

Staff News

We are delighted to welcome several new members of staff.



Andy Elliott BVM&S MRCVS
Andy qualified in 1993 and after 6 years of mixed practice he moved to Hampshire and has been in companion animal general practice ever since. His areas of special interest include feline medicine, dermatology, clinical pathology and veterinary dentistry. He is married with one daughter and an 85year old tortoise!



Charli Brace BVSc MRCVS
Charli graduated from the University of Melbourne in 2008. She is interested in feline medicine, emergency and critical care and ophthalmology. She lives in Totton with her husband, hamster and hopefully soon 2 Burmese kittens.

Lizzie Cronin VN

Lizzie qualified as a veterinary nurse in 2002. She locumed with Midforest for 3 years and is now a permanent member of the nursing team at the Totton surgery. Her interests include running weight clinics, rabbit care and anaesthesia. She has 4 rescue cats called, Roger, Bertie, Spooky and Pumpkin.

Louise Turner

Louise started work with Midforest as a Saturday assistant at Totton. She is in her final year of training as a Veterinary Nurse and is continuing her studies at Sparsholt Agricultural College towards a full honours degree. She particularly enjoys the clinical nursing aspect and has two dogs of her own.

Jenny Simmonds VN

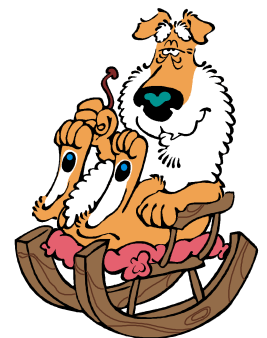
Jenny trained and qualified as a veterinary nurse at a large local veterinary hospital in 2007. She is a keen horserider and loves running and walking in the forest with her dog Jake.

Senior Citizen's Club (for the over 8's)

Happily pets nowadays have a longer life expectancy than 20 years ago. Along with this it also means that age related physical and mental problems are becoming more common e.g. arthritis, incontinence and heart disease. Therefore we believe that middle age and senior pets require a higher level of attention.

FREE clinics have been set up at both our surgeries, by qualified veterinary nurses, designed for pets of 8 years or over to help early detection of any problems that may be present, which means they can often be managed and treated more successfully. In these appointments, there will be plenty of time to discuss any problems you may have noticed with your pet (if there are any) or any particular concerns you may have and special attention will be paid to finding solutions and treatment programmes for each individual case. There may be referrals to the vet, if thought necessary, which will then be charged for in the normal way.

If your dog or cat is 8 years old or over and you are interested in attending one of these clinics, please phone either the Totton surgery, 023 8066 0400 or Lyndhurst surgery, 023 8028 2358 for an appointment.



Travelling with Pets

Many people are choosing to include their furry family members in their holiday plans. Having pets along for holidays can be extremely enjoyable and rewarding for both pet and owner, but the journey can be a challenge, so here are a few pointers to ensure “happy holidays”.

If staying within the UK, you will most likely be travelling by car. Both dogs and cats can become good car travellers. Both dogs and cats should be restrained when travelling, cats are most safe in a carrier or basket, and dogs can be contained with a specially designed seat belt. These are available at most pet retailers, and interface with your car’s seat belt to keep Fido in place. Being properly restrained is a very important safety measure, both for you and your pet as a crash will cause your animal to act as a projectile, with serious repercussions for your pet and any human in its way. Also, unless air bags have an “off” switch, pets should be kept in the back seat only to prevent injury should they go off. Remember, if it isn’t safe for a small child, it isn’t safe for your pet! Taking your pet for “mini” trips before setting out on a long journey to get them used to car travel is an excellent idea. Most animals will overcome car sickness and fear if introduced slowly to the car’s motion – and setting out on an empty stomach is also helpful. Remember to stop frequently for toilet breaks, and cats should be given the opportunity to use a litter tray. Cats may adjust best to long trips if transported in a crate large enough to have a sleeping area at one end and a litter tray in the other. While it is tempting to consider sedating pets when travelling, it is much safer to get pets used to travelling the natural way; however herbal calmers can be helpful, and should be introduced a few days prior to your trip.

Travelling abroad is a bit more complicated. Due to the UK’s rabies-free status, pets must have passports that prove their immunity to this disease. These passports give pets the opportunity to travel to certain passport scheme approved countries without requiring a 6 month quarantine prior to their return home. Most European countries (but not all), are included in the scheme, as well as several long-haul destinations such as Canada and the United States. Arranging a pet passport can take 7-9 months from beginning to end, so planning well ahead is essential. The process requires placing a microchip, vaccinating your pet against rabies and a blood test to confirm immunity. Definitely discuss the process with your vet well ahead of any anticipated travel to ensure your pet’s paperwork can be completed in time. It is also important to ensure that the countries you wish to visit and the ferry or airline you wish to travel with are included in the scheme. Government officials at entry points to the UK take the rules very seriously, and you could risk your pet being licensed into quarantine if all regulations are not complied with.

I hope the above information will inspire you to include your furry friends in your next holiday.



Getting Active With Your Dog

We all know that being active is good for our health, that it is not only good for our bodies, but also improves our psychological well being, and even increase our IQ. The same is true for our pets. We all enjoy a stroll with our pooch, but did you know that there are many organized activities for dogs and their owners that may be just what the doctor ordered for a bored pooch and an owner keen to try something new? Here are just a few suggestions:

Canine agility is quickly becoming one of the most popular dog sports. It involves coaching your pet through a course of tunnels, jumps, hoops and other obstacles. Anyone who’s ever watched a tournament can see how much fun the dogs are having. This sport does not discriminate - any dog can compete – all obstacles are adjusted to the height of the dog. While Border Collies and Shetland sheepdogs excel particularly well at this sport, there are plenty of Yorkies, Newfoundlands and any breed in between that compete and enjoy this sport. Your dog should be relatively fit to start agility training, and most clubs require basic obedience and that dogs be at least 1 year of age before starting.



Fancy something with a bit more dramatic flare? How about **Heelwork to Music**? This quirky sport started in Vancouver Canada as “Canine freestyle” and is sometimes referred to as “doggie dancing”. It involves choreographing a series of obedience moves in sync to the movement of the owner and in time to music. Sound strange? It is... a bit... but it can be a really beautiful sight, and a fantastic way to bond with your pet. Again, a certain amount of basic obedience is required to start, but after that only your imagination is the limit!

Flyball is the fastest canine sport around. Essentially a relay race, a team of several dogs take it in turn to run a series of hurdles, pounce on a specially designed box, catch the tennis ball flung forth, and run back to start. The first team to finish wins. This is a fantastic sport for dogs with energy to burn. Speed is the name of the game, but precise catching of the ball is also a factor. A word of warning, though, flyball can be highly addictive.

Of course, there are special sports for those dogs belonging to particular breeds or breed groups. **Lure coursing** for sighthounds, **scenting** for scenthounds, **cart-pulling** for large working breeds such as St. Bernards and Bernese Mountain Dogs. This list is far from exhaustive and there are large numbers of clubs that devote their time to helping breeds take part in the activities they were bred to do, be they shepherds, guard dogs or terriers. And if you are a Chihuahua eager to get active...there’s always agility!

If you and your canine friend are interested in any of the above activities, get in touch with training clubs in your area, or check out the kennel club website for links to associations for the above sports. You’ll be glad you did!