



Bulletin No 96 – August 2019

Dear Members and Friends

As the summer rain beats loudly against the windowpane, our thoughts turn longingly to dreams of jetting off somewhere drier, warmer or hopefully both! However, some of us are afraid of flying, become anxious, and stressed by it. If only we had a Therapet with us to see us off or welcome us back, we would feel a lot better. Well, this year for the first time in the UK, if you are lucky enough to be flying from Aberdeen Airport, this could be the case!



Canine Crew at Aberdeen Airport

‘Captained’ by Diane Wood, one of our Aberdeen Area Representatives and Trustee, the ‘Canine Crew’ comprises 14 volunteers, who attend both airside (within the airport building) and landside in their instantly recognisable uniforms of blue jackets and polo tee shirts for the volunteers and bandanas and lead flashes for the Therapets. The Therapet duty rota which includes Doug the Pug, and Grace the Scottish Deerhound, with all canine shapes and sizes in between, work a two hour slot once a week. The dogs have a ‘mission’ - to calm passengers and staff and alleviate stress wherever it is most wanted!

Trustees:

I Allan Sim BSc CA (Chairman),

Dr Stewart G Donald BVM&S, M Litt, MRCVS, George Leslie BVMS, James Macdonald,

Dr Valerie J Marrian MBChB FRCP FRCPE DCH, A Douglas Ruthven BEM FRSC,

Lydney G Thomson BSc(Hons) OT, Diane Wood Dip RMS, Simon W Young BA(Hons) MBA

The Canine Crew visiting the airport initially comprised:

- *Breagh the Golden Retriever with owner Diane Wood*
- *Bruno the German Shepherd with owner Fiona Watts*
- *Grace the Scottish Deerhound with owners Bill and Carole Ledingham*
- *Enzo the Red Labrador with owner Clair Petrie*
- *Noodle the Beagle with owner Amy McKenzie*
- *Tweedie Bear the German Shepherd Dog with owner Julie Duguid*
- *Zosha/Vinnie both Leonberger's with owner Kelly Wiseman*
- *Cullen the Beagle with owner Emma Ritchie*
- *Bronte the Golden Retriever with owner Jacqui Finnie*
- *Pax the Utonagan with owner Paul Higgins*
- *Shuna the Lurcher with owner Morag Forrest*
- *Bentley the Golden Retriever with owner Colin Finnie*
- *Luna the Collie with owner Karen Douglas*
- *Doug the Pug with owners Kate and Sean Broadley*

Looks like this new health and wellbeing initiative is set to 'Take Off' (could not resist, sorry!)

Getting our feet back on the ground, our **ANNUAL AWARDS LUNCH** will again take place at **The Marriott Hotel, Edinburgh** on **Sunday 24th November 2019 at 12.30 for 1.00 pm**. The Marriott is located on the A8 at the very edge of Edinburgh, close to the Edinburgh City Bypass, the M8, and the M9 and even closer to the new Edinburgh Gateway Railway Station. It is not far from the Queensferry Crossing.

The lunch is always a much-anticipated event and gives us the opportunity to thank and pay tribute to some very special dogs and some equally special people. An application form is enclosed which should be returned to the office by Monday 11th November at the latest. The cost this year is £25.00 per person.

The awards to be presented at the lunch are:

The Spencer Award for Therapet Of The Year. This award allows the Trust to recognise the wonderful work carried out by our Therapets, and their owners, not just by the winner, but also by all the Therapets whether nominated or not.

The Iain Whyte Memorial Award to a person or organisation whose help has contributed substantially to the benefit of the Trust during the year, or over a period of years.

The Dr Morris Andrew & Daniel The Spaniel Memorial Award is a tribute to one of our much loved and missed Trustees, donated by his family. This is made to the Therapet 'organiser of the year' and the recipient is decided by the Administrators with approval of the Trustees.

The Ki-Chu-Asha Stars Of Hope Memorial Trophy which is awarded to the organiser of the sponsored event which raises the most money in the year.

The Miss Matty Award to the individual who raises the most money at sponsored events each year.

To make a nomination for this year's ***Spencer Award for Therapet of the Year***, your Therapet can be nominated by **you, your Area Representative** or **by the institution(s)** you visit using the enclosed nomination form. To give your Therapet the best possible chance of winning, it is important that the nomination is well presented and your Area Representative will be able to help you with the form if required. Please arrange for your Therapet to be nominated by sending the completed form to the office, together with **one photograph** and **one press cutting**, if you have one, **by 22nd October 2019**.

Therapets no longer with us

Sadly we have learned of the deaths of the following much appreciated Therapets and our condolences go to their volunteer owners to whom they were also beloved family pets.

Annie	Elizabeth Craik's Lurcher
Archie	Sally Kinnear's Jack Russell
Coco	Barbara Cooney's Curly Coated Retriever
Gem	Janet Smith's Working Sheepdog
Jess	Alan Duthie's Collie
Max	Tracey Scothern's Bernese Mountain Dog
Megan	Linda Whitby's Greyhound
Murphy	John Bowman's Springer Spaniel
Rumpole	Kerry Robertson/Isabella Craib's British Bulldog
Sasha	Annette Adair's Collie Cross
Willow	Sonja Shepherd's Dalmatian

They will all be greatly missed by their owners and all they gave happiness to! For those Therapets who should have been included but weren't – please accept our sincere apologies. If you would let us know, we will mention them in the January Bulletin.

Cats as Therapets

In the office we receive an ever increasing number of calls from prospective volunteers wishing to register their beloved pets as Therapets. The vast number of these pets are dogs of all shapes and sizes, but sometimes we are asked if we accept more 'exotic' animals; ponies, guinea pigs, a hen and even a parakeet have been offered! Unfortunately, we do not have the scope to accept such a variety of animals – some of which may indeed have the same desirable therapeutic qualities as our Therapet dogs: but how do we assess them for behavioural suitability, or ensure they are completely under the command of their owner?



Cats, however, are like dogs in that their movements can be controlled in a similar way by the use of a cat harness. It may come as a surprise to some that we do in fact count **seven** cats amongst our numbers. Stroking and petting these feline Therapets seems to have the same positive affect as with their canine Therapet counterparts: raising smiles and sometimes initiating communication in previously silent patients or residents. Feline Therapets Darwin and Donatello, a Blue Colourpoint Ragdoll and a Seal Point Ragdoll respectively, are pictured here together with their canine Therapet buddies Frankie Doodle-Love and Meera Pudding Paws, the American Cocker. They all form part of Jools Grieve's Therapet gang of three cats and two dogs doing great work for us in the Borders.

Something Different

We all know the difference Therapets make to people's lives, whether cat or dog, and prisoners at HMP Shotts are no exception, as **Christine Fairgrieve**, Area Representative, North Lanarkshire explains.



“In January of this year, I started volunteering for CCST at HMP Shotts. It was evident from an initial meeting with Prison staff that they were looking to start a programme for fit, healthy prisoners, a bit different from my usual visits to Care Homes and Hospitals. With thinking cap on, I devised a programme where the prisoners would be able to interact with a dog. After several weeks of training their respective dogs in basic obedience and learning about the responsibility and care of a dog, a small test was set. The prisoners were asked to put their dog through all exercises learnt, and to answer questions on the Kennel Club's Canine Code on responsible dog ownership.

This programme proved to be such a success that both the staff and prisoners found this to be a worthwhile exercise that impacted greatly on the prisoners' wellbeing. Each prisoner developed a great bond with their dog and looked forward to the weekly sessions. It has proved so popular, that there is now a growing waiting list of prisoners who wish to take part. (All thanks to the prison grapevine!).

At the end of the sessions, the prison staff organised an official presentation for the certificates of achievement I had made. One of the prisoners did a painting for me. What a surprise! Although I had wondered why one of the officers asked me to email her a photo! This will be an ongoing programme at the prison.” The painting shows Charlie and Tia, two of Christine's three Old English Sheepdog Therapets.

Have you ever wondered what your pet really thinks of their Therapet duties? Here's a flavour of one dog's view – affectionately translated by volunteer **Evelyn Grant, Orkney**.



A Dog's Life

“Hello my name is Brodie and I am a qualified Therapet, which means I passed a few simple tests so that I can visit in care homes, schools and hospitals. I have to wear a Therapet Lead flash when I am working. I do have quite a busy life besides playing with my cousins Hunter and Radley, but I do have to go to work sometimes.

Most Sundays we go to the Smiddybrae (Care Home) to visit the residents there. We usually arrive half way through the afternoon church service, which is ok. Then comes the tea and biscuits! This is more my kind of thing. After our little snack, we take a wander through the wards to visit anyone who wants to say hello. Lots of the residents used to have dogs or were farming folks and they do enjoy saying hello and giving me a pat (and sometimes more biscuits!).

I also go to Papdale Primary School and meet up with some of the children there. They learn how to approach a dog (always ask the owner first). Rumour has it that not all dogs are as friendly as me! They also learn about what food to give dogs. This is when Evelyn has to tell a little white lie saying I do not eat human biscuits, cakes and ice cream and of course I brush my teeth every day. Then it comes to grooming. Well, I do not love that part and when you get 25 children wanting to brush or comb me, it can be a bit stressful but I don't mind as I do love children. We do a scheme called 'Reading with Dogs' for children who are perhaps not very confident readers and they read ME a story! It is brilliant! I try to pay attention but I invariably fall asleep. But, I don't criticise their reading skills and I don't laugh and snigger at them if they get stuck with any words. By the end, the teacher and parents see a huge improvement in the children's reading skills. We have been asked to go to Orkney College to visit the students there who may be worried about their exams. Our 'Paws against Stress' can help them with this. So, my career as a Therapist is only just beginning and I am nearly ten years old now! I thought life was supposed to get easier as you get older but retirement seems to be a long way off!"

Well done Brodie, your message is loud and clear!

You may have seen our new **Support and Development Officer Mel Hughes** out and about.

Mel's Experience so far...

It has been a really busy four months in this new position and a great opportunity to get out and about around Scotland meeting with volunteers and their Therapets at a variety of events.



I have been fortunate to attend meetings and/or events in Ayrshire, Badenoch & Strathspey, Borders, Dundee & Angus, Edinburgh & Lothians, Fife, North Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire and will be looking to visit other areas in the coming months. In the Support element of my role, it has been important to meet with Area Representatives and with our partner agencies to consider current practice, discuss training needs and look at continuity. As you are aware, we have had a change of Area Representatives in some regions and there are still several areas of Scotland without, therefore supporting the transition of new volunteers and communicating with everyone in those areas has been a significant and hopefully welcome use of my time.

A really important part of my role has been listening to your views and obtaining feedback about what works well and where we could make improvements in specific areas. I produced a report to the Trustees in early August about our discussions so far and have started work on some of the smaller projects that will hopefully assist you in your roles as volunteers. An example of this is the agreements between us and our partner agencies such as care homes and schools where there are clear expectations on how sessions should proceed. The Development element of my role has included reviewing our current documentation and processes, working on new initiatives such as Edinburgh College and HMP Perth and assisting a Masters student with her research and looking at growth management and succession planning in specific regions.

It has been lovely to see the passion, commitment and support that you all give and witness the pleasure our Therapets also seem to get from this work. If you would like the opportunity to meet with me or chat over the phone, please do contact the office and we will try to arrange this. I have enjoyed meeting volunteers and their dogs for coffee in several regions and these informal sessions have been a great way for volunteers to meet each other!

Why become a Therapet Volunteer?

A **brief note** received at the office, tells why Majella Morrison, one of our newly registered Aberdeen volunteers joined Therapet. Perhaps this ‘Reading with Dogs’ story resonates with your own experience.

“I wanted to write to you about Fiona Redford and Therapet Mannie. She has been coming to visit us with Mannie every second Wednesday at Mintlaw Primary School, Aberdeen, where I teach. Mannie comes to listen to our children read. We tell them that their task is to put Mannie to sleep and they love it! They really look forward to his visits and he has such a calming influence on them. Fiona also kindly volunteered to come on a sponsored walk with us. Our children found it a real challenge. However, Mannie made it all bearable and they had great fun. All the children in the school were delighted to give him a rub when we stopped for a rest and he was so patient with them all. One of the children has autism and can find school life challenging but he always has a good day when Mannie comes. I even heard him tell Mannie that he was his best friend. I don’t think Fiona realised what joy she brings to us by taking the time to visit, she is my inspiration for wanting to join the Trust myself.”

PAWS in Dundee & Angus

Sarah Ramminger, joint project lead for the Wellbeing project at Dundee & Angus College wrote to us about the volunteers and Therapets who supported the ‘Freshers Fayre’, across its three campuses earlier this year. “We estimate that approximately 200 staff and students visited the Therapet area”. Some quotes from the students were:

“The dogs helped ease my anxiety”

“The dogs and volunteers were fantastic and I can’t thank them enough for visiting”

“Can they be here all the time?”

“I immediately felt at ease within myself which is something I haven’t felt in a long time”

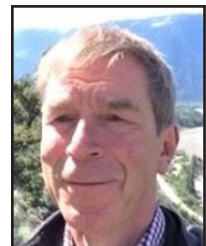
Another ‘tail’ of the success of our PAWS sessions, which we are delighted to say, seems to be replicated the length and breadth of Scotland.

Area Representatives

We are sorry to report that Sarah Bond, of the Edinburgh & Lothians Team and Shona Sneddon of the Dumfries & Galloway team have decided to relinquish their roles due to changes in personal circumstances. We thank them for their past efforts and wish them well. Allison Aspinall has kindly agreed to step into the Edinburgh South area and Annette Adair has agreed to look after Dumfries and immediate surrounds.

Trustees

We are delighted to report that Dr Stewart Donald has accepted an invitation to join the Board of Trustees to fill the vacancy caused by the retirement of Norma Murray. Stewart is a retired veterinarian and is also the Area Representative for Inverness and Nairn. Welcome to the Trust Stewart!



New Therapets

As always we have been working hard registering new Therapets! This year, to the middle of August, we have registered 227 which compares with 257 in the whole 2018 which was a record year. We welcome them all along with you their owners. We hope that you are enjoying participating in the Therapet Service. Please keep in touch with your Area Representative and with us in the office – we are all here to help and advise! For our records it would be of assistance if you would let us know where you are visiting – a quick email will suffice. Additionally we like to hear from our volunteers regarding their experiences. Please remember that your Therapet must have been visiting adults regularly for at least a year before they can be considered for work with children. When ready please contact your Area Representative to arrange for your Therapet to be re-assessed

Feedback

It is always heartening to hear about the success of our programmes. Our core Therapet visiting is to Hospitals, Hospices, Care and Nursing Home. At the Royal Edinburgh Hospital our Therapet Volunteers are co-ordinated by Angela Farr of the Edinburgh Volunteer Centre's Hub at the hospital. Angela has put together the following quotes from patients, staff and Therapet volunteers. She says that she has many more!

1. I am still visiting the acute men's ward every fortnight. It is very supportive and the dog seems to have a positive effect in the situation. I know you will have experienced it many times but it is a joy when someone opens up to the dog and then engages with other people as well. **Therapet volunteer.**

2. Friday was a great success! Thank you both for being there. The feedback was "Please come again". **Feedback from hospital staff to one of the Therapets**

3. I have so many happy memories of my Therapet dog and my visits to REH. The competition to write a poem about him is just one - and the winning entry one of the highlights! You do such a great job.

4. The happy faces and just warmth that my dog and I felt on our visits, no matter the length of time spent, it was quality not quantity that mattered most.

5. Although I do not visit with my wee dog anymore I am still privileged to have contact with the hospital, through Canine Concern, and am on hand to assist Angela and her team re any issues / concerns that may occur with the dog Therapet service within the hospital.

6. Thanks for the Therapet service. It's been fantastic. The dog gets through to people that don't engage well with other things. **Consultant**

7. The visits are going very well. We rarely stay the full hour, but we go round the two wards (male and female) and spend time with the people who are most interested in speaking to Bella. Last time I was there, one of the men had had a letter with news that upset him, and we sat with him for quite a while, and he told me in so many words that the visit was helping him calm down. Some of the people are, as you might expect, in better form on some days than they are on others, but we're getting to know them and we're both becoming familiar to patients and staff. **Therapet Volunteer.**

8. I am very humbled at going to the event, and if they do not allow dogs, am still happy. Thank you again for giving us this wonderful opportunity.

Quote after Royal Edinburgh Hospital Therapets won Inspiring Volunteer award

9. Working alongside the volunteer hub enabled us to tailor a specific role around a person Who has a strong interest in working with animals and who had previously experienced barriers around exploring animal related volunteering. This was a dynamic piece of work, which demonstrated creative thinking and good partnership working. The person has been set up with a placement with Therapet dog walking and the benefits of this have been clearly evident for the person. This placement fits well with his interests and gives him opportunity to develop skills and knowledge in the care involved in looking after a dog, dog body language and level of exercise required.

10. I love my visits and the response we get is amazing. It is a real privilege to be allowed into the ward and even the nursing staff and visitors seem to appreciate our presence. **Therapet Volunteer**

11. It was a really good session, quite a few folk up and seemed calmed by dogs magic - XX had Her on his knee for a while and B thought she was quite the thing. **Feedback from staff.**

12. I keep telling people, it's one of the best places to volunteer! **(Therapet volunteer)**

13. It's so lovely to see the change in the guys when the dog visits. **(OT Assistant in Older Peoples' Services re Therapet visits)**

13. Thank you so much for bringing XXXX to the library Therapet sessions and bringing him over to the ward. He is my favourite Therapet and gave me something to look forward to when life was not so fun. He also motivated me to go home and see my own dog. XXXXX really helped cheer me up and feel less anxious. Thank you very much (Note of thanks left by a patient) "XX has been doing a great job with G. She encourages.

14. Friday's visits felt very positive. The staff were particularly pleased that one patient who had not left his room since arriving engaged with xxx and through him chatted with us and other patients. **(New Therapet owner)**

Do you have a favourite memory of your volunteering time?

The happy faces and just warmth that my dog and myself felt on our visits, no matter the length of time spent, it was quality not quantity that mattered most. Although I do not visit with my wee dog anymore I am still privileged to have contact with the hospital, through Canine Concern, and am on hand to assist Angela and her team re any issues / concerns that may occur with the dog Therapet service within the hospital.

What have you learnt from your time here?

I've learnt to be in the moment like my dog: no judgement just genuine response, taking my lead from the person I'm with.

Do you have a favourite memory of your volunteering time?

Favourite part is seeing someone open up to the dog's presence when a few minutes before they appeared completely closed in.

What have you learnt from your time here?

Although we are both retired we have learned a lot from our time at the Royal Edinburgh - one important thing being that you don't have to do much to make people a bit happier....just be there, spend some time and care. And we learned that the REH is very much part of the Morningside Community.

THE THERAPET SERVICE

Our core visiting remains with Hospitals, Hospices, Nursing and Care Homes and we also visit nurseries, special needs schools, secure units and prisons. We also have two specific programmes.

The Paws Against Stress programme is mainly aimed at students in universities and other institutions of further education at exam time to give them relaxation and interaction with our Therapets and our volunteers. Because of the number of students involved we have a team of Therapets at each session. In addition to being outgoing and friendly towards the students the Therapets must also get along with each other! In 2018 we attended 121 sessions in a total of 62 institutions from Orkney to the Borders. 131 Therapets, and their owners, took part and an estimated 11,500 people attended. A team of Therapets attend sessions so there is an additional benefit in that give volunteers an opportunity to get to know each other. The demand for sessions, which now include some commercial organisations, continues to grow. If you would like to take part please contact your Area Representative.

Our **Reading With Dogs** programme continues to expand. In 2018 100 schools were supported by us, 81 Therapets took part and 1,591 children benefitted. The aim of this project is to try to encourage young readers who lack confidence with their reading to read to a dog. The idea being that the dog will listen to them and not judge, allowing them to relax and gain confidence in reading out loud. Our leaflet sets out the aims of the initiative, and the important guidelines for organising sessions. Of particular importance is the section dealing with those who must be present at sessions. If you would like copies of the leaflet please let the office know.



We point out, when new Therapets are registered, that they must have been visiting adults regularly for a year before they can be considered for visiting with children. A new assessment as regards their suitability must be carried out by an Area Representative. Additionally we have to ensure that Members' PVG registrations include work with children for CCST.

To meet demand we do need more Therapets to be available in all areas of Scotland. If you are interested in participating in the programme with your Therapet please get in touch with your Area Representative or the office. Please bear in mind that there is an increased level of commitment in that typically a series of six sessions will be held at a school over a period of six weeks. Naturally individual schools will have their own requirements and these will be discussed at the outset. Sessions are for up to two hours as explained in the leaflet.

Educational Film “Children and Dogs”

Way back in 1996 we had a film produced to illustrate how children and dogs can live safely together. At their meeting in November last year the Trustees decided that a new version should be produced, one that was more modern in presentation and one that depicts up-to-date dog training methods. We are indebted to the Trustees of the R S Macdonald Charitable Trust who agreed to finance the production cost of the film. Filming has taken place and the final production processes are currently being completed. Once everything has been finalised we will announce details on our website and our social media accounts.

Cambusbarron Primary “read-a-thon” Fund Raiser for CCST



Cambusbarron Primary had a sponsored read-a-thon in the school on Tuesday 30th April 2019 and the children managed to raise the terrific amount of £435.20p. This was organised by the school and overseen by Teacher Nikki Barret who coordinates our “Reading With Dogs” programme with CCST volunteer Jo Cunningham and her Therapet Reuben a CKCS who is 4years old. Trustee James Macdonald along with Jo and Therapet Reuben attended a cheque presentation at their Friday afternoon school assembly. A huge thank you to all at Cambusbarron Primary for fundraising this terrific amount for CCST and the “Reading With Dogs” programme.

Picture: Teacher Nikki Barret, CCST Trustee James Macdonald with three Cambusbarron Primary pupils and CCST volunteer Jo Cunningham and Therapet Reuben.

More on Fundraising

Were you one of the 13,000 people who participated in Glasgow Kiltwalk on April 28th this year? Our ‘kilted heroes’ raised £255.00 for CCST which was generously topped up by 40% by The Hunter Foundation making our grand total £357.00. Thanks go to our Therapet Kiltwalkers who took part and to The Hunter Foundation. Kiltwalks are organised each year in Aberdeen, Dundee and Edinburgh each year and raise millions of pounds for a wide range of charities.

We are very grateful to you, to the Trustees of a large number of Trusts and Foundations, and some commercial organisations, for the many donations and grants which enable us to meet the ever increasing costs involved in running our charity.

Many of you have been able to make your donations, and membership fees, under the Gift Aid system which means that we are able to claim 25p for each £1 donated from the Inland Revenue thus increasing the value of your gift significantly.

If your personal circumstances another way of helping the charity in the longer term is to include some provision in your Will. Bequests to charities are not included in a person’s estate for the purpose of calculating any inheritance tax liability.

Membership

We sent membership renewal slips to all members in January and some reminders were issued with the April edition of the Bulletin. The response has been tremendous and we hope to hear from some of you who have perhaps overlooked the matter. Payment can be made by cheque or by direct payment to the charity’s bank account – Sort Code 83-17-39, Account No. 00127889. Alternatively you may like to make payment by standing order and we can supply you with a form to complete and forward to your bank.

Therapet Health

The health of our Therapets is all important to us all and as a reminder we attach our current protocols for our Therapet cats and dogs.

We hope that you have enjoyed this edition of the Bulletin. Please keep sending us your Therapet stories and experiences so that we can share them with all our members. Please also remember that we, and all the Area Representatives, are here to help and advise, so please get in touch. It would be a great help to us if you keep us informed as to where you are visiting.

With best wishes for what remains of the summer and we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the Awards Lunch on 24th November.

Lesley, Norma & Carole

The Office Team

KEEPING YOUR THERAPET HEALTHY - CATS

The Therapet is almost by definition going to meet and bring comfort and happiness to people who are not in the best of health and whose immune systems may be weak either through disease or in some cases because of the treatments which they are receiving.

It is the duty of every Therapet owner to ensure that their Therapet is in the best of health and not going to take germs into the environment of those we are visiting. We must also be able to convince the authorities in charge of hospitals, homes or schools that we have taken every precaution to ensure that our Therapet is safe and can only bring benefits to those whom we visit.

Canine Concern Scotland would like to ask all Therapet owners to take the following health precautions.

- Annual Health Check. We would like all Therapets to have an annual check-up by your local vet. Be sure to tell your vet that your cat is a Therapet and ask your vet's advice as to what vaccinations your Therapet would require and what precautions your vet would advise considering that your Therapet would be in contact with vulnerable patients. We would recommend that all cats should be vaccinated against Feline Upper Respiratory Infections (Cat Flu). It would also be advisable to consider Feline Panleucopenia (Enteritis) and Feline Leukaemia.
- You should in particular ask your vet to check for any signs of ear, eye, nose or mouth infections and ensure that the coat is clear of any signs of skin disease. Remember these are the parts of your Therapet which the patients you are visiting will make direct contact with.
- Deworming every 3 months for both Tapeworms and Roundworms. When Therapets are visiting situations where they are in contact with children deworming should be undertaken monthly.
- Skin Parasites. We would recommend topical applications (Spot Ons) to control fleas and any other common skin parasites. The more comprehensive the better. All pet owners must ensure that their Therapet is free of fleas. Cats should be groomed before each visit and nails should be kept short. Ask your vet to advise a suitable length for nails and how often they should be trimmed or filed.
- Regular dental checks to stop smelly breath, and to reduce the chance of infection spreading from an infected cat's mouth to a human patient.
- Regular ear checks since even a mild, early ear infection can be painful if someone pats the head or rubs the ears. Some chronic ear infections can contain bacteria which might spread to humans. If your Therapet has had an ear infection ask your vet to give you an assurance that there is no risk of an infection being left after the ear inflammation has cleared up.
- All Therapets who are unwell should be withdrawn from duties until back to normal, or until professionally cleared if veterinary treatment was required. Therapet owners should not visit if they are unwell.
- Raw Meat Diets. Volunteers should be aware that diets which include uncooked bones or raw meat may rarely contain bacteria or parasites which might pass to your Therapet and even more rarely to the people you are visiting. For this reason the policy of the Trust is that Therapets should not be fed on diets containing raw meat.
- Also cats who are hunters when outdoors would not be deemed suitable as we must assume that they will eat their prey.

KEEPING YOUR THERAPET HEALTHY – DOGS

The Therapet is almost by definition going to meet and bring comfort and happiness to people who are not in the best of health, and whose immune systems may be weak either through disease or in some cases because of the treatments which they are receiving.

It is the duty of every Therapet owner to ensure that their Therapet is in the best of health, and not going to take germs into the environment of those we are visiting. We must be able to convince the authorities in charge of hospitals, homes or schools that we have taken every precaution to ensure that our Therapet is safe and can only bring benefits to those whom we visit.

CANINE CONCERN SCOTLAND TRUST ask all Therapet owners to take the following health precautions.

- Annual Health Check. All Therapets must have an annual health check-up by your own veterinary surgeon. You must inform your vet that your dog is a Therapet and will be visiting people who may be in poor health and whose immune system may be compromised either by disease or therapy. Ask your vet's advice as to what vaccinations your Therapet would require. If it is decided that no vaccine should be given then we would ask that your Therapet is tested every three years to assess your Therapet's level of immunity against the major dog infections. We would advise you to consider including a Kennel Cough Vaccination into the programme of vaccination.

You should in particular ask your vet to check for any signs of ear, eye, nose or mouth infections (including dental disease) and ensure that the coat is clear of any signs of skin disease. Remember these are the parts of your Therapet with which the people you are visiting will make direct contact.

- Deworming against both round and tape worms must be undertaken at least every three months, and monthly if your Therapet is visiting schools or youth groups.
- Skin Parasites. You must protect your dog against fleas and ticks..
- Passport Dogs. If your Therapet has been abroad in the past 12 months it may require a special treatment for ticks and worms – check with your vet.
- Regular dental checks to stop smelly breath and the risk of spreading infections through saliva.
- Regular ear checks. Ear infections can be painful if someone pats your dog's head and infection could be passed to a human
- All Therapets who are unwell should be withdrawn from duties until back to normal, or until professionally cleared if veterinary treatment was required. Therapet owners should not visit if they are unwell.
- Raw Meat Diets. In the light of recent scientific evidence that Raw Meat Based Diets may contain pathogenic bacteria and parasites which could infect dogs and possibly in rare circumstances pass to those in contact with the dog, Canine Concern Scotland have decided that Therapets should not be fed a raw meat based diet. We shall keep this matter under review and if scientific evidence states that RMBD are safe and free from risk of causing infection we shall reconsider our decision.