697 new registrations this year
We have seen +29% registrations compared to 2020

Registrations from 46 countries*
+3 more countries compared to 2020
384 registrations from GB

Top countries for registration (excluding GB)

AU IE TW US ES NL DE CA SE CL

*Excluding free UC website course

We have seen 498 learners completed free Unowned Cats Website Course

Net Promoter Score
We have welcomed 3,488 Enquiries to courses@icatcare.org

Top countries for registration (excluding GB)

AU IE TW US ES NL DE CA SE CL

*Excluding free UC website course
The Cat Friendly Clinic programme is another key example of a sustainable and long-term solution for improving cat welfare worldwide. Because of their unique nature and needs, taking cats to visit a veterinary clinic can be very stressful, both for cats and owners. The Cat Friendly Clinic programme is designed to help address these issues and all accredited clinics must meet and adhere to criteria based on our Cat Friendly Principles. In 2021, we were excited to welcome our first Cat Friendly Clinic in Madagascar, which joins our extensive list of over 40 countries. The Cat Friendly Clinic programme will be celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2022.

Combining ISFM’s Cat Friendly Clinics and the American Association of Feline Practitioner’s Cat Friendly Practices, has resulted in over 4,000 veterinary establishments changing the way they treat cats.
Cat Friendly Principle 5
Communicate for cats
Communicate considerately and share knowledge generously for the sake of cats

As custodians of International Cat Day, iCatCare made the most of the opportunity to spread the word, educating and raising awareness for cat owners, caregivers and all those working with cats globally.

The theme for 2021 was Training for Cats and their Humans, following a survey that revealed 95% of cat owners wanted more advice on training their cats, and that at least half of them struggled with getting their cat into a cat carrier. Resources shared via our website and social media platforms included infographics, videos, live expert panels and Q&A sessions, as well as a free educational email campaign.

- Campaign #BeCatCurious was picked up by mainstream news around the world, including the US, India and South Africa. Our International Cat Day assets even appeared on ManotoTV (estimated to be watched by 30% of households in Iran) and featured on the BBC news website (the most popular global news site).
- Over 1,000 sign-ups to an educational email campaign across three different age groups: kitten, adult and aging (osteoarthritis) for ICD.
- Total engagement growth for Facebook: +83%
- Total engagement growth for Twitter: +175%
- Total engagement growth for Instagram: +188%
- Website traffic to www.icatcare.org: +77% during the week of the campaign (3–10 August 2021).
- 5 new ICD graphics viewed over 40,000 times each.
Social media and communications: 2021 highlights for @icatcare.org

Top posts:
- Lethal lilies (164k views)
- Compulsory microchipping (168k views)

Communications:
- Cat Friendly Solutions for Unowned Cats newsletter: 274 new subscribers (up 20% on 2020 and nearly 1,000 subscribers currently)
Cat Friendly Principle 6
Collaborate for cats
Work together for cats, locally, internationally and with people from different backgrounds, always supporting and valuing each other

We are privileged to work with a global network of feline experts and enthusiasts who are committed to helping us achieve our vision of a cat friendly world. This includes our Feline Wellbeing Panel of cat behaviour experts, the ISFM Academy of Feline Practitioners, as well as our work with cat welfare organisations, charities, our National Partner network and other industry-leaders from around the world.

Key collaborations in 2021

ISFM partners with the American Association of Feline Practitioners in publishing the Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery as well as use under licence of the Cat Friendly Practice programme in North and South America – which has led to the registration of over 600 additional Cat Friendly Practices.

International Cat Care is part of the International Companion Animal Management coalition (ICAM), collaborating on improving humane cat population management.

As part of the Alliance for Contraception in Cats and Dogs, International Cat Care contributes to the development of non-surgical solutions to population management.

In 2021, International Cat Care became an associate member of the Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations.

ISFM is a member of the World Small Animal Association (WSAVA) and collaborated to organise a feline stream at WSAVA Congress.

International Cat Care is represented on the Canine and Feline Sector Group of the Animal Health and Welfare Board, England. The charity is also a member of the EU Dog and Cat Alliance and the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Cats.

Organised by International Cat Care, The Cat Group has grown to include even more charities, whose representatives pool experiences and practical advice to develop joint policies for better cat care and include: International Cat Care, Battersea Dogs and Cats Home, Blue Cross, Cats Protection, Governing Council of the Cat Fancy, PDSA, RSPCA, Mayhew Animal Home, British Veterinary Association, British Small Animal Veterinary Association and Wood Green.
Collaborate for cats: 2021 highlights

- **37** feline behaviour experts on the Feline Wellbeing Panel
- **133** veterinarians making up the ISFM Academy of Feline Practitioners
- Continued representation on advisory panel to University of Exeter research group on cats and wildlife
- **46** fully funded bursaries for Becoming a Cat Friendly Homing Centre course for 2022
- **16** lectures on cat welfare to international audiences
- **21** webinars (over 150,000 views to date)
- Lecture stream at World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) virtual congress
- Exhibitor booth at the London Vet Show

Head of ISFM Nathalie Dowgray spoke virtually at both ASASVC (China) and the first-ever conference held by the Russian Society of Feline Medicine

2021 also saw exciting new collaborations with key industry leaders including:

- **Mars** – contributing to the ‘Mars Ending Pet Homelessness Index’ and driving adoption of the Cat Friendly Clinic program
- **Trudell Medical International** – a series of 8 training videos on teaching cats to accept face masks to administer an inhaler with medication to improve breathing
Cat Friendly Principle 7
Evolve for cats
Be innovative, remain curious and keep learning for cats

Responding to the ongoing challenges of Covid-19, ISFM hosted its second virtual congress to ensure veterinary professionals worldwide were able to access the latest research and feline medicine updates. The virtual congress will continue in 2022, providing continued access for veterinary professionals who may be unable to attend in person.

**Virtual Congress 2021**
- Over 3,100 delegates from 96 countries
- 96% had heard of ISFM
- 42% were ISFM members
- 81 bursary places awarded to delegates from 11 countries

**Employees and trustees**
iCatCare continues to develop and evolve as a charity and welcomed new employees and trustees. When it comes to working together to create a better world for cats, we believe our people make all the difference. Our trustees are:

- Aarti Hogan
- Alex Campbell
- Alison Travaglia
- Hugh Edgar
- Iwona Mertin
- Jennifer Chong
- Karen Hiestand
- Lynne Hill Chair
- Natasha Lee
- Sue Badger

**What’s next?**
Evolving for the future...

In 2021, planning began for the JFMS to join the open access movement, and we are proud to announce that this will take place in early 2023. This means all papers will be freely available to read online by everyone immediately upon publication. Becoming an open access journal is a monumental step toward empowering the entire veterinary community to provide outstanding care for cats.
Financial review 2021

During 2021, COVID still played a large part in iCatCare’s activities, especially the in-person events, which were held as virtual events instead. Despite all of this, the charity’s income returned to pre-pandemic levels, resulting in £68,000 of income over expenditure.

This positive result was also partly due to the receipt of several legacies which came at a very crucial time for the charity, and we are very grateful to those who remembered us in their wills. One such legacy, from veterinarian Tony Welsh, has formed the basis of The Tony Welsh Educational Fund which will be used to develop effective and sustainable solutions to help people working with unowned cats internationally.

In 2022, we return to an in-person Congress as well as a virtual congress, which will help us to maintain and continue to grow our income stream, and will bring into play funds which have been held in various venues as pre-payment for events which had to be postponed because of COVID.

In 2022 the charity will be coming to the end of a three year strategy which aimed to use some of our designated reserves to invest in development and growth, and a new strategy will be developed for 2023–2025.
Thank you

Thank you to all of our sponsors, supporters, National Partners and organisations we’ve collaborated with in 2021 and who continue to support International Cat Care. Like us, they are passionate about improving the lives of cats around the world through donations, legacies and helping to raise awareness of our work.

Visit our website www.icatcare.org/support-us for information if you’re interested in making a donation or leaving a legacy.

You can also write to:
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Chilmark Road
Tisbury
Wiltshire
SP3 6LW
Thank you from all the team