



# ShetlandVets

## NEWS

Bixter, Shetland • [www.shetlandvets.co.uk](http://www.shetlandvets.co.uk) • WINTER 2015

### New Surgery Hours

#### Bixter Opening Times 01595810456

**Monday – Friday:** 8.30am – 5.30pm  
**Saturday:** 9.00am – 3.00pm

#### Scalloway Opening Times 01595880000

**Monday – Friday:** 8.30am – 5.30pm  
**Saturday:** 9.00am – 3.00pm

#### Lerwick Opening Times 01595690999

**Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday:** 9.00am – 2.00pm  
**Thursday:** 2.00pm – 6.30pm  
**Saturday:** Closed

#### Consultation Times

All consultations are by appointment. To make an appointment please telephone your nearest surgery or visit [www.shetlandvets](http://www.shetlandvets) to check consultation times.

### Winter Birds



The depths of winter are tough for our garden birds. Putting food outside will really help get them

through these long months before the Spring arrives.

Different species will prefer to eat from different feeding stations. The little Sparrows and Tits like the hanging feeders, ground feeding is preferred by Blackbirds, Robins and Thrushes but most will enjoy the traditional, flat bird table. A variety of seeds and nuts will be appreciated. Peanuts will be popular in the winter as they are full of fats but only use plain ones. A water bath will also be popular, both for drinking and bathing. Ensure it doesn't freeze by breaking the ice every morning.



### Winter weight alert!

The shorter days, and cold, wet weather all conspire at this time of year to prevent us and our pets getting out and about and this can have a negative impact on all our waist lines (pets and humans alike!)

It is very important to keep an eye on winter weight gain and make sure it doesn't become too great. Get into the habit of regularly feeling your dog's ribs and monitoring their body shape. If they start to look a little broader about the beam, then you should be making some changes!

It is a good idea to cut back a little on their food. Feeding fewer treats and moving to a 'light' version of their diet will help. Also, consider other activities for them. Many agility clubs train indoors in the winter or just simply put on your waterproofs and get splashing in the puddles! Please contact us if you would like any advice.

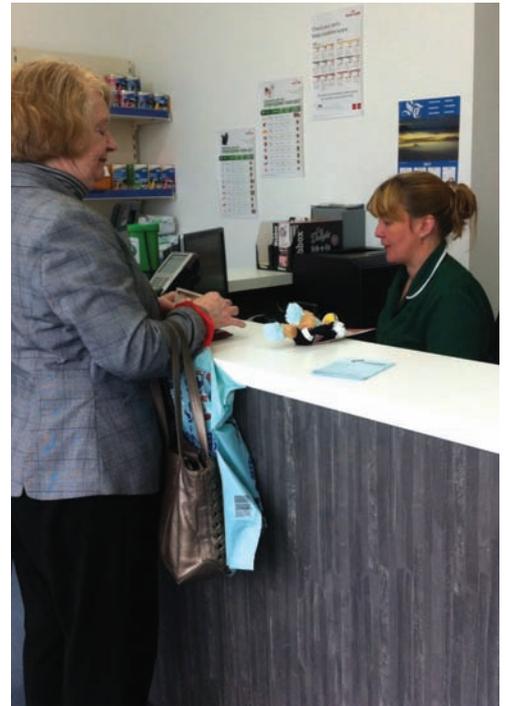
### New Branch at Lerwick

Shetland Vets were delighted to celebrate the opening of our new branch in Lerwick.

Situated on the corner of St. Olaf Street and Commercial Road, we held an Open Day on Saturday 12th September and attracted over 200 visitors. The new practice becomes our third business for Shetland Vets and it will deal specifically with small animals. Jim Nicolson said it was important to have a presence in the town. He said: "We wanted to make sure it was accessible for people without cars, or who rely on public transport. We've had lots of bookings already and we're pleased with the way people have supported us".

The pristine new premises will deal with domestic pets: "from dogs down", said Jim – this will include cats, budgies, parrots, tortoises and more unusual creatures such as reptiles. The light and airy interior of the building comprises a reception area with a shop, with lots of pet toys and treats on sale, a consulting room, with a table that can be raised and lowered where minor procedures such as stitching can be carried out. There are spacious kennels where dogs and cats can be kept during the day, but not overnight – our other surgeries in Bixter and Scalloway will still cater for longer stays and will also carry out major surgery and X-rays, and continue to look after farm animals.

All of our surgeries are linked by computer, which enables appointments to be made or medicines to be picked up at any of the premises.



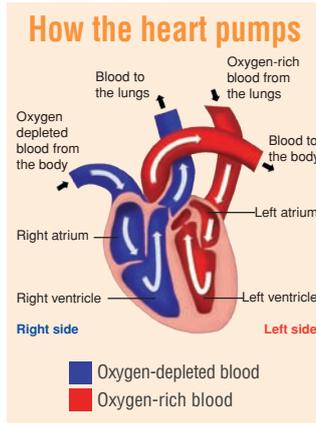
Find us on Facebook!

**Our 24 Hour Emergency Service** can be contacted by phoning **(01595) 810 456**

## Ticker trouble – heart disease in pets



The heart is a busy organ! In the lifetime of the average animal, it beats about 1 billion times, and pumps an average of 4.5 litres of blood around the body of a dog every minute. Located in the middle of the chest, the heart is split in half by a muscular wall. The right side of the heart receives low-oxygen blood from the body and pumps it to the lungs, where it gets rid of waste gas (carbon dioxide) and receives fresh oxygen from the air. Blood then travels to the left side of the heart, where it is pumped under high pressure to the tissues of the body, to carry oxygen and nutrients for use by other organs (see diagram right).



Winter, more than any other season, brings its own challenges and potential hazards to our pets.

Older animals, especially if they are arthritic, will really feel the cold and can be noticeably stiff. If they are already on medication, have a chat to us about increasing or altering their doses to make them more comfortable. If they are not on any treatment, this is often a good time to start.

If you do manage to get out and about on the freezing days, watch out for snow and grit. The grit can cause nasty sores in your dog's paws and the snow can ball up into painful lumps of ice. So avoid both if at all possible and give their feet a good wash after walks.

Also don't forget about smaller pets who live outdoors. Make sure rabbits and guinea pigs have well insulated hutches, plenty of bedding to snuggle down in and check their water twice daily to ensure it hasn't frozen. However, do let them out on the finer days to stretch their legs. Their coats will grow more than thick enough to keep them warm and they will appreciate some fresh air!

Of course the best thing about winter is Christmas! However, many families' festivities are curtailed by pet related mishaps! Avoid any dramas by keeping decorations well out of your pet's reach; baubles and tinsel can be irresistible but extremely problematic if swallowed or smashed. The tasty treats we enjoy are not so good for our pets, so keep them out of reach! Chocolate is very toxic, especially the plain varieties and raisins can cause serious kidney damage so keep the mince pies and Christmas puddings to yourselves!



Scratching dog, rabbit, kitten and dog in snow. Jane Burron

## Rabbits: a mite-y problem!



Whilst fleas tend to cause a myriad of problems in dogs and cats, **mites** are often a common problem in rabbits. It can be difficult to spot them but the symptoms they cause tend to be quite obvious.

**Fur Mites:** The most common mite found on rabbits is called *Cheyletiella* but it is much easier to say 'Walking Dandruff', its common name! This is because the mite is quite large and if you comb them out onto a dark surface, although they look like skin flecks, you can see them moving. They cause a thick scurf to form on the skin, patchy hair loss and they can be very itchy; affected rabbits can scratch themselves raw. It is often not possible to identify where the mites came from but it is often a bad batch of hay or bedding. Also, there is a variation in how sensitive rabbits are to the mite and often one in a group will be very badly affected but the others fine.

The treatment is a spot-on preparation, applied every fortnight for 6 weeks to fully clear the infestation. If there is skin damage, antibiotics may also be required. You should also clean out the hutch thoroughly after each treatment.

**Ear Mites** can cause very severe problems in rabbits. Infestations can be in one or both ears and the main clinical signs are a thick, flakey crust in the ear and a great deal of discomfort. These can be treated using spot-on drops, injections or ear drops.

So – if your rabbit is showing signs of scratching or itching, please see us for a check-up!



**Fur mites** can cause a thick scurf to form on the skin, patchy hair loss and can be very itchy. Inset – the mites can be identified down the microscope.



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