

Local Veterinary Surgeon Dan Flynn From Balmoral and Commons Brae Vets is back to answer your questions about problem pet issues. If you have a question you'd like the vet to write about send it to [askdanthetvet@gmail.com](mailto:askdanthetvet@gmail.com).

Q. We would like a new puppy for Christmas, what should we look for when choosing our new family member?

A. The charity Dogs trust have run a well known campaign for years with the slogan "A dog is for life and not just for Christmas". As we move toward the Christmas period there is a high demand for puppies. So now is a good time to discuss some helpful guidelines for when choosing your puppy.

### ***Due Diligence.***

Visit the website [www.thekennelclub.org.uk](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk) link *Buying a dog*. This will give you lots of information on getting a new puppy and if you would like a pedigree dog it will give you all the registered breeders.

It is commonplace now to browse puppies for sale on the internet and in classified newspaper advertisements.

This can be a good way to find a good breeder and a healthy well-adjusted puppy, but you must still follow some basic rules:

- Do not meet the breeder at the side of a roundabout or car park. Do not allow them to deliver the puppy to your home.
- Ask to visit the breeders home. Check out the pups environment .Watch the puppy's reaction to the breeder-is it friendly or cautious? A well adjusted puppy is one that has been handled gently and frequently by the breeder. This means they have been well socialised and will react well to humans in the future. It is better if the puppy has been reared in -doors in close contact with children and adults.
- Always see the mother of the puppy. Pet her and play with her to see what her character is like. Is she very timid, nervous or aggressive? The puppy s may inherit her characteristics.
- Look at all the litter mates. It is best not to go for the most precocious dog in the litter and the same goes for the most quiet/runt of the litter. Pick a puppy from somewhere in the middle of that spectrum. You will get a more balanced dog.
- If the puppy is for a child, it is best not to bring the child on the first visit, as attachments can be made very quickly. Do a preliminary visit where you can assess if this pup is right for you,
- Always be prepared to walk away if you are not happy when you see the puppy,
- Highlight any concerns you have with the puppy's appearance, weight and coat or environment.
- Has the pup been examined by a vet, has it been wormed, given flea treatments or

- vaccinated? If so you would like to see proof of this with a vaccination certificate.
- If the pup is a pedigree dog ensure you have researched the breeder (see kennel club- for advice). The papers are often posted to you at a later date so ensure you have proper contact details of the breeder, phone, address and email to follow up on this.

A lot of this information can be discussed over the phone before you go to see the breeder, therefore if you have any concerns, you can move on to the next advert. Never buy a puppy from a pet shop or from a puppy-farm- these animals have been poorly socialised and the breeding pair and puppies may not be well cared for. They will not make well-adjusted pets and will cause you no end of distress. Ideally you would like to visit the breeder find pups and the bitch in clean, bright, spacious environment, with close contact between puppies and humans. . This all helps you to get a healthy well adapted puppy.