

Magnus the P.A.T. Lagotto



Magnus is our Lagotto, who has kept us busy and entertained for over 4 ½ years, he came to live with us when he was an 8 week old ball of energy. It was clear from the start that we would have to invent many ways to keep him entertained, as these days he thinks a 2 mile walk is just a warm up for the rest of the day's activities.

Over the years he has gained his Good Citizen's Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards, he has done both agility and Heelwork-to-Music, and has repeatedly appeared in the RSPCA Blackberry Farm Doggie-Dancing Display Team.

It was a foregone conclusion that Magnus would become a Pets As Therapy dog, as Thornton, our Chocolate Labrador

has been one for some years.

Pets As Therapy (P.A.T.) is a national charity founded in 1983. It provides therapeutic visits to hospitals, hospices, nursing and care homes, special-needs schools and a variety of other venues by volunteers with their own friendly, temperament tested and vaccinated cats and dogs.



I first contacted P.A.T. in early 2010 and was sent the application form, this required 2 character references for me, an assessment form (including appearance, behaviour, etc) and vaccination certificate for Magnus. There is also an £19 annual subscription fee.

A temperament assessment was arranged and Magnus and I met an assessor at a small shopping centre at Milton Keynes.

Magnus was tested for:

Walking on the lead without pulling

Being groomed by me

Taking food from the assessor gently

Responding appropriately to a sudden noise

Being well controlled whilst I spoke with the assessor

He also demonstrated that I could hold him firmly without fuss

General health and cleanliness

It is unfortunate that, aside from his many sparkling qualities, Magnus, at that time, was easily spooked by the sight of strange hats, feathers... and bald heads. And although he happily spoke to everyone who happened to pass at the shopping centre, when the assessor bent down to talk to him, Magnus couldn't help but notice the shiny surface of his follically-challenged head and from then on refused to have anything to do with him. And thus it was that Magnus failed his first test.

Magnus passed his second test on 16th August 2010 with flying colours.

Since then, Magnus has regularly visited Care-homes for adults, and has also represented Pets As Therapy in various shows including The Waddesdon Woof, The Vale Housing Association Dog Show, Discover Dogs and Crufts. He even appears on the opening page of the P.A.T. website (middle left picture).



← Before going on a visit, you have to ensure that your dog is clean and healthy.

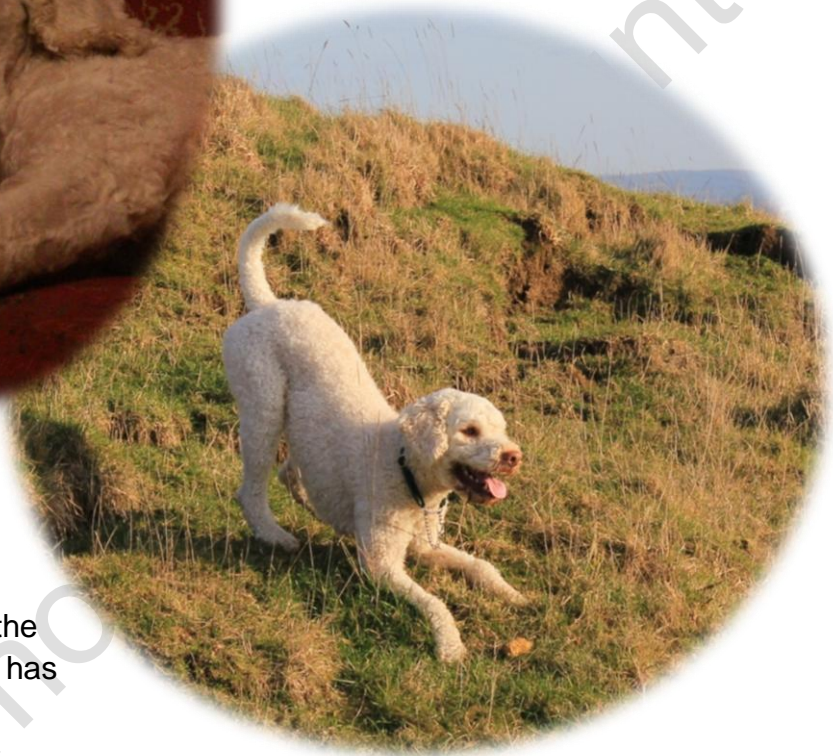
→ Your dog must wear his/her ID jacket, P.A.T. collar and lead, along with an ID tag.



Your dog needs to be calm and quiet, and must not jump up or perform tricks. ←



Most dogs are very tired after a visit and can sleep for several hours...



Magnus on the other hand, often has ideas of his own.

Written by Sarah and Edward Westmoreland-Caunter.

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