

# ***Colne Valley News – February 2019***



## **Winter has arrived!**

The first snow fall of the winter came at the end of January with freezing temperatures by night and continuing into daylight hours. The main roads had been gritted, which ensured good road flows but road grit can pose a hazard to animals. If you have walked your dog along a road or pavement which has been gritted or salted, be sure to rinse off his or her paws once you arrive home.

As ever, be aware of the dangers of antifreeze and associated products containing ethylene glycol which is extremely poisonous, even in tiny quantities. Never be tempted to add antifreeze to a water feature as it will pose a risk to any animal, domestic or wild, which drinks from it. As the water will be flowing at a time when other sources such as ponds and outdoor bowls will be frozen, it will be a very inviting source of drinking water and could therefore have disastrous consequences. Let your water feature freeze naturally, and look forward to enjoying it in warmer temperatures.

It has become increasingly popular to dress dogs in all manner of jumpers and coats. These are fine if your dog really feels the cold, but keep checking that your dog is not overheating, and remember to undress your dog once indoors, especially if the coat has become wet whilst outside. There are some very practical towelling coats available to help dogs dry off more quickly but you need to remove them once they have done the job because wearing a wet towel obviously is not going to help either!

## New Year Resolutions follow-up

How are those New Year Resolutions faring as we move into the second month of the year? Did you resolve to help your pet achieve a better body condition score by losing some weight? Make a weight clinic appointment for your pet to be weighed and to have their body condition score assessed.

Body Condition Scoring is a system of assessing the weight of a pet in terms of their body shape and size. Your pet would be assessed and given a condition score from one to nine. A score of one would indicate an extremely thin animal, nine would suggest severe obesity and a score of four or five signifies an ideal weight.

It can be hard to be sure whether or not your pet has lost weight just by looking. Putting a number on his or her weight and learning to assess his or her body condition, together with practical advice on feeding and exercise, may be just what is needed to help your pet become healthier this year.

## Safe dog walking

Although the days are at last starting to lengthen, many of us are still walking our dogs in the dark at either end of the day. Please remember the advice given in previous newsletters about being seen in the dark when walking along roads, or even in that gloomy light at dawn and dusk. It is sensible for us to be wearing high visibility clothing. Reflective collars, leads and even dog coats are available. As many of you are no doubt aware, it is even possible to buy light-up and flashing dog collars and accessories.

Remember to look up at the stars when the night sky is clear. There have been some amazing moons recently, together with Jupiter and Venus, brightly visible around sunrise. Well worth being out early. The joys of dog ownership!



**Jupiter and Venus next to the moon on 31<sup>st</sup> January morning** (Image: Callum Austin/ @CalComms)