



# Viking Vets



## NEWSLETTER



CHRISTMAS 2019



**LATEST GOSSIP** All the news from the Viking team

**ROUND UP** Looking back on 2019 at Viking Vets

**STAR PET** Read Rosie's amazing story

# Welcome

Welcome to the Christmas issue of the Viking Vets newsletter.

We look back on a busy year at Viking Vets (p4). And this month's star pet has a remarkable story (p5).

Christmas can be stressful for pets. The change in routine, visitors, children, loud music and decorations can all worry them. Planning ahead can help minimise stress for pets and ensure they have a happy home at Christmas too. Keep a number of an emergency vet on hand in case of accidents or if your pet eats something they shouldn't. If your pet is on medication, stock up before the holidays so you don't get caught out. If you're going away over Christmas, be sure to make plans for your pets - whether they're coming with you or not.

We wish all of our clients and their pets a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

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



We also now have Instagram, #vikingveterinary surgeons

# Our latest charity updates



Maria, Lisa, Chloe, Sonia, Katy, Vicky and Louise all took part in the six-mile Stomp walk for Penny Brohn in October. After a drizzly start the skies cleared for a beautiful walk from Millennium Square to the Penny Brohn Centre in Pill. The team raised an amazing £420 through sponsorship for this great charity, helping those living with cancer.

Maria's book club hosted the annual book swap on 19th October. Through cake sales at the event they raised a staggering £750 for The Green House - a charity offering free counselling for victims of sexual abuse.



# Do you know about our health plan?

We have a unique Health Plan for our clients to enjoy. It was created to help you budget for your pet's essential needs throughout the year with a small monthly direct debit.

The health plan includes:

- Discounted vaccinations and a health check (free after 12 month's membership)
- Flea and worming treatment
- 10% off of non-prescription diets
- 50% off the kennel cough vaccine (dogs only)
- 50% off routine scale



and polish dentals

Why not give us a call for more information or pop in and speak to a member of the team.

# The Great Viking Bake Off



On 9 November the Viking team spent the afternoon having a cupcake masterclass given by vet Denise. We took over Maria's kitchen and had a lot of fun baking and decorating lemon and double chocolate cupcakes.

After several hours of chaos we had enough cakes to feed a village (about 175 in total) and had picked up some great tips. We all had a lot of fun though and are still recovering from the sugar overload!

## Staff news

There have been a lot of comings and goings at the end of 2019, with some changes to the Viking team.

Vets Andy and Amy are sadly leaving us. The whole team will miss them. This has left space for us to take on some new vets. Federica and Kesia will be starting with us in January so be sure to give them a warm welcome.



We also have a new student veterinary nurse. Vicky is with us on a placement from Ireland. She is in her third year of a veterinary

nursing course and will be at Viking until September 2020. Back in Ireland she lives on a beef farm and enjoys horse riding. She is also a qualified dog groomer.



Another new face is Abi. She has taken on the role of kennel assistant and will hopefully start training to be a veterinary

nurse in September 2020. This is her first job after finishing her A-levels. In her spare time she enjoys swimming and spending time with her cat Sam.

## Festive opening hours

24 December: close at 2pm  
25-26 December: closed  
27-30 December: open as usual  
31 December: close at 5pm  
1 January: closed

If you need emergency treatment when we are closed then please call our emergency out-of-hours vets on 0117 9059000.

# A whirlwind 2019 at Viking Vets

It has been another busy year at Viking Vets in 2019. A year of staff changes has left us with a strong team for the end of the year and we look forward to 2020. We have been keeping abreast of politics, raising money for charity and hand-rearing a litter of kittens. All in a day's work here at Viking Vets!

We have all been following the Brexit news so that we know where we are with pet passports. This has changed on an almost monthly basis throughout the year, and we are grateful to all of our clients who have kept up with the advice on travelling with their pets.

In April three stray kittens (two females and one male) were brought in by a member of the public who found them at the Avonmouth recycling plant. For eight weeks they were fed around the clock, with the nurses taking it in turns to take them home. Unfortunately in May one of the little girls sadly had to be euthanised after rapidly deteriorating from a mystery illness. However, the two remaining kittens thrived and are enjoying life in their new homes.

There has been a lot of change in the Viking team this year, with lots of comings and goings. Head receptionist Laura decided not to return after her maternity leave, instead spending time looking after her daughter. We have also recently said goodbye to two of our vets, husband and wife Andy and Amy. Everyone here at Viking wishes them all the best for the future. It was good news this summer as Emily, Sam and Jeri all passed their exams to become qualified veterinary nurses. Jeri has been especially busy as she is also pregnant with her second child – a little girl who is due in January. We all welcomed the return of vet Amy Smith, who is working with us after a job at Langford. We also have a new student vet nurse Vicky, who is with us for a year on a placement from Ireland. And Abi has joined the team as our new kennel assistant. She will be hopefully be starting her veterinary nurse training in September 2020. Our brilliant receptionist Sonia achieved her gold accredited receptionist award, a recognition of the amazing job that she does.

We have again been raising money for charity this year through various events. Following their success walking 100km in 2018, this year Sonia and Chloe took on



**Clockwise from top left: our hand-reared kittens; Gold receptionist Sonia; the team fundraising for charity.**

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 have been 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. On a very hot Saturday in July Jo, Lisa, Charlotte and Sam donned their running gear for the Muddy 5k Race for Life on the Downs. In searing heat they made it round the 5k course, through the mud and over the obstacles. They raised a fantastic £220 for Cancer Research UK. In October Maria, Lisa, Chloe, Sonia, Katy, Vicky and Louise all took part in the six-mile Stomp walk for Penny Brohn. The team raised an amazing £420 for this great charity that is especially close to some of their hearts. Maria's annual book swap event in October raised a staggering £750 through cake sales alone. The money goes to The Green House, a charity offering free counselling for victims of sexual abuse. Thank you to everyone who has supported us this year or given any donations. We very much appreciate it and the charities are very grateful.

# Rosie defies the odds

A very poorly greyhound fights back from being seriously ill, to make a miraculous recovery.

Meet Rosie, a six-year-old greyhound who stayed in with us for a total of 18 days!

Rosie was first brought in to Viking Vets when her owners noticed she was off her food and that she had become very lethargic. Maria the vet noted that Rosie was pyrexia, meaning that she had a high body temperature/fever. Rosie was admitted so that she could be supported with intravenous fluid therapy and for further testing to try and find out what was causing the high temperature.

Sadly the blood test results were inconclusive. Rosie then had an ultrasound scan by Denise. The scan showed that there were no abnormalities with her kidneys, liver and spleen. While this was good news it also meant that there was still no known origin for the pyrexia.

Rosie was brighter, eating well and had stopped vomiting so she was sent home. After a couple of days Rosie's health began to deteriorate again. She had developed vomiting and diarrhoea, had become extremely lethargic and had started bleeding from her left nostril. Rosie was also diagnosed with vasculitis – this is an inflammation of the blood vessels. She had repeat blood tests, which showed a raised white-blood-cell count. This can be an indication of infection and so she was started on a course of antibiotics as well as anti-sickness, gastroprotectant and pain-relief medication.



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**“Rosie’s health began to deteriorate again. She had developed vomiting and diarrhoea, had become extremely lethargic and had started bleeding from her left nostril.”**

Over the next few days Rosie lost a lot of weight and she had become very painful when getting up and down. We continued with her medication and everyone hoped that she would soon start to make an improvement. The whole team became very bonded with Rosie, the nurses were even hand feeding her all of her meals so that we could keep her as comfortable as possible!

Eventually Rosie started to make subtle improvements. She was no longer pyrexia, she was eating on her own and she was able to stand and walk around the garden pain free. The decision was made to send her home.

At Rosie’s weekly check-up appointments her condition continued to improve until she made a full recovery. The whole team were so pleased that she was finally back to her old self and we wish her and her owners all the best for the future.

# Dogs really are good for you!

Owning a dog definitely has its benefits – especially to your health. Dog owners have lower blood pressure, are less likely to be obese and are on average 2.2lbs lighter than people without canine companions, scientists have discovered.

A study by the Mayo Clinic and Italian researchers, showed that people with dogs are healthier than those with either no pets, or those who own a different animal. Dog owners also had higher salaries, did more exercise and were less likely to have diabetes.

Dr Andrea Maugeri of the University of Catania in Italy, who led the study said: “In general, people who owned any pet were more likely to report more physical activity, better diet and blood sugar at ideal level. The greatest benefits from having a pet were for those who owned a dog, independent of their age, sex and education level.”

Around 45% of Britons own an animal, an increase of 5% since 2016, and dogs are the most popular with one in four people owning at least one.

For the study, researchers looked at 1769 people, 42% of which owned a pet. None of the participants had any history of heart disease and they were scored on body mass index (BMI), diet, physical activity, smoking status, blood pressure, blood glucose and total cholesterol.

Just 29% of dog owners were obese, compared with 32% of non-pet owners, and 37% of non-dog owners. Dog owners weighed an average of 11.9 stone, compared with 12.1 stone for those without a dog.

Out of a total score of 14 for overall heart health, people with dogs scored an average of 10 while those without scored nine.



Heart and circulatory diseases cause more than a quarter of all deaths in the UK, 170,000 deaths each year. This study is the first to show that there is a link between pet ownership and a lower risk of heart problems.

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**“People with dogs are healthier than those with either no pets, or those who own a different animal”**

Dr Maugeri said that people should consider adopting, rescuing or purchasing a pet as a potential strategy to improve their cardiovascular health as long it led them to a more physically active lifestyle.

Senior investigator Dr Francisco Lopez-Jimenez, chair of the Division of Preventive Cardiology at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, said that having a dog may prompt owners to go out, move around and play with the animal regularly. “Owning a dog also has been linked to better mental health in other studies and less perception of social isolation - both risk factors for heart attacks,” added Dr Lopez-Jimenez.

The research was published in the journal *Mayo Clinic Proceedings: Innovations, Quality & Outcomes*.

# Are cats capable of attachment?

Cats may often seem aloof and not that interested in humans, but it turns out that might not be the full story.

Researchers say they have found that cats form emotional attachments to their caregivers in a similar way to children and dogs in a behaviour known as “secure attachment”. This is shown in a situation where the presence of a caregiver helps them to feel secure, calm, safe and comfortable enough to explore their environment.

“Despite fewer studies, research suggests we may be underestimating cats’ sociocognitive abilities,” the authors of the study from Oregon State University write. The study, which was published in the journal *Current Biology* involved owners and their kittens taking part in a simple exercise.

Each owner spent two minutes with their kitten, after which they left the room for two minutes, and then returned for a two-minute reunion. The behaviour of 70 kittens was monitored throughout.

The results revealed that 64% of the kittens appeared to be less stressed during the reunion with their owner than during the separation and, during the reunion, showed a balance of roaming around and being in contact with their owner – a response the team say is evidence of secure attachment.

The authors say the remaining 36% of kittens showed hallmarks of “insecure attachment” – remaining stressed even during reunion, with the majority seeking cuddles and the others either avoiding contact or appearing conflicted about what to do.

A similar split in secure versus insecure attachment style was seen in 38 adult cats, and the team say that such a split has also been seen in previous



research involving children and dogs with their caregivers.

Further experiments showed that subsequent training and socialisation of a subgroup of the kittens had little, if any, effect on attachment type. The researchers say this suggests that while such measures might influence the development of an attachment style to start with, once established such styles are stable. “This may suggest that heritable factors, such as temperament, also influence attachment style and could contribute to its stability.”

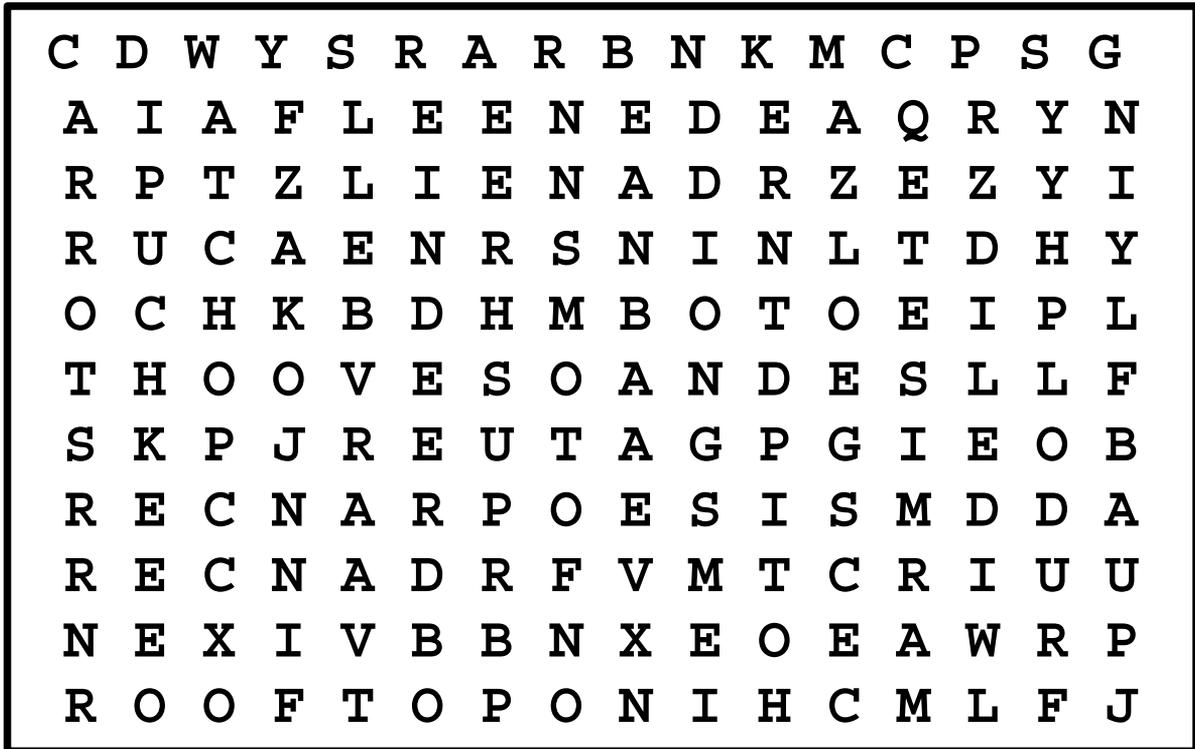
However, Prof. Daniel Mills, an expert in veterinary behavioural medicine from the University of Lincoln who has previously studied human-cat relationships, said the research has flaws. He says that the team did not explore other possible types of bonds and did not repeat their experiments with strangers. The cats might have been responding more generally to social support from human presence, rather than showing attachment to a particular individual. “At the moment, as far as we can tell,

responses around the owner that look like attachment are often largely the result of previous reinforcement,” he added.

While Prof. Mills added that kittens show attachment to their mother, he said it remains unclear whether they form a similar attachment to their owners. “I think cats do emotionally bond with their owners, I just don’t think that we have any convincing evidence that this is a form of psychological attachment in the normal psychological sense,” he said.

Dr Lauren Finka from Nottingham Trent University agreed. “For species that spend a large proportion of their time in proximity to specific humans, it can be very advantageous to form bonds with them,” she said. “However, unlike children and potentially dogs, it is less probable that cats have an innate need to form strong, secure attachments to their caregiver, particularly as adults – hence signs of this are more likely rooted in factors like their personality, early socialisation and how we keep them.”

# Find Santa's reindeer



**caribou**

**reindeer**

**Dasher**

**Dancer**

**Prancer**

**Vixen**

**Comet**

**Cupid**

**Donner**

**Blitzen**

**Rudolph**

**red-nosed**

**flying**

**speedy**

**antlers**

**hooves**

**herd**

**rooftop**

**listen**

**watch**

**bells**

**magical**