**lune valley dtc**



**BARKING**

Barking is one of a number of methods that dogs can use to communicate with each other and with us. Every dog has a number of different barks in their repertoire, which one they use will depend on their emotional state and the motivation behind their behaviour.

There is nothing more likely to upset the neighbours or get you stressed than a dog that repeatedly barks in certain situations and it can cause huge problems for owners it is therefore no something you want to encourage!

Where, when and the frequency and duration of barking will depend on a number of factors, such as breed, previous experience, age and environmental factors.

**DOGS BARK FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS:**

* Frustration
* Seeking attention
* Anxiety – e.g. when left alone
* As a warning – when territorial
* Nervousness
* Stress
* Boredom

For some dogs barking can be used as a method of coping with unwanted advances from other dogs, people etc. What tend to happen is that the dog barks and the approaching person or dog backs off, which means the dog can then develop barking as a coping strategy. Barking is commonly heard when a dog is in a situation that if finds stressful, such as at the kennels, vets, groomers or perhaps travelling in the the car if they are not very used to it.

The key to tackling the barking is to IDENTIFY THE TRIGGER. Does your dog bark at you if:

* You stop playing or stroking him?
* You withhold an item he desires?
* You restrict his access to someone or something?

If yes, then the motivation for the behaviour could be either frustration or attention seeking. The dog is trying to get you to respond to him in the best way he knows.

**When your dog is barking at you for attention you must:**

* **Ignore it** – turn away and carry on with something else or walk out of the room and close the door behind you, (re enter when quiet)
* **Be consistent** – this means on every occasion and everyone must do it.

**THE BARKING WILL INCREASE THE MORE IT IS REWARDED**

**The following may reward and encourage the barking:**

* Giving in and offering your dog exactly what he is asking for e.g food or a toy.
* Stroking or touching him.
* Telling him to “be quiet” – speaking to your dog (even in a negative way) can be rewarding.
* Frowning, scolding or eye contact.

If everyone is consistent your dog will eventually work out that he gets no response from you for barking and the behaviour will decrease.

If you dog is barking in stressful situations, when anxious or nervous more in depth help may be required from a pet behaviourist.