



Welcomes and farewells

Many of you will have met Brendan Ruban, one of our general practice clinic veterinary surgeons. Brendan joined us nearly 18 months ago, initially as a locum to cover for Laura Shaw's maternity leave. He has become a popular member of our veterinary team, not least with his clients.

Brendan is now entering a new phase of his life and is moving near friends and family in the south of England where he and his partner intend to start a family of their own. We wish Brendan well for the future and thank him for his dedication, hard work and excellent patient care over the last 18 months.

We are very pleased to welcome Noella Cooper as Brendan's replacement. Noella has been in small animal practice for 10 years and holds the post-graduate qualification of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Certificate in Small Animal Medicine. Noella will join our first-opinion clinic at the beginning of August and she will be teaming up with veterinary surgeons Sally Hutton and Laura Shaw, who returned from maternity leave earlier in the year.



Open Evenings are running for clients once a month throughout this year. **Page 2**



Pet Drawing Competition we received over 300 entries in three different age groups, and the standard of entries was excellent. **Page 4**

New, exciting plans for enhanced emergency, night and weekend cover!

We are delighted to announce that, from October 2010 onwards, we will for the first time be providing our own on-site emergency out-of-hours cover for our primary clinic clients and their pets.

Instead of having to go to Southside Emergency Clinic, you will be able to contact a Willows' nurse and veterinary surgeon directly during the night, over weekends and on Bank Holidays. Should your pet need to be seen at these times, you will come to our hospital and see one of our own full-time veterinary surgeons.

We are recruiting four additional veterinary surgeons and numerous members of nursing and other support staff in order to provide this service and to significantly enhance our out-of-hours patient and client care.

From October, in addition to the current provision of nursing care on premises, there will always be both veterinary and nursing staff awake in the hospital, caring for in-patients, **24 hours a day, 365 days a year.**

We are continually striving to give the best quality of care that we can at all times and to constantly improve our service. Please feel free to contact us if you have any queries about our services or concerns about your pet.



All new informative website for those of you who may not yet have visited our website, you are missing an exciting treat! **Page 4**

cat waiting area



Willows caring for cats

Some of you may not be aware that in our new hospital we have a separate, air conditioned, fully ventilated ward dedicated to cats. In addition, we now have a designated waiting area for cats in our spacious waiting room. This is well away from the busy entrance and will help your cat to feel as relaxed as possible on his or her visit to see us.

Should your cat need to be hospitalised, we also take every care to ensure that we keep exposure to other animals to a minimum and that the environment is as quiet as possible. This is made easier through the availability of a dedicated quiet room for administering anaesthetics etc to our feline patients and our staff are always on hand to make a fuss of your cat and make him or her feel 'at home'!

Visit the Willows website for comprehensive information on looking after your cat...

www.willows.uk.net/cat

*...air conditioned,
fully ventilated ward
dedicated to cats*

Open Evenings

We are running Open Evenings for clients once a month throughout this year. You are cordially invited to a guided tour of our hospital with one of our vets, during which you can get a 'behind the scenes' look at our wonderful new facilities.

If you would like to book a place or places for yourself and perhaps friends or family, please either contact reception on **0121 712 7070** or follow the links on our website: www.willows.uk.net



As safe as houses? Potential hazards to your pet around the home

Did you know that both chocolate and grapes can be poisonous to dogs?

To learn more, read on...

Unfortunately, cats and dogs are not uncommonly poisoned by products in the home – some of these might be expected to be poisonous whereas there are others which are harmless to humans but potentially harmful to animals and so can pose unexpected dangers to our pets. Dogs are not infrequent victims of poisoning due to their scavenging nature, whereas cats are rather more picky about what they eat. However, cats do occasionally eat things which are bad for them. In addition, well-meaning owners will occasionally accidentally give poisonous products to their pets without realising the potential implications.

Chocolate is a very common cause of poisoning in dogs. Chocolate contains a chemical called theobromine which is very toxic to dogs. Dogs with chocolate poisoning may vomit, start to tremble and become hyperactive. Their heart starts beating very quickly and in severe cases seizures and death can occur. Recently, there have been health warnings about

cocoa bark matting and cocoa shells which are sometimes used as ornamental garden mulch – some dogs have eaten these and suffered theobromine poisoning.

The high levels of caffeine in **coffee** can also be toxic to dogs. Take care how you dispose of coffee grounds from coffee makers. The clinical signs are similar to chocolate poisoning.

A fairly recent and surprising toxin is one found in **grapes**. Poisons in this fruit have caused kidney failure in some dogs. Sultanas, raisins and currants, which are all dried grapes, can also cause poisoning, so keep your fruitcake in a safe place!

Another potentially poisonous product is **chewing gum**. The sugar substitute xylitol which is found in sugar-free gums can cause a massive release of insulin in

dogs. This can cause the blood sugar levels to drop very low, resulting in weakness, seizures and even death. Swift action is required to stabilise these patients.

Ethylene glycol is a chemical found in antifreeze and similar products. It has a sweet taste which can tempt both cats and dogs. If consumed, ethylene glycol can cause serious kidney damage. Care must be taken when using and storing these products.

If cats get **oil** or **petrol** contamination on their coat they will fastidiously clean this off. Unfortunately this can cause a whole range of problems. The skin can 'burn' and peel away, the oil burns the mouth, throat and gut and can also damage the liver. If your cat gets covered in oil, contact us immediately. Try to prevent licking. Your vet will reduce contamination by clipping and bathing. The cat will also need supportive medical treatment.

Rodenticides or **rat baits** are both deadly and tasty to their intended victims and, sadly, to some dogs and cats by causing severe bleeding. If caught early enough, the problem can be successfully treated.

Slug baits are extremely toxic and even with prompt treatment this poisoning can be fatal. Poisoning occurs most often when an inquisitive dog gets into the shed and chews the packet, so do remember to store poisons at high level, out of reach of pets as well as children.

Lilies, although beautiful, can be deadly for cats. Cats do occasionally chew on plants, including lilies, in the home and garden (just as they eat grass in the garden). So make sure you put lilies where your cat can't get at them and won't be dusted by the pollen.

Some **medications** which are used frequently in humans and which can be bought over the counter at the chemist can be deadly in our pets. The worst offenders for this are pain killers such as **paracetamol** and **ibuprofen** – *just because you can buy them without prescription does not mean they are safe, especially for our pets!*

Visit the Willows website for comprehensive information on looking after your pet...

www.willows.uk.net/gps



Chocolate

Coffee



Grapes



Chewing Gum



Ethylene glycol

Oil/Petrol



Rodenticides

Slug baits



Lilies

Medications



Pet Drawing Competition



As part of *National Pet Month 2010* we held a children's Pet Drawing Competition. We received over 300 entries in three different age groups, and the standard of entries was excellent. If you would like to view all of the entries as well as the 9 prize winners, they are all on display on our website at:

www.willows.uk.net *Please have a look – they are wonderful, and will raise a smile!* The prize winning drawings are also currently on display in our waiting room at the practice.



Grace Hyde
Aged 6
First Prize - under 6's



Saffron Haughton
Aged 8
First Prize - 6-10's



Emily Whalley
Aged 13
First Prize - 11-15's

Specialist supervision of anaesthetic procedures

Since we moved into our new hospital in August 2009, we have been in the fortunate position of having specialist-level veterinary supervision of anaesthetic procedures, critical care and pain management for all our in-patients. We plan to increase the number of staff in the anaesthesia department from two to three by the end of this year. In addition, we

have state-of-the-art anaesthetic monitoring equipment readily to hand all around the hospital, so if your pet needs an anaesthetic for any reason, you can rest assured that we will be doing everything we can to make the procedure as safe as possible and to optimise your pet's post-operative comfort.



All-new informative Willows Website

For those of you who may not yet have visited our website, you are missing an exciting treat! It is crammed with useful information, not only about the practice staff, opening times, news items, payment policies etc, but also about pet care and health issues.

We have well over 200 downloadable web pages, written by our own staff, on topics

ranging from advice on [Worming](#), [Diets](#), [How to Look After Your Puppy](#), [Adult Cat](#) etc, through to [Fireworks Advice](#), [Household Poisons](#), and a wealth of information about a whole range of diseases such as [Kidney Failure](#), [Slipped Discs](#), [Cataracts](#) and [Diabetes](#). In addition there is information about what to expect if your pet is coming into the hospital to have an operation or a blood test, for example.

To access this information, just follow the links at www.willows.uk.net

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www.willows.uk.net

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