



Dacre House *Veterinary Clinic*

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NEWS



WINTER 2018

Practice News

As ever the practice is busy looking after the pet population of Southborough and the surrounding areas; we strive at all times to give you the best possible service and are delighted to receive so much positive feedback from you on Facebook, Google and the, always appreciated, hand-written cards of thanks.

Laparoscopic surgery has become a popular choice for bitch spays amongst our clients with quicker recovery rates reported and a lower risk of complications – if your pet needs surgery please ask our vets about keyhole options.

Sine Reed joined our nursing staff in September, having worked previously at Folly Wildlife Rescue. **Becky Cheeseman** has now gone on maternity leave – we wish her all the very best with her forthcoming motherhood and look forward to welcoming her back part-time next year.

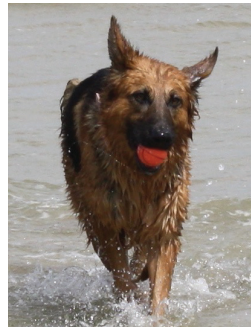
It is with great sadness that we bade farewell to vet **Helen Denning** at the end of November. Helen has been a wonderful member of our team for the past two years, full of compassion and with an admirable work ethic. Helen is leaving the veterinary profession for the time being due to family commitments.

All that leaves is for us to wish you all a wonderful Christmas – do look out for our reminders on pet safety this festive season – and to thank you all for your custom this year.



Topics in this issue:

- Update on lungworm in dogs
- Winter weight worries!
- Brrr – it's cold out there!



Cold weather aches and pains

Cold winters can make your pet's joints feel stiff and painful. This can manifest as a reluctance to go on long walks, a stiffening when getting up after lying down or a specific lameness.

The joints most susceptible to arthritis are those permitting limb movements – called synovial joints. The ends of the

bones which meet at these joints are covered by smooth articular cartilage. In pets with arthritis, this protective cartilage is damaged, resulting in exposure of the underlying bone, causing pain and inflammation. Secondary new bone is commonly deposited around the joint and may be seen on x-ray (see lower right image).



In many cases, arthritis causes a low grade, constant discomfort. Whilst some pets will develop an obvious limp, many pets, especially cats, will simply slow down, be stiffer getting up and generally rest more; all of which is easy to put down to 'old age'.

Although arthritis cannot usually be cured, the good news is that we now have an expanding range of treatments to help your pet. First of all, **weight reduction** is absolutely vital. Often sore joints lead to reduced exercise causing an increased waist line! However, even a small loss will make a massive difference to mobility. Have a chat to us about how to help your pet slim down!

Exercise: Many arthritic pets struggle on long walks, so little and often is the key. Vary where you go so they always have somewhere new to explore; mental stimulation is as important as physical, especially for older animals. Try swimming as well, pools for dogs are now very common and it is a great way to strengthen muscles and burn calories while not stressing out sore joints. Simple changes at home can make such a difference: putting mats on slippy floors, providing a super supportive bed and using ramps will all really help.

Many pets also benefit from anti-inflammatory **pain relief** and also increased dietary intake of **glucosamine and chondroitin sulphate** either as a supplement or in the way of prescription food. If you are worried that your pet may have arthritis, please come and see us for a check-up!

X-rays and arthritis

Radiography is commonly used to investigate joint problems.



X-ray of a normal elbow joint



Arthritic elbow joint in a dog with lots of "fluffy" new bone (yellow arrows) around the joint, indicative of marked arthritis.

Q: Where do fleas go in the winter? A: Your home!



Did you know that the worst time for flea infestations is actually the Autumn and Winter months? Fleas thrive in warm conditions and thanks to central heating, they don't need to hop south for the winter, they just need to move into your living room.

Fleas can make their way into our homes in all sorts of ways; on our pets, on us, or just hopping in by themselves. Did you know that fleas can jump 20cm into the air – so your front step is no barrier to them! They lay their eggs in protected places like under furniture or in the cracks of laminate floors and those eggs can survive for months, waiting to be activated by warm conditions (remember that central heating?!) and the presence of pets spending more time inside. This is why flea infestations can appear to come out of nowhere!

So, it is vital to protect against fleas all year round! Come and have a chat to us about the best ways to do this and you can stop your home from being a flea's winter paradise!

