

Viking Vets

NEWSLETTER

CHRISTMAS 2018



- LATEST GOSSIP** All the news from the Viking team
- CHRISTMAS TIPS** How to enjoy the festive season with your pet
- STAR PET** Meet the dog with 90 lives!

Welcome

Welcome to the Christmas issue of the Viking Vets newsletter.

Read all about the latest gossip from the team and the news from the practice, plus there is a round-up of 2018 on p4. We meet a dog who has really been through the wars in our star pets section on p7. We also have some tips to help you enjoy Christmas with your pet this festive season (p5).

Don't forget your outdoor rabbits in this cold weather. If possible bring them indoors over the winter, or move the hutch into a garage or shed. Check that there are no holes in the hutch that will let the wind and rain in, and that the wood isn't rotting. Cover the roof with a plastic sheet or tarpaulin and add a blanket underneath for extra warmth. You should also raise the hutch off the floor to stop damp getting in. And remember that rabbits still need their exercise so bring them inside for a run around.

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

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

Christmas opening times



The practice will close early on 24th December at 3pm. We are then closed on the 25th and 26th of December and on the 1st of January. Apart from this it will be normal opening hours. If you do need emergency treatment

when we are closed then please call our emergency out-of-hours vets - Rowe Vets Bradley Stoke - on 0117 9059000. We would like to wish all our clients and their pets a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

An update on pet passports

Changes to the pet passport scheme after Brexit in March 2019 are still unknown. However, DEFRA is warning pet owners to plan four months in advance for travel to EU countries.

The advice is:

- If you are planning to take your pet abroad shortly after Brexit (29th March 2019) your pet should have a rabies vaccination and a blood (titre) test to ensure they are able to cross EU borders.

- The blood (titre) test must be carried out at least 30 days after vaccination and no sooner than three months before you are due to travel.

- If a deal between the EU and the UK is negotiated, this may be unnecessary but at the moment



nothing is certain and if travelling with your pet is essential you are likely to not want to take any risks so you should get the vaccine and blood test done a minimum of four months before you travel.

Please contact the surgery for more information and advice regarding this matter.

Team receives Petplan award nominations

We have received lots of nominations for the Petplan Veterinary Awards this year. Thank you to anyone who nominated. Vicki and Andy have both been nominated for Vet of the Year, Chloe has been nominated for Nurse of the Year, Sonia has been nominated for Practice Support Staff of the Year and Viking Vets is nominated in Practice of the Year.

The Petplan Awards recognise the fantastic work that goes on in veterinary practices across the UK. Petplan has worked with the veterinary profession for more



than 40 years and hosts these independent industry awards to recognise the hard work and dedication of veterinary staff caring for pets. The nominations are judged by an expert panel

and the results will be announced in April next year. Fingers crossed for all of our brilliant nominees. For more information, visit www.petplan.co.uk/about-petplan/vets/awards/.

Viking raises money for charity during October

In October we all donned our pink scrubs for Pink Week to raise money for breast cancer. We baked and sold lots of yummy cakes and raised an amazing £112.46, which was donated to Breast Cancer Now. Thank you to everyone who donated and we hope you enjoyed the cakes!

On 13 October the annual book swap was held at Henbury Village Hall, organised by



Maria's book club. The event allows you to bring along and take home as many books as you would like for free – there is something for everyone from kids books and fiction, to non-fiction. There were lots of cakes



for sale and all of the proceeds went to Jessie May Children's Hospice at Home. This year the event raised an amazing £761 so a massive thank you to everyone who came along and supported this event.

What to do if you find a stray cat

Sometimes it's difficult to know what to do if you find a stray cat. Read our four top tips below to get some advice.

- Do not feed the cat. Feeding a cat that starts coming into your garden will ensure they hang around as they know they will get an easy meal. Some cats may also be on a strict diet and other foods may make their condition worse.

- Ensure the cat is actually a stray. Check that your neighbours haven't got a new cat or that someone new hasn't moved in



near you. Cats can wander up to half a mile from their home and still find their way back. The majority of "stray" cats that are brought into us live in the

person's immediate area.

- Paper collar the cat. If you can get near the cat you can put a paper collar on it (a strip of paper about 1.5 cm wide with your contact details on) asking the owner to give you a call.

- If the cat has been hanging around for a while and you haven't managed to find the owner then you can take the cat to a vet for a microchip check.

Some elderly cats can become thin with age and look lost. Please ensure you have tried these steps before taking the cat. If the cat is in immediate danger or needs veterinary treatment please take it to your closest veterinary surgery.

Looking back at 2018 at Viking

At the beginning of the year we won a Wellbeing Award in a competition for veterinary practices in the UK. The awards were created by the Society of Practising Vets (SPVS) in partnership with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) Mind Matters Initiative. Viking Vets was recognised for its focus on staff wellbeing in areas such as supporting staff, encouraging work-life balance and promoting effective communication. A happy team means better service for you and your pet.

We received a lot of nominations for the 2018 Petplan Veterinary Awards. Vicki, Andy, Maria and Veerle were all nominated for Vet of the Year, Chloe and Lisa for Nurse of the Year, Sonia for Practice Support Staff of the Year and Viking Vets for Practice of the Year. The nominations are now coming in for the 2019 awards. Vicki, Andy, Chloe, Sonia and Viking Vets have all been nominated again. The results will be announced in April 2019.

In practice news, this year we purchased laparoscopic equipment to allow the vets to perform keyhole operations. We now offer keyhole spays and other minimally invasive procedures, which have many advantages for the patient. We also have a new bronchoscope. This allows the vets to view and evaluate the larynx, trachea and bronchial tree using a flexible camera that can be guided down the airway.

Dogs and cats remain our most popular clients, but we have also treated birds, chickens, ferrets, guinea pigs and rabbits. This year we had a very unusual patient – a six-foot boa constrictor. The snake was brought into us as a stray after being found in a pillowcase in the Blaise Castle Estate. This was the first time in Viking's 18-year history that a stray snake has been brought in! The snake was in good health and after a stay at a specialist rescue centre it was later rehomed.

The team have all been busy this year, with lots of comings and goings. We welcomed back two of the team from maternity leave – Jeri, one of our student nurses, and Amy, one of the vets. We also saw the return of a familiar face as Katy took up a position as a veterinary nurse after working with us as a student during her degree. There have been several departures this year – nurse Natasha left us in March, vet Amy Smith moved to a position at Langford in June and after



Clockwise from top left: Race for Life; an unusual stray; 100km charity walk; baby Chloe; and award winners.

providing us with extra help over the summer vet Sharon finished in September. Head receptionist Laura gave birth to her first baby on 8th August. Baby Chloe is doing well and giving her Mum lots of sleepless nights!

We have again been raising money for charity this year. In June some of the team ran in the Pretty Muddy 5k Race for Life on the Downs. They raised an amazing £596 for Cancer Research UK. In July receptionist Sonia and nurse Chloe took part in a 100km walk from Poole to Bridport along the Jurassic Coast. It took 25 hours and 20 minutes, but apart from the sore feet they loved the experience and raised £970.25 for Hounds for Heroes. They are already planning their next challenge for 2019. In October we all donned our pink scrubs for Pink Week to raise money for breast cancer. We baked and sold lots of yummy cakes and raised an amazing £112.46, which was donated to Breast Cancer Now. The Annual Book Swap raised a magnificent £761 for Jessie May Children's Hospice at Home. Thank you to everyone who has generously supported us this year.

The practice also attends events in the community. Maria has done several school visits, opened the Westbury on Trym Village Show (and judged the winners) and also is a judge at the Annual DAWG show. The next DAWG show is on 20 January 2019 at the Avon Riding Centre for the Disabled, with Maria again judging!

Have yourself a merry little Christmas

Christmas is just around the corner and the festive period provides many exciting opportunities for our pets – decorations to play with, wrapping paper to hide in and tasty food to eat. But what we think of as tempting treats can be problematic for pets. Here are some tips to make the Christmas period as safe as possible.

Christmas decorations

A fir or pine Christmas tree looks lovely in the house. But they can be troublesome for pets. The oils in fir trees can be mildly toxic, causing stomach upsets, and the needles can get stuck in your pet's paw or throat. Regularly sweep up needles and keep pets away from the tree when you go out to avoid any accidents. Make sure you place your tree in an area where your pet can't pull it down - heavy trees can cause crush injuries.

Baubles, tinsel and decorations hanging from the tree branches provide irresistible play opportunities for your pet. Be careful as they can be dangerous. Chocolate is harmful to pets, so hang edible decorations out of reach. Anything knocked off the tree can be swallowed, which may cause an obstruction, and broken glass ornaments can get stuck in a paw. Tinsel is especially attractive to cats but it can cause gut impactions if swallowed. Keep cables from Christmas tree lights out of reach or get a cable guard that can't be chewed through, as rabbits, cats and dogs will all try. Always turn the lights off when leaving your pet unattended.

Candles pose a fire risk to pets. They are at risk of burns, and candle smoke can make respiratory conditions in cats worse. Always keep candles safely away from pets.



Tasty treats

Many of the Christmas foods we love are toxic to our pets. Keep all food out of their reach to prevent temptation.

- Chocolate contains theobromine, which is toxic to dogs and other pets. Chocolate toxicity is more common during the festive season, as there's more chocolate around the home. Dark chocolate is most dangerous to our pets, but any case of chocolate ingestion should be seen by a vet. Chocolate can cause vomiting,

diarrhoea, liver disease and even death. If a gift contains chocolate don't leave it under the tree. Your pet might open it and eat it.

- Raisins are found in lots of Christmas treats, such as mince pies and Christmas cake. They are very toxic to our pets and can cause serious injury to their kidneys. Again, any suspected raisin ingestion should be reported to a vet.
- Alcohol causes weakness, lethargy, vomiting and diarrhoea in pets, and can even result in coma and death. There is often alcohol around at Christmas time, but it's important to make sure that drinks are kept well out of the reach of pets.
- Don't give your pet turkey or chicken bones – they can splinter and cause serious injury, or get lodged in the throat.
- It's tempting to feed your pets any Christmas leftovers. However, this can cause serious problems, as pets can suffer from a painful condition called pancreatitis if they are fed too

much fat. This condition can have long-lasting effects and can make them very ill.

Festive plants

Poinsettias, mistletoe and holly look great at Christmas, however they are dangerous for pets. They have varying levels of toxicity if eaten and the side effects depend on how much of the plant is consumed. Keep them out of reach to avoid any tummy troubles and if they are ingested seek veterinary advice.

Antifreeze

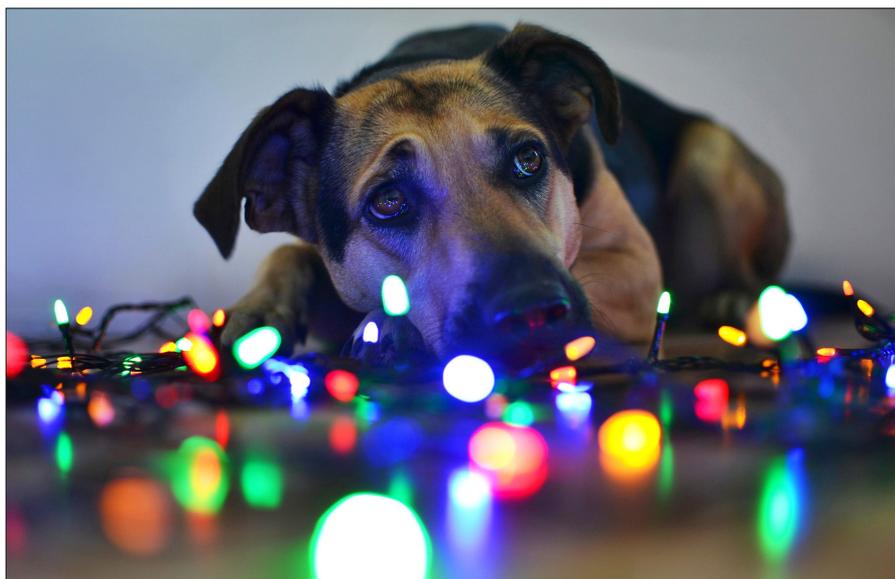
Now we are into winter and the frosts and ice are here, the use of antifreeze increases. This is hugely toxic and can be fatal to cats and dogs, so be careful not to spill any on the ground and keep bottles out of reach – even the smallest amount can be dangerous.

A busy time

Christmas is often a busy and chaotic time. Help your pet cope with the chaos by keeping to their normal routine as much as possible, especially with feeding and exercise. Try to walk your dog as much as possible to tire them out and stop them becoming bored and disruptive.

Lots of visitors and more noise can be scary for your pet, so it's a good idea to provide them with a safe room that they can escape to if it all becomes too much. If you're having guests make sure children are supervised when they are near your pet to avoid injury to either of them. Make sure everyone knows to close any doors, windows or gates to stop your pet escaping.

At such a busy time, it can be easy to overlook your pet's preventative healthcare measures. Worming treatments, flea treatments and vaccinations need to be continued throughout the Christmas period, so mark the dates they are due on the calendar. If your pet is on any



long-term medication, please contact us in advance to ensure that you have a plentiful supply over Christmas.

Fire safety

We love an open fire on a cold winter's day. But your pet might try to investigate, so use a fire guard to stop them getting too close.

Wintry walks

When walking your dog in the cold weather, be careful of the cold ground on their paws. Avoid walking over frosty grass and watch out for salt grit, which can cause skin problems. Wash your

dog's feet after a walk in the snow with baby wipes or a wet towel.

New Year

Fireworks over the New Year period can be a source of anxiety for many cats and dogs. Make sure your pet is calm and comfortable by using a pheromone diffuser like Adaptil or Feliway and making sure your pet has a hideaway place where they feel safe. Close the curtains and turn on the TV or radio to help with distraction, but don't fuss or comfort your pet if they are showing signs of fear – this only confirms that your pet is right to be afraid.

Bobby, the dog with 90 lives!

Bobby is a seven-year-old Jack Russell crossbreed who was recently admitted after his owners had noticed that he had not eaten for 24 hours. Bobby has a history of eating various things that he shouldn't and in October last year he needed two lots of surgery following the discovery of a potential foreign body. An unidentified object was removed from his gut after some lengthy surgery. This recent bout of inappetance was therefore an immediate concern.

On top of this, Bobby has had three surgeries on his knees in the last 18 months. Bobby has definitely been through the wars.

When Bobby was brought in by his vigilant, and by now somewhat weary, owners it was discussed and agreed that based on his radiographs surgery was the best option for Bobby, taking into account his previous history with foreign bodies.

As soon as surgery began vets Maria and Denise realised that things were not as they should have been. Bobby had some extremely severe adhesions in his abdomen from previous surgeries and the anatomy was not as expected. After a lengthy and difficult surgery, two foreign bodies were removed from his intestines. One of which was a grass impaction and the other was a curved rubber structure.

During Bobby's recovery he became very lethargic and inappetant and was prescribed medication to help with his pain and sickness. Bobby was checked over frequently by the vets at Viking after his surgery. Bobby's owners had noticed his wound had been oozing slightly so this was monitored closely and soon subsided and stopped. This post-operative inflammation was similar to how he reacted after his previous surgery and



Bobby the Jack Russell has certainly been through a lot in the last couple of years so we are all hoping he stays out of trouble now.

there were fears that the wound may break down. Luckily it was controlled medically and further surgery was not required.

Bobby and his owners have been through a lot in recent years, with multiple operations for different problems, revision surgeries and also post-operative complications. Bobby might

be high maintenance, but he is certainly brave and he is a fighter. We have all got our fingers crossed that there will not be a next time, but knowing Bobby, let's just hope that if we do see him again he can fight his way back to health like he has in the past... If they say a cat has nine lives, Bobby has 90.

