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Anti-Yob Cat protection petition

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“Heartbroken” pet owners claim a group of teenagers are “trapping cats” for their dogs to “rip apart”.

A petition signed by 3,675 people is calling for more action from the RSPCA and the police to stop the acts around Claygate and Chessington and surrounding areas.

Natalie Harwood, who started the petition, said her “beautiful” cat Frank had been killed, describing him as “the smallest, most gentle, loving, friendly cat” who was killed “in the worst way”. She added: “We’ve had him since the day he was born, he was only two and a half years old and we are absolutely heartbroken.”

A Surrey Police spokesperson confirmed there had been two reports of incidents involving cats being taunted or harmed by a group of boys around Surbiton Golf Club, but said there had been no arrests made. They said they were aware of ongoing concerns of anti-social behaviour in the area on and around the golf course, and were working closely with the Metropolitan Police to share information, given the area borders London.

The spokesperson said: “In both cases, it was reported that dogs were involved and chased the cats. Officers are conducting further enquiries and anyone who witnessed an attack on a cat or any other animal can get in touch.”

They also said the force would be increasing police presence in the area, “specifically looking out for anti-social behaviour of any kind including animal welfare issues”.

Ms Harwood told the LDRS she and her family spent two weeks searching the golf course after Frank went missing in October, before being told via an anonymous phone call that the beloved pet had been ripped apart by dogs. She said she’d had reports of boys “trying to pull cats from under cars”, climbing trees to get a cat down, or using rakes trying to hit it down with their dogs “waiting at the bottom”.

An RSPCA spokesperson said dog owners had a legal responsibility under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 to keep their dog under control in a public place, and that this legislation was enforced by the police. They added: “This must have been a very upsetting and distressing incident for the owners of the cats mentioned and we are so sorry to hear they sadly lost their lives. We are concerned to hear about wildlife being targeted in this area.”

Clint Whittaker, general manager at the golf club, said the club had reported trespassing issues to local police but nothing concerning animal welfare. He said the club had invested £100,000 in installing security fencing around a portion of its boundary but that it didn’t cover all access points because of a public footpath running across the property.

Mr Whittaker added: “These incidents tend to occur outside of club operating hours, therefore we are only made aware from neighbours when they occur.”

The change.org petition said such incidents had been happening in “Claygate, Chessington and surrounding areas for months.” It also claimed people were “catapulting and shooting at all animals including cats, horses, foxes and deer”.

The petition said: “There’s witnesses, video footage and pictures of these boys and the things they are doing but the police and RSPCA don’t do anything.” The Met Police has been contacted for comment.

Surrey Police ask that anyone who has witnessed such incidents contact them quoting PR/45230118653. The RSPCA spokesperson said they would encourage anyone with serious concerns about animal welfare issues to contact the RSPCA inspector line on 0300 123 8018 or the police.

Image: Frank the cat, a cat who went missing and whose owner Natalie Harwood started a petition calling for an end to animal cruelty after reports of a group of boys attacking

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