



# Veterinary Centre

SPRING 2017

Call us on 01922 411755

387vets.com



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## NEWS

### Jo excels in Customer Service

Huge congratulations to our receptionist Jo who has passed her Level 3 Customer Services NVQ after two years of work-based study, regular assessments and in-practice observations by an external tutor. The course focused on understanding different facets of Customer Service, researching related legislation and looking at ways of improving performance and customer service skills.

Jo was awarded College of Animal Welfare 'Student of the Year' for her course, and although the qualification is a pass only award, her tutor wrote on course completion that 'Jo would be a Distinction all round!' A brilliant achievement, Jo, and very well deserved.



### Author on board!

We were very excited when the September edition of 'The Veterinary Nurse' arrived in practice, as one of the key published authors was our own Head Nurse, Nicky Smith! Focus on mental health is very big in the veterinary world at the moment.

Nicky's article was about research she had undertaken to establish whether veterinary nurses are at risk of being negatively affected long-term by emotionally challenging experiences at work, with the aim of improving mental wellbeing across the veterinary profession as a whole. From over 990 responses via a targeted internet survey, Nicky was able to conclude that qualified nurses are at risk of suffering from a condition called compassion fatigue - the loss of ability to nurture and a feeling of low morale and frustration. However, she also concluded that job satisfaction can really help in maintaining a mentally healthy workforce. Good news.

### Christmas collection thank you

Thanks to your amazing generosity, our 'Give a pet a Christmas Dinner' campaign was once again a huge success - literally! You donated over 500 tins and pouches of wet food and 76kg of dry food, pet toys and blankets for local homeless cats and dogs waiting to find a new forever home. All donations were split



Jodie with Anna Whitehouse from Rugeley Cats Society.

between Rugeley Cats Society, Ashmore Rescue for Cats (ARC) and Ravens Rescue who are all incredibly grateful for your support.

Anna Whitehouse: "On behalf of us all at Rugeley Cats

Society THANK YOU to 387 Vets for choosing us as one of the lucky rescues to receive donations and THANK YOU to all clients who donated xx"

### 387 Vets now offering acupuncture for pets



Following a four day Association of British Veterinary Acupuncturists Course (and practising point-finding on dogs, horses and fellow delegates!) our vet Carole is really excited to be able to offer an acupuncture service for your pets.

"Having found acupuncture very helpful for my own muscular aches, I'd been looking for the opportunity to be able to offer it to my patients for several years.

"It's really exciting to have something extra to offer alongside conventional medicine to treat animals with a range of chronic diseases, especially where we are struggling to control their symptoms."

As well as being used as a pain management therapy, for some conditions acupuncture can be given as sole treatment, whilst for others, it acts as a complementary therapy to alleviate suffering. Acupuncture can be used for almost any chronic (long-term) disease where conventional medicine is not controlling symptoms, such as inflammatory bowel disease, chronic allergic skin or ear problems and seizures. Carole is already giving acupuncture sessions to pets with a range of illnesses, including arthritis, epilepsy and skin infections.

A minimum of four sessions of acupuncture is recommended (45 minute introductory appointment, with further appointments lasting 30 minutes) for patients to see real benefit from the treatment.

Please contact the practice if you feel acupuncture could be of value to your pet.

### 387 Vets wins top UK team awards

We were delighted, in the Autumn, to be awarded 'Best Veterinary Team - UK', and 'Award for Excellence in Customer Service - UK' in Global Health and Pharma Magazine's Animal Health Awards 2016. The two awards recognise our innovative approach to offering the best standard of service to our clients.

We constantly invest in new equipment, commission mystery shopping to benchmark our customer service standards, run clinical audits, invest in whole team and individual training courses, encourage personal and professional development and work hard on delivering a personal, friendly service where people and pets feel comfortable and at home.

Thanks to you, we have over 1000 testimonials to view online, were voted Best Vets in the UK last year, and with this new accolade, can well and truly say we are a multi-award winning team!





## We know it's hard to say goodbye

Losing a pet is incredibly upsetting, whether it's from a sudden illness or accident, or after a long-term condition. And making the decision to euthanase a pet, even when you know it is the right time and the kindest option, is one of the most difficult and courageous decisions a pet owner can ever take.

We know that getting the right support when you come in for an end of life appointment is crucial, and that it's a last private, special time with your pet. With this in mind, we've put the whole team through specialist training with Compassion Understood, a company delivering best practice training on end of life care, to help us to improve your experience.

The training has made us think about things from an owner's perspective, and whilst we'll continue to review our service, here are some of the changes we've already made to be as comforting as we can when the time comes to say goodbye to your pet:

- **Longer appointments:** Half an hour given to end of life appointments wherever possible.
- **Quieter times of day:** We aim to book end of life appointments at the end of our consulting sessions when there are fewer clients on site. We'll direct you into one of our consulting rooms where you can wait quietly for your appointment.
- **Phone-ahead service:** If you do have to come at a busier time of day, please ring ahead and we'll escort you from the car park into the practice through our side door.
- **Company:** One of our team is happy to stay with you while you wait for your appointment.
- **Privacy:** You will never be expected to queue at reception to settle your account.
- **Sedation:** Our standard service includes sedation prior to euthanasia to make your pet's passing a more gentle, peaceful experience.
- **Post euthanasia support:** Our bereavement pack will give you information about coping with your loss and where you can turn for more support.
- **Private exit:** We'll escort you out through our side door which leads directly to the car park, and by-passes the need to exit through the waiting room.

## Feelings of grief

Everyone's relationship with their pet is unique and our experiences of loss can be very different. Whilst some people will come to terms with the loss of a pet more quickly, others may be deeply affected for an extended period of time and find the grieving process much more protracted and painful. It's important to acknowledge all responses are completely valid: there is no right or wrong response to pet loss.

### Some common emotions surrounding pet loss:

**Sadness:** Most people will feel this, and it can bring a sense of loneliness and a temporary inability or lack of energy to do anything.

**Anger:** This could be directed at the vet or the practice, at the disease your pet may have suffered from, your family - or even yourself. Trying to let go of anger will help you move through the grieving process.

**Guilt:** This is a common emotion, whether you feel guilty for taking the decision to euthanase, that you feel you should have done it sooner, or if your pet had an accident, that you could have prevented their death. Be kind to yourself, as you made the decision that was right for you at that time.

**Denial:** Whether you try to keep yourself busy so you don't have to think about your loss, or you try and suppress feelings of upset, it's only prolonging healing. Seek support and gently examine your feelings to help you heal.

For more information about grief and pet loss, as well as preparing for your pet's end of life, visit Compassion Understood's website at [www.compassionunderstood.com](http://www.compassionunderstood.com)

If you feel you cannot get past any of these emotions, that you are losing perspective or that you are withdrawing from normal daily life, it's really important to seek help. Ask us for contact details of supportive organisations. Alternatively, visit the 'Where to Find Support' page on Compassion Understood's website ([www.compassionunderstood.com/page/where-to-find-support](http://www.compassionunderstood.com/page/where-to-find-support)). Here you'll find information about access to a range of bereavement support services as well as pet loss forums where you can connect with other owners sharing similar emotions to you.



The 387 team on presentation of their Platinum Certificate, the highest Compassion Understood accreditation



## Bye-Bye Buster Collars...

If your pet is coming in for surgery, **Medical Pet Shirts** are a great way to stop them licking wounds or worrying at stitches post-op and are a much more comfortable and less cumbersome alternative to traditional buster collars (plastic cones). Shirts are blue for dogs and red for cats and range from around **£15-£19**. We stock all standard sizes for dogs and cats, and can order in non-standard sizes for large or very small breeds. Order yours pre-op!

"Penny (the cat) was wearing one for over two weeks after her op. It was so much better for her as she could still eat, jump and wash herself without the risk of her doing more damage to us or herself!" Penny's owner.

## New anaesthetic monitoring machine enhances patient safety

For many years, we have used separate anaesthetic monitoring machines to give our vets and nurses vital information about how much oxygen is in the blood, how much carbon dioxide is in the breath, the patients' blood pressure reading and what the electrical read-out of the heart looks like. This has enabled us to fine tune the anaesthetic depth and amount of oxygen the patient is breathing, which has been particularly important since we upgraded our choice of anaesthetic gas to sevoflurane in 2014.

At the end of 2016 we invested in a new anaesthetic monitoring machine known as a 'multi parameter' monitor. This now gives us all this information in one place as well as enabling us to make even more adjustments (such as intravenous fluid flow rate). The machine makes anaesthesia **safer for your pets**, especially if they are undergoing longer operations.

