



AlphaPet News

NEWSLETTER Winter 2018



Adopting dogs from abroad



We are seeing increasing numbers of dogs being registered having been imported from countries such as Romania, Bulgaria and Greece. It is very understandable for us all to want to help these dogs by giving them a loving home, given the appalling conditions they have often come from and, in many cases, this can be hugely rewarding. However, rescuing any dog comes with challenges but this can particularly be the case with pets from abroad.

Many rescue dogs have spent their lives in kennels or on the streets, so they may arrive frightened and poorly socialised. This can result in nervousness, aggression and separation anxiety problems. Imported dogs may have already been infected with diseases such as heartworm or Leishmania which can result in significant ongoing vet bills as well as risking introducing these diseases into the UK. We're not saying you shouldn't rescue a dog from abroad, but we do recommend that you go into it having weighed up all the pros and cons.

A more detailed consideration of this topic is available in our blog at <https://alphapet.co.uk/blog/2018/12/10/adopting-pets-from-abroad/>

Brexit Issues

At the time of writing, we still have no idea what Brexit will look like or even if it will happen at all!

Whilst the uncertainty is playing havoc with the financial markets, its effect is also being felt by pet owners who wish to travel to and from the EU after 29th March.

If we leave under a No Deal Brexit, there is a possibility that the rules under which dogs, cats and ferrets can travel to and from the EU may change significantly. In a worst case scenario, pets who currently have valid passports for travel, may be compelled to be revaccinated against rabies, then undergo a rabies blood titre test at least 30 days after the vaccination. Assuming the titre test is adequate then there could be an additional 3 month wait before travel would be allowed.

We hope that common sense will prevail, but if you have travel plans with your pet after 29th March 2019 then you need to be aware of the possible issues.

The government is continually updating its information and advice at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/taking-your-pet-abroad-if-theres-no-brexit-deal>



Alabama Rot

Recent studies have shown that almost 95% of confirmed cases have occurred between November and May.

There have been 46 cases so far in 2018 with a total of 169 confirmed cases across 38 counties since 2012. Most cases have occurred in the western and southern parts of England.

Despite the highest number of cases being reported in West Sussex, Dorset and Hampshire, it is important to remember that Alabama Rot is still an extremely rare disease. We recommend that dog owners continue to walk their dogs as normal.

The first sign is likely to be a skin sore or lesion that isn't caused by a known injury. Most frequently it will be found on the lower half of the leg as a distinct swelling, patch of red skin or an open ulcer.

If a dog becomes infected, the best chance of recovery lies with early recognition and intensive veterinary care.

Any dog owner who is worried that their pet might have Alabama Rot should contact AlphaPet immediately.



AlphaPet Improvements

Many clients who have visited AlphaPet in the last few months will have noticed the changes at our Bognor Regis and our Chichester surgeries.

Our Chichester surgery has undergone some major changes in both increased staffing, such that there are two vets there every day now, as well as the Reception area having a very impressive facelift to reflect its unique character.

Our Bognor Regis Hospital has also undergone some major work with the reception area being modified to create a new consulting room, two quiet areas (for cats, small furrries and other nervous pets) as well as each of the existing consulting rooms being updated and modernised, making them more visually appealing as well as being better for our patients.

And we haven't forgotten our Birdham surgery! Significant improvements are planned for this surgery in 2019.



Applying Spot-Ons

We'd just like to emphasise the importance of applying spot-on products correctly following a couple of tragic fatal accidents.

It is vitally important to check that the product you are using is meant for the species you are applying it to. Dog spot-ons applied to cats can cause serious harm. They contain different chemicals to tackle parasites such as fleas and ticks.

Please also ensure that they are applied in the correct place on the back of the neck where they cannot be licked off. Again, we have seen instances where cats have managed to lick spot-on products causing serious problems.

Brandy's Home!

It happens to AlphaPet staff as well! Receptionist Becky Pullen's cat Brandy went missing over 2 years ago. Despite trying everything she could think of to find him, she'd pretty much given up hope of ever seeing him again.

Then one day, he was brought into our Bognor Hospital as a stray. Fortunately he was microchipped, so a quick scan confirmed his identity and here they are reunited! Miracles do happen. Happy days!



Wildlife Treatment

AlphaPet has always treated wildlife casualties presented to us by clients and members of the public. Over recent years however, we've been getting more and more wildlife casualties from other vets via Brent Lodge Wildlife Hospital. Brent Lodge is a wildlife recuperation and rehabilitation charity, wholly reliant on legacies, donations and fund-raising to allow them to do their amazing work. When many casualties still need workups and treatment, these are having to be financed by both Brent Lodge and ourselves.

So AlphaPet has taken the lead and sent a letter to all local vets to try and encourage them to do their bit for wildlife casualties and reduce some of the current burdens on Brent Lodge and AlphaPet. Many local practices already see this as pro bono work and it's enough for them, like AlphaPet, to know that we are all doing our share for our community and that it's part of the "deal" of being a vet.



Nurse Clinics

AlphaPet continues to expand its range of nurse clinics for patients. For the last few years, we have run specific weight clinics, SAGA clinics, diabetic clinics and tortoise clinics. Our highly qualified Registered Veterinary Nurses have a wealth of experience and knowledge to help you look after your pets better. Understanding the need to make these as convenient as possible, RVN Charlie Sampson now holds evening nurse clinics at our Bognor Regis Hospital between 6pm and 7pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. In the New Year, we will also be launching Osteoarthritis Clinics to help give clients the most up to date information to help them care for ageing pets with arthritis.

Tortoises & Hibernation

This year hasn't been a great year for tortoises in the UK. We've noticed a significant increase in the numbers of tortoises being presented with diseases related to hibernation and the cold snaps last spring followed by the very hot spells this summer and now a very up and down Autumn. Over the last 25 years, since AlphaPet was established, a huge amount of new knowledge has been gained about how we should be looking after these fascinating creatures. Years ago, if a tortoise didn't wake up after hibernation, one simply went out and bought another one. Thankfully, those days are gone and tortoises are more highly valued as family pets, often being passed down from generation to generation. The problem is that they were never designed to live in the UK. Many species evolved in a Mediterranean type climate, so they need higher temperatures and a lot more sunlight (ultraviolet) than we normally have in the UK. Hibernating tortoises for 4-6 months is unnatural and fraught with risks. If you'd like more information about how to best look after your tortoise, please book in to see one of our tortoise specific nurses, Charlie Sampson, Sue Eaton or Hayley Goddard.

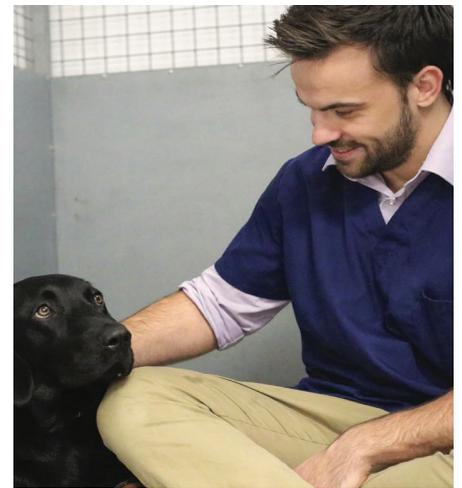


Staff News

We are very pleased to welcome several additional members of staff. New vets, Michelle Beckett and Jake Ambridge are pictured below. A warm welcome also to RVN Laura Brind.

Gecko

Occasionally, we are lucky enough to come across some really cute patients. This tiny Mediterranean House Gecko arrived in the UK from Spain with a bag of sweet potatoes. How he didn't get crushed on the journey over, we have no idea. Unfortunately, the finder refused to leave a name or contact details so we know no more. Weighing in at a little over 1 gram, he was a little dehydrated when he arrived with us, but is now back to normal and is very quick! Since he is still a wild animal, we are trying to get him back to Spain to be released back to the wild. Hopefully, we can arrange a flight for him along with an export health certificate. We'll keep you posted, but we're not doing that to him!



A new arrival of a different sort: Huge congratulations to nurse, Amie van der Hut who has given birth to a healthy baby girl. We'll shortly be saying au revoir to receptionist Becky Pullen and vet Charlotte Gray on maternity leave for a while. Congratulations to ANA Jaz Nichols who passed her maths exam and can now start working towards becoming a qualified RVN. Jaz is also a very talented photographer and she takes the credit for the majority of the photos in this newsletter! Congratulations also to nurse Jade

Weeks who passed her RVN final exams and to Josie Metcalfe who passed her ANA exams. RVN Kayleigh Galdes Giappone has been appointed joint Lead Nurse at our Chichester surgery and receptionist Sam Sparshott who has been appointed Lead Receptionist at our Bognor Regis Hospital. AlphaPet staff have also been doing their bit over the summer to keep public areas clean and tidy by conducting litter sweeps of the field at West Meads and Medmerry Beach. It has been rewarding for a job well done but saddening that so much litter was found.

Christmas & New Year Opening

Our Christmas and New Year services are as follows:

Christmas Eve: Normal service all surgeries until 5.30pm

Christmas Day & Boxing Day: CLOSED:
24/7 Emergency Service at Bognor Regis West Meads Hospital

Thursday 27th December: Normal hours at all surgeries

New Year's Eve: Normal service all surgeries until 5.30pm

New Year's Day: CLOSED:
24/7 Emergency Service at Bognor Regis West Meads Hospital

Wednesday 2nd January onwards: Normal hours at all surgeries



Bognor Regis Hospital: 01243 842832

AlphaPet Chichester: 01243 528899

AlphaPet Birdham: 01243 513514

Reminders

Written Prescriptions

If you choose to request a written prescription for medication for your pet, please be aware that it is your responsibility to obtain their medication from either a local pharmacy or a reputable online pharmacy and to keep a supply in until such time as a repeat drug check for a further written prescription is due.

Please be aware we require 48 hours notice if you do need an emergency supply of up to a week to allow you to obtain a repeat supply online. Emergency supplies may only be granted in line with the prescribing guidelines and can only be issued at the discretion of the veterinary surgeon in charge.

Repeat medications

Please help us to help you by giving us 24 hours notice for repeat medications orders (including flea and worming treatments). We carry limited supplies of medications at each of our surgeries and it takes staff time to check prescriptions against veterinary surgeon instructions. The courtesy reminder texts we send to clients are not an indication that medications are ready for you to collect. It can be very annoying to have a wasted journey or a protracted wait for medications. Remember, you can phone in your requests or make them online at our website: www.alphapet.co.uk

All pets on repeat medications will need regular veterinary checkups. The frequency of these will be determined by your veterinary surgeon in conjunction with the requirements of the Medicines Act and dependent on the type of drug. It is illegal for us to prescribe POM-V medications outside of these requirements without a checkup.

AlphaPet in Numbers

73,651 The number of animals treated by AlphaPet in the last 25 years

20,657 The number of clients registered at AlphaPet in the last 25 years

58 The number of staff currently employed by AlphaPet

£1.5m The annual cost of employing staff at AlphaPet

6591 The number of nights animals needed hospitalisation in the last 12 months

423 The number of Out Of Hours consultations carried out in the last 12 months

£3036.49

15 The number of Veterinary Surgeons employed by AlphaPet

19 The number of qualified nurses employed by AlphaPet

2621 The number of wildlife patients treated by AlphaPet in the last 12 months

1369 The number of nights of hospitalisation needed by wildlife casualties in the last 12 months

The amount raised for Brent Lodge charity at the 2018 AlphaPet Fun Dog Show