



Fourstones,  
Pittington Road,  
Rainton Gate,  
Tyne & Wear.  
DH5 9RG

13/12/08

Dear All,

What a year! Awful weather, depressing news bulletins, and poor financial management by the World's finest. One thing remains constant – one member, or members of the household, don't give fig, just as long as the tin/sachet/biscuits are opened and dispensed at the correct time, and they get a bit of attention when it is demanded. But enough about the kids.

Once again it has been a real pleasure to look after your furry friends this year, (even those with short tempers, long claws and sharp pointy teeth!) Despite the loss of one of ours this time last year, numbers in our household remain constant at three. Many of you followed the story of Ringo, a kitten deliberately left by his feral mother for us to watchover. The full story is on our website ([www.rainton-gate.co.uk](http://www.rainton-gate.co.uk)) – but just to spoil the ending, I can tell you that Ringo is “The Cat Who Came In From The Cold.” He bonded immediately with Leo who is a little bit older, and the two of them tear around the house playing “Tig,” (and sounding like a herd of baby elephants running down the stairs, taking three at a time!) He is very handsome, but his feral genes prevent him from becoming a lap cat. Back to the main topic of the year however.

This year's financial downturn has had an unusual effect on our cattery. Because of the slowdown in the housing sector, specifically New-Builds, the demand for timber has fallen greatly. Wood mills are seeing a huge decrease in business. Wood mills are the main source of sawdust, which is compressed and reformed into the wooden pellet-type cat litter we use. Our local manufacturer/supplier, has stopped production. We will be using a different cat litter until the world's financial climate improves!

It was always our intention **to not increase prices in 2009**. This plan was slightly scuppered by the Chancellor when he reduced VAT in December. Consequently we were instructed by HMRC to reduce the VAT we charge by 1%, (we operate under the Flat Rate Scheme.) All our prices reduced by a few pence here and there, and we had to start stocking up on change for the cash box. We have therefore decided to realign our prices in the New Year. This effectively means that unless your cat stayed with us in December, you will see no change from 2008 into 2009. The temporary price adjustment in December will remain until 5<sup>th</sup> January 2009, when they will revert to the prices charged throughout 2008:

1 cat	£11.00
2 cats (sharing)	£15.00
3 cats (sharing)	£18.50
4 cats (sharing)	£21.00

Costs have risen, however, and so we are increasing the Minimum Stay charge. Rather than being £35 across the board, it will become the equivalent of the cost for a 4 day stay, depending on the number of cats boarding. The cost of our collection and delivery service will also increase – please ask at the time of booking for details. We will, however, continue with the honour system, of not requesting a deposit from existing customers for their booking. It worked very well this year, and is a good way of keeping administration costs down and making it easier for you.

Finally a reminder of our opening hours – some people still arrive outside of them, and appear surprised that they exist:

We are open from **0900-1300** and **1500-1800 every day except Wednesdays**, when we don't reopen in the afternoon, **and Sundays** when we **close for the day at 1200**. We are closed on Christmas Eve and ALL Bank Holidays for pick-up and drop-offs. If you are in any doubt, full details are always available on our website, or give us a ring.

Have a great Christmas, a prosperous and peaceful New Year - Best Wishes,

Beverly & Tim