

# Lawton and Stoakes

Partners:-

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*Veterinary Education and Training Services (International) Ltd—T/a Lawton and Stoakes—Company Number 03431621*

## NEWSLETTER SPRING 2016

### Staff News

Our Head Nurse **Fiona Gordon RVN** is leaving us after 21 years at Lawton and Stoakes. Fiona joined us in 1995 and studied at Writtle College for 2 years gaining her Veterinary Nurse Qualification. Fiona made her way up through the ranks to become Head Nurse and returned to work part time after her two children were born. We wish her well as she becomes a full time mum.

**Jamie Biggs RVN** is stepping into Fiona's shoes to become Head Nurse and we are sure he will fill the role admirably.

We have two new nursing assistants to introduce.

**Lily Knell** is hoping to start the Veterinary Nursing Level 3 Diploma in February 2017 in order to qualify as a Registered Veterinary Nurse. She has 4 dogs one of which is a rescue, 3 cats and one rabbit. Lily has already completed a Level 3 Diploma in Animal Management and so has had experience with animals of all kinds. Lily's ambition upon qualifying is to work abroad in poorer countries assisting Veterinary Surgeons in places such as Africa.

**Morgan Cooper** is starting as a Veterinary Nurse assistant in March. She is currently undertaking a Level 3 diploma in Animal Care and would also like to move on to do the Veterinary Nursing Qualification.



### STAFF

#### VETERINARY SURGEONS

**Dr. Martin Lawton**

B.Vet.Med; Cert.V.Ophthal; Cert L.A.S;  
C.Biol; M.S.B; D.ZooMed; FRCVS

**Dr. Lynne Stoakes** B.Vet.Med. MRCVS

**Dr. Moira Kelly** MA VetMB MRCVS

**Dr. Noemie McDermott** B.Vet.Med.  
MRCVS

#### RECEPTIONISTS

**Julie Austin**

**Coral Wilkinson**

#### NURSES

**Jamie Biggs** RVN Head Nurse

**Laura Bouchier** Nursing Assistant

**Lily Knell** Nursing Assistant

**Morgan Cooper** Nursing Assistant

**Rachael** our trainee nurse is taking a break from her training to have her first baby so we wish her the best of luck in her new role as a mum and hope to welcome her back after her maternity leave to continue her studies.

**Martin** will be away for 2 weeks in March as he attends the Western States Veterinary Conference in Las Vegas.

With so many new staff to train up we appreciate your patience especially at busy times!

## What's New?

We are constantly striving to provide our patients with the best care possible and to this end we have upgraded our intra-operative heat pads with a new "bear hugger". This device uses warm air through a blanket to keep the patient warm during surgical procedures leading to improved recovery times and patient outcomes.



Dr Lawton has invested in a new Slit Lamp. This replaces the older model, which had seen better days! This hand-held machine is used to examine the structures of the eye looking for diseases of the cornea, iris, lens or retina in a procedure known as biomicroscopy.



## IS A VEGETARIAN DIET SUITABLE FOR YOUR PET?



Any pet owner considering feeding their pet cat or dog a vegetarian diet should seek veterinary advice, experts recommend, to help avoid severe health implications from essential nutrient deficiencies in many selected diets.

As omnivores (meaning they eat meat and vegetables), dogs can safely be fed on a vegetarian diet. It is not easy, however, to ensure a balanced diet as diets without meat are often deficient in essential nutrients. It is therefore advisable to talk to your vet about the diet you're considering so that the level of vitamins, minerals and essential amino acids can be checked to make sure it is safe for your dog in the long term.

Cats have a very different metabolism to dogs and are considered obligate carnivores (meaning they have to eat meat). It therefore cannot be recommended to feed your cat a vegetarian diet. Cats have very high protein requirements and certain amino-acids such as Taurine cannot be met with a non-meat diet, often leading to neurological, fertility, fur, skin and eye problems.

Given that a vegetarian diet with inappropriate protein or amino acid levels can prove fatal in both dogs and cats it is really recommended to seek advice before deciding upon a vegetarian diet for your pet.

## ALERT FOR TORTOISE OWNERS

Owing to the unseasonably mild winter weather many tortoises were late in going into hibernation and consequently may have used up some of the reserves they laid down over the summer months. This raises concerns over their ability to survive the hibernation period and **Lawton and Stoakes** are therefore advising all tortoise owners to check for signs of activity in their pets. If you notice signs of urination, faeces or weight loss of more than a few grams it may be wise to artificially wake your tortoise and keep them warm until the spring. If you have concerns over your tortoise's health please telephone for advice or for a copy of our "Over Wintering tortoise" leaflet.

## Microchip reminder

From 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016 it will be compulsory for all dogs over 8 weeks of age to be microchipped and registered on an authorised database. Failure to do so, or to update your database-listed details, could result in a notice served by the police and a £500 fine.

Lawton and Stoakes Veterinary Surgeons are therefore offering a free-health check with every dog microchipped before 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016 (by appointment only). Pop-in and see us or give us a call to find out more and hear about our other microchipping special offers.

## Exposure to passive smoking linked with increased risk of diseases in pets

It is well known that being exposed to cigarette smoke is associated with health risks for humans. However, following the publication of a new study looking at the health of companion animals living in homes with tobacco smokers, vets have been advised to discuss with owners during routine health examinations whether their pets are exposed to passive smoking and the risks involved to pets if this is the case. The study showed a significantly higher risk of certain diseases, including weight gain and some forms of cancer, in pets exposed to passive smoking at home. Whilst previous studies had shown dogs living in a smoking household can take in significant amounts of smoke, the study showed cats (even those with access to the outdoors) are even more affected - possibly due to their increased self grooming which can increase the amount of smoke taken into the body.

The study showed consistently smoking away from pets did reduce the amount of smoke taken into the body but didn't protect against exposure to the toxins. If you are concerned that your pets may be affected and would like to discuss the risks of passive smoking to your pets please feel free to ask one of our vets!



## Tom and Jerry Syndrome

This is an unusual condition of older cats in which certain noises can stimulate seizure activity. It is named after the cartoon cat that was depicted being startled by sudden noises.

Typical noises include rustling tin foil or clinking metal objects together. It is thought that cats evolved the ability to hear high pitched noises in order to hear the squeaks of mice. If the noise cannot be eliminated from then anti-epileptic medicine may help.

## KIDS CORNER

This Issue we have a spring themed word search. Can you spot the seven words listed below?

E	T	A	N	B	C	H	I	C	K
R	A	L	T	G	F	R	K	W	M
S	D	E	A	H	D	E	T	J	H
T	N	S	N	M	F	I	A	W	A
C	E	H	K	I	B	C	M	B	R
D	S	T	Y	B	J	N	O	L	E
E	T	N	A	H	A	N	F	O	B
G	V	R	N	A	D	E	G	G	C
B	F	R	O	G	S	P	A	W	N
W	E	T	B	T	F	A	N	D	P

LAMB      EGG      RABBIT      HARE  
CHICK      FROGSPAWN      NEST

## EXOTIC SPOT- Chipmunks Dr Moira Kelly

Chipmunks are small, decorative rodents of the squirrel family. There are two species of Chipmunks commonly kept in captivity- Siberian Chipmunks from Siberia and Asia and Eastern Chipmunks from Northern USA and Canada. These rodents grow up to 30cm (including a 10cm tail), weighing around 70-120g and can live about 10 years in captivity.

Chipmunks are diurnal (active during the day), very energetic and curious so the cage provided should be as large as possible, with multiple levels and an exercise wheel to allow them to run, climb and jump. Although often solitary in the wild, chipmunks often seem to fare better in captivity with a companion. They can be kept in pairs of the opposite sex or a group of one male with up to 3 females. However, these groups should be established when young or adults should be introduced gradually to reduce the risk of fighting.

They should have a wire mesh cage with a solid floor lined with bedding material such as paper towel or straw; the mesh should be no larger than 15mm x 15mm to prevent limb injuries and shouldn't be coated or painted as this can be ingested when your chipmunk chews its cage and could be harmful. Rocks, branches, tunnels, ropes and tubes should be supplied to provide environmental enrichment for your chipmunk, as long as there are no sharp edges and they are secured well to ensure they don't fall on your pet! A dust bath should be provided for 30 minutes every day or every other day - a tray of sand (or 9 parts sand to 1 part sterilized topsoil) to remove excess oil and moisture from your chipmunk's coat. Your chipmunk also requires a number of bedrooms or refuges- such as a small box full of bedding, hammocks and pouches give them plenty of places to sleep and hide. The cage should be spot-cleaned daily with any large areas of wet bedding and uneaten fruit or vegetables removed, and fully cleaned out using a pet-safe disinfectant once a week.

Chipmunks need a varied diet consisting of about 50% cereals (such as oats, barley, millet sprays, wheat), fruit and vegetables (such as apple, pear, peaches and plums, bananas, oranges, carrot, sweet potato), nuts (unsalted, such as pine nuts, walnuts, peanuts) and a cuttlefish can be placed in the cage can provide minerals as well as helping to wear down teeth.

Fresh drinking water should be available at all times from a securely attached bottle (protected from freezing if in an outside enclosure!).

Pet chipmunks should be handled and weighed regularly to ensure that any health problems can be picked up promptly. If bringing your chipmunk into the vets it's best to bring them in a small container to make catching your chipmunk easier and less stressful!



### STAR PET

This is Onyx who was brought to us as he had a urinary stone stuck in his urethra. He was referred to Dr. Lawton for delicate surgery and we were so pleased to hear that he is doing well! His owners report he is very bright and lively as the photos they sent in show! Well done Onyx!

