

Viking Vets

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2019



LATEST GOSSIP All the news from the Viking team

BEHAVIOUR Developing good behaviour in puppies and kittens

STAR PET Meet the very brave Koko

Welcome

Welcome to the Summer issue of the Viking Vets newsletter.

Read all about the latest gossip from the team, including details of upcoming promotions. We have a really brave dog as our star pet in this issue – read all about her story on p4. And we have a variety of stories about cats and dogs that have been in the news (p8). This month's feature is all about behaviour - find out how to improve your pet's behaviour and focus on their relationships with children (p5).

Summer means lots of fun outdoors with your pets. But this brings with it some risks. The heat can cause dehydration and heatstroke, and animals can get sunburn just as we do. You must NEVER leave an animal in the car as temperatures can soar really fast. With a few preventative actions you can make sure that you enjoy the sun together.

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

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Keep up to date with everything happening at Viking Vets by following our

Facebook page
[@vikingvetsbristol](https://www.facebook.com/vikingvetsbristol)

Staff fundraiser for charity

Deputy head nurse Charlotte took part in the Brighton Marathon on 14th April to raise money for the Alzheimer's Society. This was her first marathon and she completed it in an amazing time of just under 4.5 hours. Congratulations to Charlotte and thank you to everyone who donated money to this great cause.

Following their success walking 100km last year, this year Sonia and Chloe took on an even greater challenge – walking a total of 206km (128 miles) in two charity walks. The first walk around the whole coast of the Isle of Wight was in May. They walked for 26 hours without stopping and were left with sore, blistered feet but feeling accomplished. And they were back at work two days later! They are raising money for Hounds

for Heroes, which provides specially trained assistance dogs to injured and disabled men and women of both the UK Armed Forces and Emergency Services. There is a sponsor form in reception if you would still like to support them with this worthwhile cause. There are also doggy bowties and pet treats for sale to raise money. Thank you to everyone who has donated so far.

Some of the team will again be running the Muddy 5k Race for Life to raise money for Cancer Research UK. The event will be held on the Downs on 29th June. If you would like to sponsor Charlotte, Lisa, Jo, Sam and Imogen there is a sponsorship form in reception or you can donate online at https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/team/viking-vets-2?fbclid=IwAR0rrhnj5InitJKdG_4ZTE4sjyWp_



Chloe and Sonia at the start line ready to walk round the Isle of Wight.



Deputy head nurse Charlotte, ready for the Brighton Marathon.



Upcoming offers and promotions



June signals the start of the summer, so this month at Viking Vets we are taking a look at the risk of the heat for pets. There will be advice on our boards in reception and tips for how to keep your pet sun safe.

During July we will be focusing on pet behaviour. See the feature on p5 for more information. We have recently been promoting the concept of being a fear-free practice. Creating fear-free visits for your pets is really important and there are lots of strategies that we put into place

to achieve this, including a calm environment, correct patient handling techniques and even sedative medications.

In August we will have lots more information about this on our noticeboards in reception. September is the end of the school holidays and we will be running our own 'back to school' campaign. We will be going back to basics with preventative healthcare for your pet, including parasite control, vaccination and information about our health plan.

Dedicated team nurse kittens to health

In April three stray kittens (two females and one male) were found in the Avonmouth recycling plant. A kind member of the public watched them for a while, but when no mother returned they brought them into us.

For eight weeks our nurses fed them around the clock, taking it in turns to take them home and care for them. They were all doing very well, growing, opening their eyes and learning to eat on



their own.

Unfortunately in May one of the little girls sadly had to be euthanised after rapidly deteriorating from a mystery illness. The two remaining kittens are thriving and love to play!

Staff news



We would like to say a big congratulations to Jeri and Sam who have passed their exams and are now fully qualified veterinary nurses. We are so pleased for you both.



A new student nurse joined us in May. Jessica will be working with us while studying veterinary nursing one day a week at Bath

College. She studied animal management at college before doing her A-levels. She had a job as manager at McDonalds before pursuing a career in veterinary nursing. She has a bulldog called Ruby who seems to spend a lot of time at the vets herself!

We also have a student nurse, Ella, from Langford joining us for the summer.

And we would like to say a huge welcome back to vet Amy Smith who is back working with us after a job at Langford.

We said goodbye to kennel assistant Imogen who has been with us for seven months. She has a place to study veterinary medicine at The University of Nottingham and we wish her all the best.

A nasty injury for Koko

Koko suffered a terrible leg injury following a road traffic accident. Read all about this brave dog's long journey to recovery.

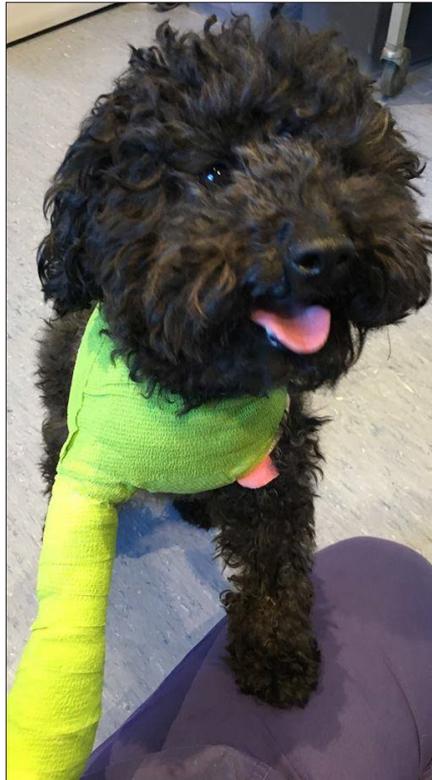
Koko is a two-year-old Poodle cross. She visited us recently to be spayed. The spay procedure went really well and Koko recovered back to full health. She came in for her final post-op check where she received the all clear and could finally go for long walks again.

Unfortunately, on her first walk post-op she was involved in a road traffic accident. Koko's owners brought her in straight away for a vet to assess her. She could stand but she was unable to walk properly. The vet noted multiple wounds to her chest and right foreleg. As she was so painful, the vet could not assess her thoroughly while conscious and so a full general anaesthetic was needed to assess the extent of her wounds.

Koko was given some pain relief to keep her comfortable and placed on a drip to keep her well hydrated and maintain her blood pressure. The severity of Koko's wounds became apparent while under anaesthetic. She had several de-gloving injuries on her right foreleg, which had extended up to her chest area. A de-gloving injury is where the skin is torn from the tissue layer underneath.

Koko also had some X-rays while under anaesthetic to check for internal injuries. Fortunately her internal organs were intact but the X-rays showed that Koko had also fractured her accessory carpal bone in her right foreleg.

Her wounds were cleaned and sutured, and her right foreleg was then bandaged to protect the wounds and support the



Koko has been for regular bandage changes at Viking as her wound went from open and necrotic (top right) to almost healed (bottom right). All of the staff enjoyed the lovely cakes brought in by Koko's owner (below).



fracture. Over the next week it became apparent that the skin on her leg had become necrotic

and started to slough off.

Koko then began her long road to recovery. Her leg was treated as an open wound and we repeatedly cleaned and re-banded it three times a week for five weeks. Her wounds are now almost completely healed and on her last visit she went home without a full leg bandage!

Everyone at Viking Vets hopes that Koko continues to make a full recovery and we wish her all the best!

As a thank you from Koko's owner, we received two boxes of beautiful cupcakes. The whole team enjoyed them and they didn't last long!

Focus on behaviour: Keeping children safe around dogs

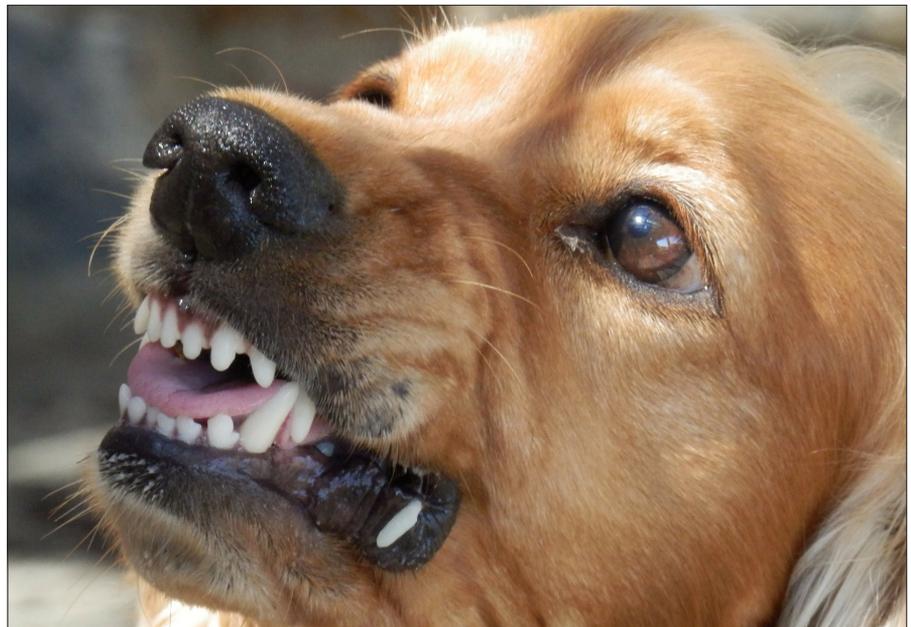
Without the proper training and socialisation as a puppy your dog can develop a range of behavioural problems that can cause risks, especially for children. By training your dog and teaching children how to act around dogs, we can ensure that they have a happy relationship.

The best way to prevent your dog developing undesirable behaviour or becoming unsafe around people or other animals is to ensure that they are well trained and socialised from an early age. Socialising your dog means providing it with positive experiences with new things.

The best way to do this is by including things that they love, such as food or toys. Make sure puppies are exposed gently and positively to different people – children, beards, elderly people, different clothes such as hats and glasses, people on wheels – and associate new people with great things such as yummy treats.

Teach your dog how to act around other dogs and animals. Making sure they encounter a wide variety of situations and environments is key. Take them to busy places so that they can watch the different people, animals and vehicles, and feed them treats to make it a positive experience. To prevent noise phobia (such as fireworks or thunder) feed your dog a treat when the noise occurs, but avoid stressful situations such as firework displays. There are noise DVDs available as well as YouTube videos to help desensitise your dog to these sounds.

Take them on a range of vehicles and surfaces, but always let your dog set the pace. If they are at all scared or over-excited you should leave the situation as this could do more



harm than good. Try again after a break and if you continue to have issues you might need to work with a behaviourist

Problems and treatment

There are many behavioural issues that your dog can develop, some more unsafe than others.

- Aggression and barking
- Phobia of car travel
- Fear of a specific place
- Firework phobia
- Play biting
- Separation anxiety
- Problems walking on the lead
- Jumping up
- Problems with other dogs

“Socialising your dog means providing it with positive experiences with new things”

But all of these will impact yours and your dog’s quality of life, so working to prevent the issues occurring is best. If you do need help there are ways we can work with you. There are medications, behavioural modifications and behavioural professionals who can all offer solutions with a lot of patience and commitment.

While waiting for treatment or a behavioural referral you need

to identify the triggers and avoid them as much as possible. This should prevent things getting worse and stop the escalation of behaviours like fear aggression. You might need to keep your dog away from triggers using baby gates to separate areas of the house, and to keep them away from other dogs or children. Preventing problem behaviour is easier than trying to correct it once it is established. Unfortunately there isn't a quick fix for behavioural problems once developed and they often involve lifelong management and commitment from the owners.

Focus on dogs and children

With millions of dogs kept as pets in the UK, your child is likely to come into contact with one at your home, at family/friend's or while out and about. So it is vital that children know how to behave around dogs and how to stay safe.

Even the smallest, cuddliest dogs can bite if they feel threatened or if they are provoked. Some examples of things that might cause a dog to bite include being fearful of the place/person, being trapped in a corner, feeling unwell or in pain, protection of a person, overexcitement or surprise/shock.

Most dog bites happen in the home with family dogs. You should always ensure that your children are safe at all times and never leave them alone with any dog. If you are a dog owner it is your responsibility to train your dog well, but you also need to give your children the knowledge to behave appropriately around them.

Even if your dog is really well behaved and friendly, you should always be on the lookout for warning signs that show they are becoming stressed or scared. A lot of this is shown in their body language, which for a happy dog should be relaxed and wiggly.



TIPS FOR HAPPY VET VISITS WITH YOUR DOG

- **Relax in the waiting room. Teach your dog to settle down comfortably.**
- **Help your dog to love the practice. Pop in for visits when it is quiet to get them used to the environment.**
- **Recognise what your dog is telling you. Watch and understand their behaviour to manage their experience.**
- **Don't tell your dog off for growling. This behaviour just indicates that a dog is feeling very uncomfortable and wants whatever is happening to stop.**
- **Teach your dog that the examination is ok. You can use treats at home while touching them somewhere they are comfortable with, and build up to the rest of the body.**
- **Introduce new things slowly. Use treats or toys to teach them that things like tablets or ear drops are ok.**
- **Teach your dog to cope on their own. This will help them if they ever need to stay at the vets overnight.**

- **Fear** – stiffening shows a dog is becoming scared. They might also have wide eyes, flat ears and be cowering.

- **Anger** – this leads to aggression so must be stopped as soon as possible. Growling is a warning that if something doesn't stop the dog might react. Baring teeth, barking and flat ears are other signs to look out for.

- **Avoidance** – if the dog is attempting to move away from a situation/person then allow

them to do this. If a child keeps following the dog might snap/growl and potentially bite to warn them away.

Pre-natal preparations

If you are expecting a baby and already have a dog, then there are things that you can do to prepare them for the arrival. As well as having good basic training you can incorporate some special training to include things they will encounter with a baby around. There will be a lot of change with

a baby in the house, and this can lead to stress for a dog. Try to make small changes to their routine gradually before the baby arrives to make the transition easier. For example, changing walking and feeding times if these are likely to be altered. You can also introduce any new equipment/toys etc for the baby gradually to get them used to them as there will be a lot of new sounds and smells.

Preschoolers

Toddlers and young children present a different challenge for dogs as they become mobile. Some potentially risky situations include the child invading the dog's space. It is important to have a quiet area that the dog can escape to. Make sure that your child understands that this place is for the dog and to respect this. Related to this, children must know that dogs need to be left alone when eating, drinking or sleeping as this is when they feel most vulnerable. Children love to explore with their hands, but you must make it clear that hair pulling and eye poking can hurt the dog and cause them to lash out. Loud screaming and shouting is another given when you have small children. Dog's hearing is much more sensitive than ours and the loud noises can excite or scare them. Try to get your child to stay calm around your dog.

Dogs and children can have a brilliant, fun relationship and playing together is very important. Some good games to play include hide and seek, doggy treat hunt and Simon Says.

Teenagers

As your child gets older and hits the teenage years there are different situations to watch out for. Older children are more likely to be left alone with a dog so they need to be more



responsible for their safety as well as their dog's, especially if they are taking them for a walk. Ensure they keep dogs on a lead near roads, exercise them in a safe place, never ride a bike while walking the dog and don't wind them up or rough play with them when in public spaces.

Safety around dogs in public

As well as making sure that children are safe around the family pet, they also need to be aware that not all dogs are the same and some don't like children at all. Some important rules to follow are:

- Always ask the owner before touching a dog.

“Dogs and children can have a brilliant, fun relationship and playing together is very important”

- Never touch a dog that has been left alone tied up outside a shop.
- Never run and shout around dogs as this can over-excite or scare them, leading them to chase or nip.
- Don't enter a garden with a loose dog in it, and don't put your hands through a fence to stroke them.
- Never chase or tease any dog.
- If a dog does jump up cross your arms over your chest, tuck your fingers in and turn side-on. Stand still and look away from the dog. Wait for the owner to come and help before walking away slowly. If you get knocked over curl up into a ball and cover your face and head with your arms until the dog goes away or someone comes to help.

Social media

Please be wary of making your dog pose with children to capture the 'perfect' picture for social media. Many dogs don't like being forced into positions and the perpetuation of these images on Instagram and Facebook means that more people want to post their own 'cute' pet photos.

Neurotic owner, neurotic cat!

If your cat enjoys sleeping or is suffering from behavioural problems it might be that the apple doesn't fall far from the tree!

New research carried out by Nottingham Trent University and the University of Lincoln has found a link between the personalities of cat owners and the behaviour of their pets.

Just as a parent's personality can affect the personality of a child, the findings show that the same is true for a cat and its owner.

The research published in the journal *PLOS ONE* involved more than 3000 cat owners, mainly from the UK. The researchers asked questions about owners' personalities, as well as their cat's behaviour, health and lifestyle.

It was found that owners who scored high for neuroticism - defined as individuals more likely to experience anxiety, fear, anger, depression and loneliness - were more likely to have pets with behavioural issues. These cats displayed more aggressive and anxious/fearful behavioural styles as well as more stress-related sickness, and were more likely to have an ongoing medical condition and be overweight.

The same was also true for the opposite side. The research found that mentally well-adjusted owners had calmer, happier and healthier pets.

Dr Lauren Finka, postdoctoral researcher in animal welfare in Nottingham Trent University's School of Animal, Rural and Environmental Sciences, and co-author of the study said: "Many owners consider their pets as a family member, forming close social bonds with them.

"It's therefore very possible that pets could be affected by the way we interact with



and manage them, and that both these factors are in turn influenced by our

“Just as a parent’s personality can affect the personality of a child, the findings show that the same is true for a cat and its owner.”

personality differences.

“The majority of owners want to provide the best care for their cats, and these results highlight an important relationship between our personalities and the wellbeing of our pets.

“Further research is needed to investigate the causal nature of this relationship – and to look at if, and how, owner personalities are directly influencing their cat’s behaviour and welfare.”

Previous studies have found a link between parental personality and child behaviour, and this research suggests that pets are just as responsive to their owner’s traits.

Nottingham Trent University Associate Professor Mark Farnworth said: “More and more we are learning that the welfare of pets is driven by the underlying nature of the owner, and not simply by their conscious decisions and behaviours.”

Cats recognise their names

It seems that cats have selective hearing just as we do – especially children. Cats have been shown to be able to recognise their own names, just like their canine friends. So if you have ever tried calling your cat in for hours with no response, it's not because they can't understand you ... they may just be ignoring you!

Researchers in Japan investigated how well domestic cats could tell the difference between human words. The experiment involved measuring whether the cats reacted to their names when they were spoken among a string of other random nouns. The same test was then carried out with the words being spoken by a stranger, rather than by the cats' owners.

The results showed that the cats displayed recognition responses, such as pricking their ears or moving their heads, but very rarely showed any more excitement such as



making sounds or moving their tails. The researchers said they believed cats react to their own names as they might associate it with "rewards" such as food, or with "punishments", such as

having a bath, but whether they care enough to get excited is another matter.

John Bradshaw, an expert on human-animal interactions from the University of Bristol, told *The Times*: "Cats are just as good as dogs at learning - they're just not as keen to show their owners what they've learnt."

Atsuko Saito, from Sophia University in Tokyo and the author of the report - which was published in the journal *Scientific Reports*, said the study could be used to help improve cats' quality of life in the future.

"For example, perhaps we can get cats to learn that dangerous objects or places are referred to by specific utterances," he wrote.

"This work has shed new light on the ability of cats to communicate with humans; further clarifying cats' abilities with respect to cat-human communication will potentially enhance the welfare of both humans and cats."

Sniffing out disease

A new study has shown that dogs are able to smell the early signs of cancer in humans with nearly 97% accuracy. Their highly evolved scent receptors are 10,000 times more accurate than ours, meaning that they are sensitive to odours that we can't smell.

Researchers say that using the dogs' ability to detect cancer in the blood of humans "could potentially save thousands of lives". The findings were presented to US scientists demonstrating how three beagles were trained to sniff out malignant lung cancer in samples from patients.

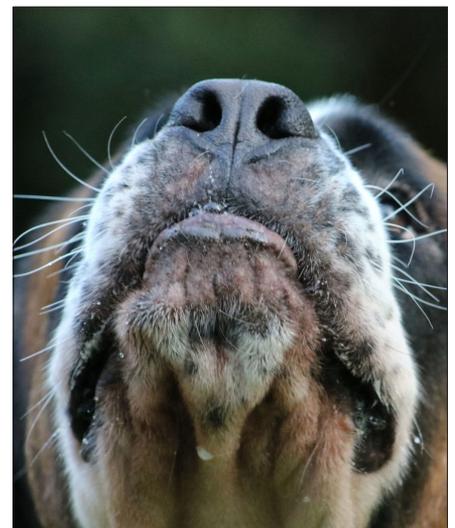
Heather Junqueira, study

leader at research and development firm BioScent Dx in Florida, said that dogs could soon be part of cancer-screening programmes that are as accurate but less invasive than the methods currently used.

"Early detection offers the best hope of survival," she said. "A highly sensitive test for detecting cancer could change the way the disease is treated.

"It is very exciting as it paves the way for further research, which could lead to new cancer-detection tools."

Ms Junqueira's team used clicker training to teach the beagles to distinguish between normal blood and samples from lung-cancer patients. The dogs were able to correctly identify cancer samples 96.7% of the time and normal samples with a success rate of 97.5%. This



indicates that canine scent detection can be used to develop a non-invasive way of screening.

The study was presented at the annual meeting of the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology in Orlando.

Join the dots in this summer scene

