

## Your New Puppy

### GETTING GOOD ADVICE

Having a new pup in the house is a great experience, and there are lots of things to consider if it is to become the start of a long and happy friendship. Getting it right and obtaining impartial advice is important, particularly today with more reliable information on medical and dietary matters, and with a better understanding of training methods. What you decide today may have a bearing on events many years later, and could make the difference between having a great new member of your family, or becoming governed by his or her every move for their entire life.

What makes for a good pet and what certainly doesn't is where we have a wealth of understanding and we would welcome you tapping into our knowledge, training and experience so that you avoid the pitfalls and maximise the benefits. Everyone benefits – a happy dog, a happy family and a practice that can follow your dog and watch him or her grow up.

### PACK! PACK! PACK!

Consider the pup when you first get him or her home. Up to that point they will have come from a 'pack' of other dogs, and behaviour based on instinct will rule. In their new home they then have a complete about-turn and have to learn that they are now in the human 'pack' that is your family. Such a change will need careful guidance, lots of patience and a clear understanding of the situation. Kindness and consistency is vital, so that the puppy understands the rules- remember if you don't want your 60kg adult dog to get into bed with you- don't let your puppy do it!

### DIETARY ADVICE

When it comes to diet, no two dogs are the same, and tailoring their needs for optimum growth is not just a matter of what tastes good – it is now a science. We now know that early diet has knock-on effects some ten years down the line and improvements in diet mean that dogs do live healthier and for longer if they are allowed to eat properly from the start.

For example, we now know that too fast a growth results in long legs but poor joints, and problems from wear and tear start to develop earlier. Furthermore, the dietary requirements of pups of the larger breeds differ significantly from those of a smaller adult stature and certain breeds have individual problems that can be avoided simply by proper nutrition.

### VACCINATION

To prevent your puppy from picking up certain potentially fatal diseases we can vaccinate them. Two doses are needed, two weeks apart. We like to vaccinate them from 8 weeks of age. It can be done earlier but this does not necessarily result in you being able to take your puppy out and about any earlier. Vaccination is vital to prevent your puppy catching diseases from other dogs. The incidence of the deadly diseases, distemper and parvo virus, in this area is quite low but we do see cases which can result in the death of a much loved new pet.

### BEHAVIOUR

The most important thing is to get your pup used to other dogs and experiences as soon as possible! But do it safely – particularly when they may not have had all their vaccinations. Chat to us first about what you want to do. Training a pup means *thinking like a pup!* How they see the world and how they interpret your commands may differ from what you see and mean to say. They will want you to become part of their pack, but you will doubtless find it easier if they become part of your pack! Remember – the relation with your dog will hopefully last a good twelve years, so prevent annoying habits before they annoy! Attending the puppy party, which you will be invited to following the puppy's vaccination will help in this process and this is the ideal