

Colne Valley News – June 2019



Colchester in the distance, taken from Cymbeline Meadows on 31st May 2019

Barbecue hazards are not just for dogs!

(Editor) Whilst huddled in waterproofs determinedly having a barbecue in the drizzle last weekend (19th May), it became apparent that barbecues pose a hazard not only to dogs but also to other pets. Our cat was very interested in what was happening, jumping onto the table to inspect the food and thinking about leaping from there onto the barbecue which would obviously not have ended well. Needless to say, he was lifted down from the table and sent on his way into a safer part of the garden, but there are so many hazards associated with the whole barbecue situation for everyone, us and our pets.

The barbecue itself poses a burn hazard. There may be a fat trap underneath it which will attract attention but could end up with a pet causing serious illness if the contents are consumed. The packaging from foods to be cooked on the barbecue will be of interest to pets but may cause a blockage if eaten, requiring hospitalisation and surgery. Table scraps left unattended at an easy height for scavenging, people passing bones and left-over food to dogs begging at their side. Kebab skewers are an interesting hazard as dogs will eat them and they have had to be removed surgically from within intestines and notably once at this practice from a dog's rear-end. Breakages can occur from crockery and glass being used outside, with the potential to cut paws. Alcohol can even be drunk from glasses left unattended at a height accessible to pets.

There are also the fire pits which are certainly welcome on cooler nights but vulnerable to being knocked over. They can also pose a serious burn hazard for waggy tails. Candles may be lit to add atmosphere which are, again, potential targets for tails as well as other parts of the body.

Many, if not all, of these risks could be applied to other species including cats and people so it is wise to have our wits about us whilst enjoying a barbecue.

Leishmaniosis

Leishmaniosis is a potentially fatal disease of dogs (and cats) and any dog travelling abroad to the southern parts of Europe is potentially at risk. The disease is spread by sand flies which are not present in the UK but they are common in warmer climates, particularly around the Mediterranean (e.g. southern France, Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, and the Middle East). Protection against sand flies is therefore advised if taking your pet to southern Europe and we recommend a licensed spot-on or collar. There is also a Leishmania vaccination course available which needs to be started at least ten weeks before travel, with the dog at least six months old when the first vaccine is given. Annual booster vaccination is needed to keep protection up-to-date.

Additionally, there has been a report of leishmaniosis contracted by a dog in this country which had never travelled abroad. The dog was, however, living with another dog rescued from abroad which subsequently died from leishmaniosis. There would therefore appear to have been dog-to-dog transmission, a worrying occurrence.

Holidays

With all the uncertainty over the effects of Brexit on the regulations for taking pets abroad, it is easy to overlook the needs of pets who do not travel with their owners when they go away. If you plan on putting your pet into a boarding establishment whilst you are away, then book the slot when you book your holiday because spaces can become scarce. You will also need to ensure your pet will be up-to-date with vaccinations for the dates that he or she will be boarding, and that you have sufficient amounts of any medication.

Contact us in good time if you are unsure about needing an appointment for a booster, vaccination course or medication review.

Happy holidays!

