

Viking Vets

NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2018



LATEST GOSSIP All the news from the Viking team
FIREWORK ADVICE How to keep your pets safe this season
IN THE NEWS Emotional dogs comfort their upset owners

Welcome

Welcome to the Autumn issue of the Viking Vets newsletter.

Read all about the latest gossip from the team, including all the recent comings and goings at Viking. We follow two special pets with eye problems, and bring you the incredible story of Daisy who was viciously attacked by another dog in our star pets section on p4. And in the news we hear the truth about whether our pets really do fight like cats and dogs, and learn about emotional dogs comforting their owners when they are upset (p8). We also have advice for helping your pets if they are afraid this firework season (p6).

The change in weather in autumn means that many people start using anti-freeze for their cars. Beware as this is very toxic to pets, especially cats who are more likely to ingest it. Always store the bottle in a safe, locked place.

If you have any feedback or there is anything you would like to see in the newsletter please contact us:

Viking Vets
Chevening House
Station Road
Henbury
Bristol BS10 7QQ

Tel: 0117 9505888

Email: thevets@vikingvets.com

Web: www.vikingvets.com



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Imported street dogs

I would like to start with an apology regarding my poor English. One of my sons informed me that his friends find my little articles hilarious, mainly due to my eccentric use of the English language.

I will revisit an old chestnut today. We have seen a massive increase in the importation of street dogs from abroad. This may seem like a wonderful idea, rescuing dogs that have had a very poor start and giving them a fantastic life. Sadly we are seeing issues that concern us. To bring a dog into the UK from Europe, it has to be microchipped, vaccinated against rabies and treated against tapeworm five days to 24 hours prior to entering into the UK. A puppy cannot be rabies vaccinated until it is 12 weeks old, there is then a waiting period of 21 days post vaccination day (day of vaccination is day 0). All dogs and cats have this waiting period after the vaccination.

Vets have many responsibilities, one of them are to help keep UK free from rabies, so we are obliged to report any discrepancies we see in any passport of pets that are presented to us. I can assure you that this is a thankless but very important part of our job.

Imagine this: you have fallen in love with a photo of a beautiful puppy on the Internet. You are told the puppy has no hope of a home in its country of origin, but a wonderful rescue charity is caring for it and are helping to have it brought to the UK. You decide to help this puppy, and organise to pick up the puppy from the charity on the day it is brought into the country. You bring it to your local vet for a free pet check. The vet spends a long time looking at the puppies teeth, comparing it to dates in the passport, then goes and gets

another vet to look at this. They think the puppy is younger than what is stated in the passport. "So what, surely one month either way is neither here nor there...." you think. You are getting angry at the vet, the charity have had a vet check the puppy, it has come through the border fine, why is he making trouble?

The real issue here is that if the puppy has been vaccinated too young the rabies vaccination may not work, this causes a potential huge public health issue. Rabies is almost always fatal once symptoms appear. However this is just the tip of the iceberg, there are many other clinical issues that can be brought in, not to forget an array of behavioural issues.

As vets we can lose our licence to practice veterinary medicine if we do not follow the RCVS (Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons) Guide to professional conduct. We are put under a lot of pressure from owners not to report this type of issue. It is not uncommon that people say they will start writing bad reviews or report us to RCVS, when we are trying to do our job correctly.

The pet passport was introduced to make it easier for people to take their pets on holiday. It has now enabled a massive import of puppies both from breeders and the importation of street dogs. In Norway (a non-EU country) they have introduced a new rule from 1st of July 2018. It states that you have to prove you have owned and been with your dog for six months prior to bringing it in. I know this would make our job a lot easier, but I can not see this happening in the UK soon.

I do understand that some people find it difficult to get dogs from UK charities, next month I will discuss these issues.

Maria Lowe

Team run muddy Race for Life



On Saturday 30 June Charlotte, Lisa, Katy and Sam took part in the Pretty Muddy 5k Race for Life to raise money for Cancer Research UK. It was an extremely hot day so they welcomed the muddy, wet obstacles to cool

them down.

They raised an amazing £596 so thank you to everyone who sponsored them and donated to a very worthwhile charity.

Walking for Hounds for Heroes

On 21-22 July, Sonia and Chloe took part in a 100km walk from Poole to Bridport along the Jurassic Coast to raise money for Hounds for Heroes. This charity provides specially trained assistance dogs to injured and disabled members of the UK armed forces and the emergency services.

They completed the walk in 25 hours and 20 minutes, and apart from the sore feet they really enjoyed the experience.



Thank you to everyone who generously sponsored them and helped to raise £970.25.

Upcoming campaigns and events

October is focused on preparing for firework season (see p6 for advice on how to help your pet if they suffer stress from firework noise at this time of year).

In November we will be thinking about arthritis in

your pets. Look out for more information in reception to see how you can help your pet if they are suffering.

We will be raising money for Cancer Research again during Pink Week from 15 to 19 October. We will be selling yummy cakes in reception so pop in, take home a treat and donate to a good cause.

Staff news

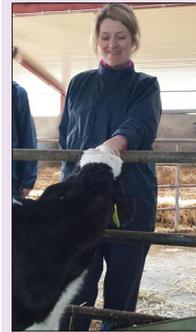


Our head receptionist Laura gave birth to a beautiful baby girl on 8th August, weighing 6lb 12oz. She has named

her Chloe Summer Rose and Mum and baby are doing well.

We said goodbye to Amy Smith, one of our newer vets. She has now taken up a position at Langford and we wish her all the best with her future career.

Congratulations to Sharon and Katy who both graduated



from the University of Bristol in July. Sharon is now a qualified vet and Katy is a qualified veterinary nurse. Katy is now a full-time member of the Viking team and I'm sure you will see her around the practice. She has also just passed her driving test



so congratulations! Sharon has been with us over the summer to cover for staff holidays. She has fitted in well with the team and has a great veterinary career ahead.



Well done to the team who recently went horse riding on one of the

Viking socials.

Sore eyes and nasty wounds

In this issue we have eye problems in a very brave cat and well behaved dog, and we bring you the incredible story of Daisy who was attacked by another dog

Lola is an elderly cat who developed swellings of her conjunctiva, resulting in the eyelids slightly everting. We took biopsies under sedation and were pleased to find it was non-cancerous. Although her owners were worried about her having a surgical procedure, they were reassured that we regularly perform procedures on elderly patients and have excellent facilities and experienced staff to manage our patients in the hospital.

Lola has a condition called lipogranulomatous conjunctivitis, which is a bit of a mouthful! Accumulations of secretions build up and cause swellings in the conjunctiva. Lola coped really well with her surgery, which went well, and



Lola developed swellings of her conjunctiva, making her eyelids evert.

had a good recovery, with lots of TLC both here and at home. She is on some drops to help

prevent recurrence. She is doing brilliantly well, it is under control and she is happy.

Barron is a very handsome working shorthaired pointer. After working in the fields with long grass, Barron had very sore eyes. His Dad rushed him in to see vet Andy who was immediately suspicious of a foreign body. Andy applied local anaesthetic and then we all joined forces to remove several grass seeds from both of Barron's eyes!

Barron was the most incredibly well behaved, calm and compliant patient. We all gathered round, Andy held Barron in his arms, while Denise and Vicki together elevated the third eyelid and removed the offending objects with the assistance of Sharon and Chloe providing illumination! It really was a team effort to help this fantastic dog as quickly as we could.

Further examination showed that both of Barron's eyes were ulcerated – the grass seeds had rubbed away his outer layer of cornea resulting in painful ulcers. Andy started Barron on supportive medication and pain relief, and will be monitoring his progress carefully to ensure his ulcers heal promptly.

So always be aware of signs of eye pain in your pet: blinking/squinting; crying; avoiding the light. Any of these signs mean that you need a vet appointment as soon as possible.

Although running in long grass might be fun, grass seeds can cause severe problems if they get in the eyes, or other parts of the body. Barron's Dad has ordered him a pair of doggy goggles to protect his eyes when working in future.



Several grass seeds in Barron's eyes had caused a lot of pain and ulceration of the cornea.

Dog attack causes severe injuries to Daisy

Daisy is a two-year-old terrier who was rushed into us after being severely attacked by another dog. Daisy was collapsed, in shock and in terrible pain. The main priority at this point was to ensure that Daisy was stabilised and given pain relief, so a continuous-rate infusion drip was prepared with a combination of strong pain relief in it to help relieve her discomfort, and she was monitored closely by our team of nurses.

After Daisy had been stabilised, conscious radiographs were taken of her abdomen and thorax to ensure that there were no ruptured organs and that no hernias were apparent. Her X-rays were assessed to rule out a diaphragmatic rupture. Once these checks had been carried out and any potential internal injuries cleared she was hospitalised under close supervision.

Throughout the day, the swelling on Daisy's limbs became worse and once the sore areas had been clipped to remove the overlying fur, weeping puncture wounds were found on all four legs and they were hot to the touch. Vets were concerned about infection so intravenous antibiotics were used alongside the analgesics.

Throughout the week, the swelling on Daisy's limbs started to decrease and as a result her mobility improved. Her wounds and sore spots were bathed and soothing lotions were applied to help prevent further worsening of the condition of her limbs. On the second day, with the help of a sling, Daisy was able to walk out to the garden and back, and by the end of the day she was able to support her own weight without assistance, albeit limping on her front right leg.

At the end of the week, Daisy's



Daisy suffered extensive wounds to all four legs.



After her ordeal, Daisy is now recovering at home.

bloods were checked and vets carried out a final assessment of her condition. It was decided that Daisy could be sent home with her family who were very happy to hear that she would be coming back home with them.

Since then, Daisy has been checked over and is doing remarkably well. She is bright, keen to eat and drink, and steadily returning to her usual happy self. Daisy is still limping,

so a course of anti-inflammatory painkillers have been prescribed to help with the soft tissue swelling and if this does not improve the lameness, Daisy may need to have further investigation to find out the underlying cause of the limping.

The Viking team hopes that Daisy continues to make a speedy recovery and keeps progressing with her fitness and wellbeing.

Remember, remember your pets this November

It is already autumn and fireworks season will soon be upon us. Many pets are affected by the unpredictable loud noises and sound fears are a very common problem.

Many cats and just under half of the UK dog population show a fearful response to loud noises. Pets can show varied stress reactions to firework noise. They can withdraw into themselves and hide, soil in the house or sometimes harm themselves while trying to escape from the noise.

Dogs

Signs of distress to look out for in dogs include:

- Ears back
- Excessive panting
- Drooling
- Shaking
- Hiding away
- Barking excessively
- Messing in the house

Cats

Cats don't always show as many behavioural changes as dogs. The bigger problem for cats is often stress caused by changes to their environment or routine, especially when they are used to being outdoors and are then kept in the house more. Signs to look out for in cats include:

- Excessive grooming
- House soiling
- Vertical scratch marking
- Less interaction with you
- Acting withdrawn
- Hiding away
- Over or under eating

Small animals

Rabbits and guinea pigs can also become stressed by fireworks, but are even less likely than cats to show signs



of fear. Signs to look out for in small animals include:

- Stamping their back legs
- Restlessness or just staying motionless
- Attempting to escape or hide
- Aggression
- Grinding their teeth
- Reduced appetite - this can be very dangerous in rabbits and guinea pigs
- Change in toileting habits

What can you do if your pet is affected?

The first thing to do is speak to us here at Viking Vets. We can give you advice regarding how to help your pet cope on the night(s), like how to react yourself and where to prepare a safe place. We can also advise whether your pet would benefit from having medication, and recommend products that will

best suit you and your pet. Some animals suffer severe reactions to fireworks and will need prescription medication. These need to be trialled well ahead of the actual event as they can cause adverse reactions. For less fearful pets, there are many other options that can be used in conjunction with each other.

Medication

Nutracalm is a natural product that can help alleviate stress in many situations, i.e. moving house or a having a new baby. It is only effective for mild anxiety, so can be used for fear of fireworks in pets that have a mild reaction. It does not cause sedation or memory loss, and is often used with other treatments. It needs to be given for two weeks before firework season starts.

Adaptil and Feliway are other options. They are natural pheromones that come in various forms, such as plug-in diffusers, sprays, collars and tablets. The diffuser should be plugged in two weeks before firework season, but the spray and tablets can be used on the day, and would normally be used alongside other products.

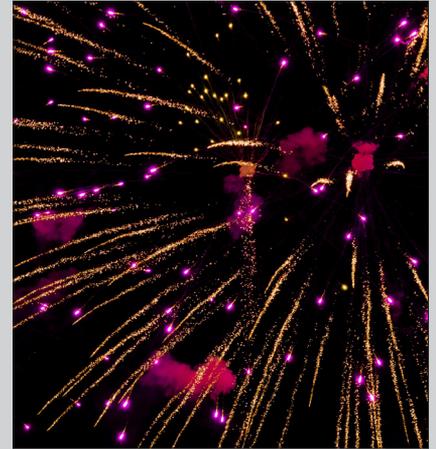
Other products include Yucalm and Kalmaid. These can reduce stress and anxiety, and are available in tablet and liquid form.

Behavioural management

Once firework season has passed, it's time to think about long-term control of the problem. Fear of fireworks tends to get worse over time, and can progress to include fear of other loud noises such as thunder. Sound desensitisation has been shown to be a very effective way of managing the problem long-term. It involves exposing the pet to firework noises in a controlled way, which must not be done during firework season. The programme includes clearly written and verbal instructions and practice tracks to help you get started.

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR FIREWORK SEASON

- Ignore any fearful behaviour. Panting, shaking and whining should all be ignored - any attention you give is reinforcing to the pet that they are right to be frightened!
- Make sure your pet is kept in a safe and secure environment at all times, so that they don't try to bolt and escape. Try to encourage them into a darkened room that contains toys and familiar objects. There should also be things for you to do there, so they don't feel they have been abandoned. Blacking out the room removes potential problems of flashing lights, which often precede the bangs. If this is not achievable, create a den or hiding place where your pet can go to feel safe. If you are making your 'dog den' from scratch try to do this a few weeks in advance so that your dog has time to get used to it and understand that it is a safe place to go to when fireworks start. Do not try to force them out to give reassurance if they prefer to hide away.
- Keep cats inside, make sure windows, doors and cat flaps are closed, and draw the curtains so the flashes can't be seen. Remember to provide a litter tray if your cat is not usually kept inside. Cats prefer to go and hide on their own, they should be left to do this and not disturbed, they will come out when they feel safe to do so.
- Provide distractions from the fireworks by turning the TV up, playing music, and playing with your pet. Sound therapy CDs are available, which can help prepare your pet for the following year if used correctly.
- DAP and Feliway plug-in diffusers can be used to increase the feeling of security. Supplements such as Kalmaid



and Nutracalm are useful to decrease anxiety. Ask one of our nurses for more information on these before the event and plan ahead as some medications and treatments need to be used in advance.

- If your dog is extremely frightened there are other drugs we can give on prescription. An appointment will be needed with a vet, therefore it is best to arrange this before the event not once the fireworks have started.
- Walk your dog during the daylight when fireworks are less likely to go off and startle them.
- Don't ignore the phobia once the firework season is over. Instigate a desensitisation programme as soon as possible and you will have a happier, well-adjusted pet next time. There is a lot of behavioural advice we can give on this subject, both for the short and long-term to prevent the same situation each year.
- For small animals: partly cover outside cages with blankets so an area is soundproofed and hidden, but leave an area for them to look out; provide bedding that they can burrow in; and consider bringing them indoors – this will need to be done gradually so plan ahead.

Dogs comfort upset owners

A study has shown for the first time that dogs will make a concerted effort to comfort their owners if they think they are upset. Although dog owners have long claimed that their pets can read their emotions and will offer support in times of crisis, it has never been scientifically tested before.

In this new study, scientists from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, US, took 34 dogs and positioned them behind a door held closed with magnets, with their owners on the other side.

While sitting behind the door, the owners were asked to either hum “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” or pretend to cry.

They found that many of the dogs managed to get through the door by nosing their way through, but they did it three times more quickly when they thought their owners were upset and needed comforting.

“We found dogs not only sense what their owners are feeling, if a dog knows a way to help them, they’ll go through barriers to provide to help them,” said lead author Emily Sanford, a graduate student in psychological and brain sciences at Johns Hopkins University.

“Every dog owner has a story about coming home from a long day, sitting down for a cry and the dog’s right there, licking their face. In a way, this is the science behind that.

“Dogs have been by the side of humans for tens of thousands of years and they’ve learned to read our social cues.

“Dog owners can tell that their dogs sense their feelings. Our findings reinforce that idea, and show that, like Lassie, dogs who know their people are in trouble might spring into action.”

Throughout the experiment,



the researchers also measured the dogs’ stress levels and found those who were able to push through the door to “rescue” their owners showed less stress, meaning they were upset by the crying, but not too upset to take action.

The dogs who didn’t push open the door actually seemed to care too much. They showed the most stress and the researchers believe they were too troubled by the crying to do anything about it.

The idea for the experiment

came from co-author Julia Meyers-Manor, an assistant professor of psychology at Ripon College, as she was playing with her children. They buried her in pillows and she began calling for help in play. “My husband didn’t come to rescue me, but, within a few seconds, my collie had dug me out of the pillows,” she said. “I knew that we had to do a study to test that more formally.”

The research was published in the journal *Learning & Behaviour*.

Do pets really fight like cats and dogs?

Living under one roof can be hard work for many of us – so what is it like for our pets. In a rare study, researchers explored the relationships between cats and dogs who were living together. The experiment found that although cats were the more nervous, they generally were more likely to assert themselves.

The online survey of 748 homeowners from the UK, the US, Australia, Canada and Europe found that more than 80% felt their pets were comfortable with one another, with only 3% declaring that their cats and dogs hated each other.

But despite the overall peaceful results, the survey revealed that cats were definitely the more antagonistic of the animals. Homeowners reported that cats were three times more likely to threaten their canine housemates than vice versa, and 10 times more likely to injure them in a fight. But the dogs didn't seem too concerned: more than a fifth were reported to pick up toys to show them to cats, compared with only 6% of cats doing the same for dogs.

Researchers at the University of Lincoln carried out the study to find out what made for happy cat-dog relationships. With more pets of different species living together a peaceful coexistence is important for welfare and could reduce the risk of pets ending up being rehomed.

"We really wanted to know what is it that makes cats and dogs amicable," said Sophie Hall, a co-author on the study, published in the *Journal of Veterinary Behaviour*. "They are often portrayed as the worst of enemies, but that isn't always the case."

Along with her colleagues



Jessica Thomson and Daniel Mills, Hall found that cats and dogs rarely fought. While 57% of owners said their cats hissed, spat and swatted at dogs, and 18% said their dogs threatened cats, less than 10% of cats and only 1% of dogs ever harmed the other animal.

Hall believes that domestication might be the explanation. Because dogs have been domesticated for longer and are more easily trained

than cats, they may be better able to control their behaviour. And because cats are usually the underdog in a fight with a dog, they tend to need more reassurance that they are safe under the same roof. "It's easier for dogs to be happier around cats than for cats to be happy around dogs," she said.

After collecting the information provided by homeowners, the researchers found that the best predictor for a happy cat-dog relationship was the cat's age when it began living with the dog. "One thing owners can be aware of is the age of the cat, and to make sure they get the cat at a young age," said Hall, adding that under a year old may be best.

"Owners shouldn't be deterred from having both cats and dogs," she said. "In general, both animals are seen as being really comfortable around each other which goes against what we might think. We shouldn't think that they can't live happily together."

“Dogs and cats are often portrayed as the worst of enemies, but that isn't always the case.”

Help the squirrel find his acorn

