

Jillian Brown submission of 15 February 2023

PE1938/I: Introduce compulsory microchipping of cats in Scotland

I have been watching the debates and following all articles relating to changing the road traffic act to include cats with interest.

I would like to take this opportunity for my submission to be read.

My story starts when I was 9 years old (40 years ago), I witnessed our family cat being hit on the road she was making her way back home. The driver hit her and never bothered to stop; I saw everything somewhere in my mind I remember screaming. My mum went out and picked her little body off the road. I (we) were all heartbroken, I just couldn't understand what had happened and why the car never stopped. I was even bullied at school for witnessing this. It has haunted me to this day, I often wonder if the driver had any regret or just didn't bother or care that a much-loved family cat was killed by their car.

Now 40 years on and the law still hasn't changed from the day I was a 9-year-old child, left heartbroken and sobbing.

I have set up and run a Facebook group called Cats lost and found West Lothian Scotland – please visit this group. It is one of many, that's purpose is to help reunite missing/lost cats with their owners. The number of reports we receive about cats that have been hit and left on the road is staggering. I have retrieved and picked up numerous sadly deceased cats, scan them for a microchip and if one is present the database is checked and contact with the owner is made (if the details are up to date, it makes things a lot easier), it breaks my heart having to make that call but the owners are grateful they know what happened and have closure. They can put their little one to rest.

It is about time the law was changed to include cats, they are usually much loved family pets with a family looking for them – they could be a young person, a child, a single person, a couple, an elderly person their cats matter to them that cat could be the only thing that matters to them in the world, it could be a last link to a memory, my cats matter to me.

Changing the law would be a humane thing to do as cats are also sentient beings. Not an object that doesn't live and breathe.

Having to report hitting a cat I believe will help the owners get closure and the fact the law would recognise that their life's do matter. It would lessen a lot of heartbreak and pain. What happened to me will stay with me until I die but the law change will help the ghost that haunts me rest a bit easier.

If veterinary help had been sought the cat would have lived instead of being left to die an agonising death getting hit again and again. I understand a lot of people might not be able to face what has just happened but if they take a moment to consider the feelings of the owner, sometimes people even deliberately hit cats on the road for whatever sad sadistic reason. There are lots of groups that would happily go and help retrieve the cat, it doesn't cost anything to take the cat to the vet they will happily take it in.

In this day and age there are many more people who have dash cams, ring doorbells and such like that could help enforce someone failing to stop and report hitting a cat.

Also there are more and more reports of how cats were valued during the wars – by protecting food supplies, they raised morale among sailors and troops, they were mascots for some.

So why do they not get their place in the road traffic act and get the recognition they deserve?