

# social skills



Summer 2013



A chewed slipper, puddles on the floor, and squeaky toys strewn around the room. Your new puppy has arrived in the household, and after the morning's play of fun is now looking very cute asleep on your sofa! Life certainly changes when a new pet joins the family. From the time those small paws step through the door, your pet will depend on you for a lifetime of love, food, security and healthcare.

This young one will also need your support in experiencing new encounters and some very important socialisation, particularly in those early days of puppyhood.

**Learning Curve** At first everything is a little scary for your puppy, especially being away from Mum and the rest of the litter, but it is usually not too long before they settle into their new home. They become braver and with a naturally inquisitive nature, show little fear at 'testing the ground', even if it is met with a swipe on the nose from the cat. Lesson One....approach the cat less boisterously next time! Under three months of age, they are most responsive to accepting new encounters. So the sooner they have social interaction with people, other animals, supervised meetings with children, exposure to noise and experience of the world in general, the better.

**Little by Little** Once your puppy's vaccination course is complete, they can venture outside. Gradually introduce new experiences like lead walking in the town countryside and park - travelling in the car - crowds and traffic - ducks on the pond. Remember they are only young. At times your puppy may become a little anxious or over-excited. Consider their character. Shy or confident? Just like young children, a puppy's attention span can be short, they tire easily too, and although life is very interesting and thrilling, it may also be overwhelming.

**The Key** Work to establish a positive reaction from the encounter. Negative responses can generate fear, which might be difficult to rectify at a later stage. Familiarising your puppy with a wide range of experiences will help with their development and behaviour, so they mature into happy, socialised adult dogs.

*If you would like to learn more, please call the practice and a member of our friendly team will be happy to help you.*

## Welcome Jana and Amanda

We'd like to introduce the latest additions to join our staff team here at HillPark, **Vet Jana Hornakova** MVDr MRCVS, and **Receptionist Amanda Tubby**.

**Jana** has been at our Harold Hill branch since September 2012. She likes soft tissue surgery, and with a particular interest in Internal Medicine, enjoys the challenge of investigating and diagnosing conditions, followed by the successful treatment of your pets. Jana qualified from Veterinary and Pharmaceutical University, Brno, Czech Republic. Initial thoughts were to study human medicine, but as pets were a big part of her home life, the veterinary world became the winner. We are sure the chameleon with respiratory disease, and a more recently treated African Pygmy Hedeghog with painful sores, are very happy she became an 'animal doctor!' In the future, Jana would like to gain a certificate in Internal medicine, or imaging, as x-rays and ultrasound are a favourite of hers.

Outside of work, she is a keen violinist, loves going to the theatre and watching a good film with her pet cat Mushka, who only has three legs. Found as a stray in this condition, it is a complete mystery how this happened to him, but Mushka is now happy and coping with life very well.



The new face you may have seen on reception is **Amanda**, who joined our front desk in February. She previously worked for the RSPCA Campbell Clinic, covering reception, and assisting vets with restraint, blood tests, and is also qualified in microchipping. Amanda has great experience in helping people, and enjoys meeting all our clients with their pets. Co-ordinating reception to help the smooth daily running of the practice, she is very happy to answer your queries and particularly loves to hear all your pet stories. With a few pets of her own, she has tales to tell about Jessica her rescue Staffordshire bull terrier and the four cats, Fudge, Ruby, Cadbury and Willow.



### Harold Hill

01708 344455 01708 386046  
Monday to Friday 9am - 6.30pm  
Saturday 9am - 12.30pm

### Elm Park

01708 458424 01708 438039  
Monday to Friday 9am - 6.30pm  
Saturday 4pm - 6.30pm  
Sunday 10am - 6.30pm

Consultations by Appointment  
24 hour 7 day  
Emergency Service

www.hillparkvets.co.uk  
01708 344455

# ★★★★★ Five Star Accommodation for your Rabbits

At local DIY stores people are found buying anything from comfy cushions to draught excluder, to help make their homes a more pleasant environment to live in. For those pet rabbits living outdoors, they require basic comforts too, plus a whole lot more!

## ★ Natures Needs

Rabbits are inquisitive, active, intelligent and sociable. In the wild they always live with other rabbits. So one pet rabbit kept in a cramped wooden hutch at the bottom of a garden, is leading a very lonely and unhappy life indeed. Rabbits need company, and in captivity male and female pairs work well, provided they are neutered. They also need to forage for food, dig, feel secure, hide, hop, stand on their hind legs and explore.



## ★ Just a hutch?

A rabbits' accommodation must provide opportunities to allow expression of natural behaviour. They require choice and control within their own home. All of this can be achieved through quantity and quality of space, plus environmental enrichment.

## ★ The Ideal Home

This must suit the number of rabbits you are planning to keep, their size, age and any medical conditions. They will require - **Raised, secure and**

**adequate sized housing** for privacy and safety,

together with an **outdoor enclosure**. Both must allow your rabbits to:

- ✓ **easily stand up on their hind legs**
- ✓ **lie fully outstretched**
- ✓ **make at least 3 consecutive hops**
- ✓ **turn around unhindered**

Visit [www.rabbitwelfare.co.uk](http://www.rabbitwelfare.co.uk) for full information on housing and run size.

## ★ During building consider -

The type of materials/preservation treatments are **not toxic** or will cause injury to your rabbits. **Ventilation and provision of shade** for both in and outdoor areas, as they can suffer heatstroke in the summer. Will the housing be **warm and draught free in winter**; dry, strong and **escape/predator proof**? Positioning of outside enclosure, as **some plants are poisonous** to rabbits.

**Hiding places** like cardboard boxes, large tubes etc. plus platforms, separate areas for eating, sleeping and toileting.

## ★ Environmental Enrichments

will help your rabbits express their natural behaviour. **An earth pit** - rabbits love to dig! Provide tree stumps, twigs and suitable toys. **Encourage 'foraging of food'** by filling boxes, cardboard tubes or racks with hay. Place food in puzzle feeders or scatter the pellets amongst hay.

**Remember to regularly inspect their accommodation for damage or hazards that require repair or removal.**

By providing a suitable home to meet all your rabbits needs mentally and physically, you are helping to keep your pets healthy and happy.

**Please protect you rabbits against infectious disease** Myxomatosis and VHD are very distressing, and sadly in some cases can be fatal. We can protect your rabbit using the latest combined vaccine, plus a free health check **for just £25.**



Protect your rabbits against **Myxomatosis** and **VHD** for just **£25**

## Website News

Hillpark were recently stars for a day, when a photographer visited our practices to capture us all in action. The reason behind the 'shoot' was for the refurbishment and update of our website. There are lots of new photos, and a number of additional features, including online pet registration. So log on to [www.hillparkvets.co.uk](http://www.hillparkvets.co.uk), and view our fresh new look website!



*If you have been missing the friendly face of our former Veterinary Nurse Lisa, here is a beautiful photo with her little girl Evie, who is now 6 months old. Lisa left last year for the birth of Evie, and since then just loves the new role of Mum to her bundle of joy! They often both pop in to the practice to see us all, along with the other former practice regular, Lisa's three-legged Border terrier Lily.*



## Just a reminder about Sunday Opening

Our Elm Park branch is open from 10 - 6.30 every Sunday. We are happy to see Harold Hill clients there too.

1 Lindfield Road **Harold Hill** RM3 9BJ

89 Coronation Drive **Elm Park** RM12 5BT



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