

## **News from Community Neutering and the Cat Watch project!**

The Cat Watch study is a research and community project that sits within the wider CP Community Neutering model. Cat Watch aims to improve the welfare of stray cats, empowering individuals and communities to care for cats and delivering human benefit through the lens of human behaviour change science, using a community-based partnership approach. Involving communities rather than just delivering a service to them, enables people to see the benefits of cats in their areas and the potential for community cohesion as people share responsibilities for caring for cats or realise the benefits of controlling the population through neutering and return or rehoming. The project started in 2016 in one pilot area (Bulwell, Nottingham) and has since extended to a further five areas. All areas, apart from one, are wards of high deprivation, with around 8,000 households. Beeston in Nottingham was the control area as this is not a ward of high deprivation.

Large-scale door-to-door survey work, pre community outreach gave insight into how the community felt about stray cats, and their knowledge and understanding of cats and their reproductive capacity. It also started the awareness raising process and by this means, was an intervention in itself. Asking people about the incidence of strays in their street allowed the beginnings of population mapping, as another key objective of Cat Watch is to estimate the number of unowned cats in the UK. Insights given by the surveys allowed targeted messaging and communications to each of the communities in the pilot areas.

### **Bulwell Cat Watch**

The results from the first area (Bulwell, Nottingham) showed mixed findings and highlighted that human bias, emotional response and behaviour towards cats is very complicated and interrelated. The key objective of community outreach in the project is to raise awareness of the stray cat issue and create stray reporting behaviour. The core interventions were a mobile app, a drop in community hub, a Facebook group, joining and running events, continued door-to-door work and trap-neuter-return. All of the Cat Watch interventions aim to provide an element of social support to communities, unifying them over a shared cause, which has proven to help cats and people.

A cross sectional survey was undertaken in Bulwell as part of the evaluation, with the following results:

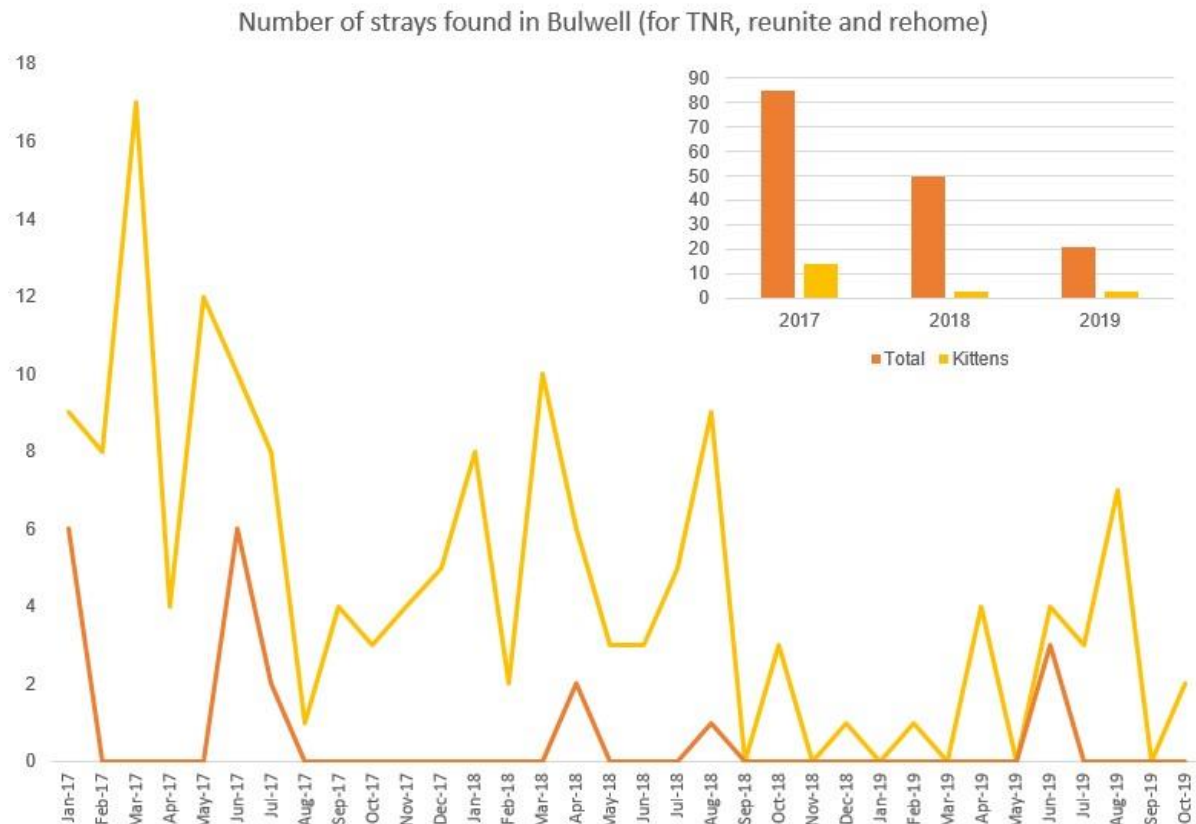
- 882 behaviours were reported as a way to help cats
- People aware of the project more likely to report unowned cats as a way to help them and more likely to have started reporting cats in the last two years (since the project started)
- They were also more likely to have provided or helped arrange neutering for an unowned cat (30% v 13%)
- More likely to report unowned cats now to previous years (68% v 56%)
- There was a marked increased behavioural intention to arrange neutering for unowned cats (76% v 29%)
- 91% reported a sense of enjoyment and personal achievement due to being involved with the project
- 47% reported increased sense of community and 26% reported increased self-esteem

These findings have been published. The link to this paper can be found at <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/9/4/175/pdf>

The first published paper about the project can be found at: [http://journal.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fvets.2018.00258/full?utm\\_source=Email\\_to\\_a](http://journal.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fvets.2018.00258/full?utm_source=Email_to_a)

[uthors &utm\\_medium=Email&utm\\_content=T1\\_11.5e1\\_author&utm\\_campaign=Email\\_publication&field=&journalName=Frontiers in Veterinary Science&id=417357](#)

Following the amazing response from Bulwell residents, reporting strays to us and working with us to Trap-Neuter-Return and care for the strays, we have been able to help so many of the community cats. Furthermore, comparing 2017 with 2019 we have seen a 75% decline in the total number of cats being found on the streets:



### A case study from Beeston

In May 2018, we were gathering initial reports for the start of the Beeston Cat Watch and we received a report about a black & white stray cat.

On investigation the Cat Watch team (Amy Carlin and Yvette Adams) found the cat out on the street and quickly realised, he was in quite poor condition with fur missing and sore patches on his back. Amy and Yvette knew it would be crucial for us to trap him as soon as possible so he could receive the care he desperately needed. His caretaker was informed about what TNR was and how it would be carried out. The caretaker had been feeding him for around 2 years, was very fond of him and very happy for him to come back once he had had treatment so she could continue his care.

The cat (now named Sir Baslow after the street he was found on!), was trapped and taken to the vet for assessment, blood testing for Feline Immunodeficiency virus and Feline Leukaemia Virus, and neutering. Sir Baslow was a shy but friendly boy. The blood test was negative for FIV and FELV was negative, however the vet was very concerned about the condition of his skin, as this would be something he would need ongoing treatment for until it healed. This could not be provided to him while he was living out on the streets, as it

would be too difficult for his caretaker to do. Sir Baslow was diagnosed with flea allergic dermatitis that had become sore and infected. He also had ear mites and needed a dental.

Following treatment and lots of tender loving care at the Nottingham Adoption Centre, Sir Baslow was ready to find his forever home and it did not take long for someone to come along and completely fall in love with him! Throughout his care, his previous caretaker was updated with his progress and they went to visit him at the centre before he went to his new home.

His new owners are completely in love with him and regularly send the centre updates on his progress and lovely photo's too!