

## COMPANION ANIMAL NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2022

### HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

“Hmmm should we get a dog...?” Is this just a fleeting thought or a considered decision? Many households made the choice to add a new pet to their family during lockdown and are now regretting not having given it more thought. It is easy to underestimate just how much of a commitment a pet is, particularly a dog. Our pets offer us companionship, unconditional love and enrich our households, but they are also very tying, expensive and a huge responsibility. We must first be sure we can provide all a dog will need before entering into this long term relationship. It is better to weigh up the pros and cons of adding a pet to the family **before** you meet a potential candidate and become emotionally involved!

Should I get a puppy or an adult dog? A puppy is a **lot** of extremely focused and time consuming hard work. Be sure that you have the time and commitment level to take on a puppy—their well adjusted life depends on it! The most important period of development for puppies is between 4 and 14 weeks, and the correct foundations of socialisation and behaviour must be laid during this period. Visit the litter from 4 weeks and then the ideal time to bring your new arrival home is at 8 weeks of age. Remember that your puppy will need their primary course of vaccinations to be able to socialise safely outside the home. The first few weeks with you in their new home are arguably the most crucial in their life and although hugely rewarding, be ready for house training accidents, destruction and exhaustion!



Acquiring an adult dog can be less daunting and can avoid some of the responsibilities of training a new puppy. A new puppy may be impractical if you are a family who spends much of the day away from home with an adult dog likely to be already house trained and less dependent seeming the wiser choice. However, remember an adult dog who may have had insufficient training/socialisation in their early life may be left with some behavioural problems that are difficult to resolve.

Boy or girl? If you are not planning to breed from your pet we would advise, for both health and behavioural reasons, that dogs be neutered. For this reason the sex of the pet you get can be pretty much down to personal choice. However, remember male dogs tend to be slightly larger and can be more assertive. Male dogs can be more prone to mounting, roaming, scent marking and sometimes be aggressive, these behaviours are usually reduced when neutered. Female dogs before they are neutered, or if you decide not to neuter, will have seasons and bleed and can have affected mood and phantom pregnancies.

Another decision is whether to get a pure bred or cross breed. By choosing a rescue dog, an abandoned animal will be re-homed, some of the genetic problems of inbred pedigree breeds can be avoided and the initial cost will be lower. However, the financial responsibility of



feeding, insuring, veterinary care and boarding for the life of the animal all still need to be considered. On the other hand getting a pure bred dog from known parentage will give a better idea of size and temperament, but make sure the breeder is open to questions and visits and that both parents can be seen. It is also important to consider life span, this can vary greatly with breed. Do your homework and research breed types and rescue centres. Speak to breeders, other owners, vets and The Kennel Club have great breed information online. Behavioural factors also need to be given due consideration, including temperament (to fit in to your family dynamic), your activity level, the dog's exercise needs and any health problems specific to certain breeds.

So in summary, we have only just touched on the myriad of factors to consider when you are thinking of adding a new dog to your family. This is an exciting time, just be sure this is an informed decision and that you have done your homework first! If after due consideration you decide to go for it then great! We cannot wait to meet the new addition to your family and help you care for them for a long and healthy life.

## Contagious Canine Cough (CCC)

CCC, previously known as Kennel Cough or Canine Infectious Respiratory Disease Complex, is always a topic at the forefront of conversations. We have seen a much higher rate and more severe cases of CCC this year, and due to this we are recommending all dogs are vaccinated.

There are many different pathogens that can cause the classic “goose-honking” cough. These consist of, but are not limited to; Bordetella Bronchiseptica, Parainfluenza virus, Adenovirus type-2, and Canine Coronavirus. Other signs include sneezing, nasal and ocular discharge, lethargy, reduced appetite, swollen glands and even vomiting following the cough in severe cases.

Most of the causative agents are very contagious and air-borne, meaning they be transmitted from up to 2 meters away without nose-to-nose contact and can survive on surfaces for several hours. If your dog comes into contact with anything an infected dog has had contact with there is a risk of transmission.

Most boarding kennels, day care centres and puppy socialisation groups will request all attending dogs be vaccinated for CCC to reduce the spread of the disease, as they will have a high throughput of animals and the vaccine reduces the severity and spread of the disease.

The vaccine covers for the Bordetella and Parainfluenza pathogens, so it does not completely eliminate the risk of contracting CCC. Older dogs, dogs with a weakened immune system and young puppies are at an increased risk of contracting CCC.



Bordetella Bronchiseptica is a bacteria that is found within the environment. In rare cases, it can be transmitted to humans, hence is known as a zoonotic disease. It is more common for it to be transmitted to humans with weakened immune systems, such as concurrent disease, chemotherapy or other medication designed to suppress the immune system.

The vaccine given is a live vaccine, meaning the animal is given a weakened version of the actual pathogen. Due to this, we avoid vaccinating dogs that live with humans who are immune suppressed. This also means dogs may have a mild cough after receiving the vaccine.

If you need any further information on CCC, or have any concerns please call the surgery.

In the last decade a new strain of Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease (RHD) has become prevalent in the UK. This variant strain, also known as RHD-2, has quickly become the predominant cause of this fatal disease. All breeds of rabbit, including both pet and wild rabbits, can be affected by RHD (caused by either RHDV-1 or RHDV-2), as well as Myxomatosis. Both fatal diseases are endemic to the UK.

Most rabbits affected by RHD die rapidly often without showing obvious clinical signs apart from a short period of dullness and lethargy. If the rabbit does show symptoms, these can include widespread haemorrhages, fever and organ dysfunction before they die. Myxomatosis causes puffy swellings around the head, face and genitals as well as a high fever. These swellings can be so severe that they can cause blindness. Affected rabbits typically cease eating and drinking and death typically follows within 12 days. Ultimately, both diseases are typically fatal.



The diseases are spread by insects, meaning contact with other rabbits isn't necessary for disease transmission. These diseases cannot be cured, only prevented. Make sure your rabbit is protected by booking a vaccination appointment. These diseases can now be vaccinated against in just one visit to practice, which also provides opportunity for a general health assessment to keep your rabbit happy and healthy.

## COVID 19

- Clients **MUST wear a FACE MASK** when attending the surgery, both when speaking to the vets/nurses and the reception team at the front doors
- **BRING** your **MOBILE PHONE** with you and when you get to the surgery please telephone our reception to let us know you have arrived, and inform the receptionist of the number you are on. Keep it on your person so that **the vet or nurse can speak to you remotely** when they have examined your pet to discuss treatment options and also so that **the reception team can take your payment over the telephone without having to come to the door where possible**
- **If you or any member of your household have tested positive for Covid19, are displaying symptoms or are self-isolating, PLEASE do not come to the surgery.** Contact us to arrange an alternative appointment when you are well.



Check out our website [www.daleheadvetgroup.co.uk](http://www.daleheadvetgroup.co.uk) for more information about caring for your pet, special offers, vet and staff profiles and much more!

