

# *Colne Valley News – October 2017*



## **Legal aspects of taking your pet in your car**

The Highway Code states that dogs should be suitably restrained when travelling in a car to ensure they do not pose a distraction to the driver or cause injury should the car stop suddenly. Although the Highway Code is not the law, breaching it can mean that an offence has been committed. Furthermore, your car insurance could then be invalidated.

A suitable means of restraint is a seat belt harness, pet carrier or dog cage. When your pet is travelling in the boot of the car, a dog guard will confine him there. Even if restrained, dogs should not be able to hang their heads out of car windows as this not only poses a danger to themselves but is also distracting to other drivers.

On arriving at your destination, it makes sense to ensure that your dog is on a lead or at least that you have a hold of his collar before allowing him out of the car. A dog jumping freely out of the car by the side of the road may be knocked by a passing vehicle, for example. A puppy will soon learn to wait in the car until invited to leave it in a controlled fashion - all part of his training, and a good habit to reinforce through adulthood.

It should be obvious that cats and other pets should never be allowed to travel loose within a vehicle. A suitable carrier should ideally be restrained within a seat belt - there are some types of carrier which incorporate slits in the top part to accommodate the belt and provide stability.

## Autumn is coming

Whilst thinking about safety of dogs in cars, it is worth remembering the need to be careful when walking along a road. As the days shorten, it is time to not only find your hat and gloves for dog walks but also 'high vis' clothing to ensure you can be seen when it is dark or the light is poor. There are also 'high vis' coats for dogs, and collars with reflective strips or lights. Facing oncoming traffic will ensure that cars approaching you will pick up your face, and the reflection from your dog's eyes, in their headlights.

## Fireworks alert

And so Guy Fawkes Night approaches once more. The information sheet produced last year has been updated and is available on the practice website as well as from reception. Please note that the 'Sounds Scary' resource is now available on the Dogs Trust website, together with treatment programmes to help dogs with sound phobias and to introduce various sounds to puppies.

Please do not hesitate to ask a member of staff if you have any concerns about your dog if he or she is anxious about fireworks. If your dog has previously had a medication prescribed for firework anxiety, please ensure you give us at least 24 hours' notice if you need repeat dispensing. You will need to make an appointment with a veterinary surgeon if your dog has not been examined in the past six months, so please think ahead.

## Letter box safety

The theme for this newsletter has developed into keeping your pet safe, with the final topic having arisen from an item in the media which you may have seen.

Several dogs are reported to have needed veterinary attention after eating chocolate sent with magazines through the post. There are often 'freebies' with magazines which may pose a risk to a pet if eaten. Items are also increasingly ordered online for delivery to our homes.

It would therefore be wise to fit a box or similar over the interior opening of your letter box to catch your post before it lands on the ground and becomes accessible to your inquisitive dog. Alternatively, a secure box outside your house will ensure your post is not investigated by your dog.

After all, your dog simply tearing up letters and bills may not cause him harm, but will certainly be an inconvenience to you. Our pets rely on us for so much, and not least their health and safety.

## Updated staff photo

We have recently updated our staff photograph as there have been a few staff changes. Please go to our Facebook page to see it and, while you are there, please 'like' and 'share' our page so that you will be one of the first to receive our latest news.

It is also on our website - [www.colnevalleyvets.co.uk](http://www.colnevalleyvets.co.uk) where you will also find other information including previous newsletters and factsheets.

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