



**Meeting 13 June 2019, British Veterinary Association, 7 Mansfield Street, London W1G 9NQ (2.00 – 5.00pm)**

## **Notes of Meeting**

**Members present:** Carol Fowler (CF), David Grimsell (DG), Dan O'Neill (DON), Katharine Williams (KW), Clare Rusbridge (CR), Camilla Pegram (CP), Vicki Betton (VB), Tania Ledger (TL), Andrew Gillon (AG).

### **1. Welcome**

**2. Apologies for absence:** Rowena Packer, Emily Davies; Fiona Cooke; Lesley Field

### **3. Matters arising**

Action points from March meeting:

#### **3.1 Easy Fundraising**

It was confirmed that the monies collected via Easy Fundraising had been credited to DBRG bank account.

#### **3.2 Charity Commission**

The Trust Deed has been amended so that all present and future trustees are governed by Clause 11. This will be sent out to all trustees for signing and returning.

***Action KW***

#### **3.3 Breed Health and Conservation Plans**

An up-to-date list of those breed clubs publishing Breed Health and Conservation plans is being compiled and will be presented at the meeting in September

***Action ED***

### **3.4. Use of DBRG logo**

It was agreed that the policy presented at the meeting in March has been adopted.

- *Consistent with DBRG Aims*
- *Promotes dog health and/or welfare*
- *Makes strategic sense*
- *Consistent with scientific evidence*
- *Trustworthy credentials*
- *Professional quality of presentation or delivery*
- *Communicates welfare message effectively to public, breeders or specialists*
- *No conflict of interest*
- *Would not bring DBRG into disrepute*

### **3.5 Membership Policy**

Membership policy was discussed, and the possibility of having members and associate members. However it was agreed that DBRG strategy needs to be finalised first.

An agreement needs to be reached as to attendance at the quarterly meetings and an AGM.

**Action All**

### **3.6 Project Dog**

As discussed at the last meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> March, and documented in the minutes, there are ongoing discussions with the University of Surrey and Brunkskill and Grimes. It was agreed that it would be beneficial for DBRG to be involved in the project and to be kept informed of any developments.

**Action CR and VB**

### **3.7 BVA Canine Health Schemes**

Kelly Thatcher is named as the replacement for Andrew Gillon. It was agreed that she should have a standing invitation to attend DBRG meetings

**Action CF**

## **4. Reports of Meetings**

### **Brachycephaly Working Group**

The group continues to be active. A position statement has been published on-line (<http://www.ukbwg.org.uk>) relating to the use of brachycephalic dogs in advertising, stating that unless the use of such a dog can be justified in advertising or media they should not be

used. The group are currently endeavouring to get this policy accepted by as many potential advertisers/media users as possible.

Obesity in some brachycephalic breeds such as the Pug was discussed. The veterinary profession is changing emphasis from a culture of chastising owners for their animal's obesity to describing obesity in animals as a disease. It is hoped that this will make owners take obesity in the dogs more seriously.

### **Extreme Conformation Working Group**

DBRG has a formally appointed representative on the CFSG subgroup on extreme conformation. Due to the high workload of the subgroup leader, the subgroup had not completed its initial targets at the time of the DBRG meeting. The subgroup are having ongoing discussion about what constitutes 'extreme conformation'. It is currently defined as: 'when an animal's body shape, structure or appearance has the potential to result in negative impacts on their health and welfare.' Some breeds are obviously more susceptible to extremes in certain aspects of conformation than others. However the focus of the subgroup is on dogs overall and not on specific breeds. The subgroup has defined a list of key conformations that will be explored to set criteria for acceptable and unacceptable limits. DBRG members then went on to discuss the likelihood of specific guidelines being issued to make extreme conformation easier to define, and therefore bring prosecutions under The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018.

### **Dog Health Workshop (DHW)**

The workshop was attended by 3 members of DBRG (CF, CR, TL) as well as Dan O'Neill and Camilla Pegram, who reported back that discussions concerned issues such as extreme conformation; genetic testing; the concept of breed; breed specific health strategies; and supply and demand of puppies. It was noted that 8 million dogs a year are required across Europe to supply the demand for puppies. Therefore there is wide belief that commercial dog breeding is necessary, but should be closely monitored. Engagement with breeders is essential to ensure healthy dogs.

The event was attended by representatives of kennel clubs, welfare organisations, scientists, breed clubs and breeders. It was noted that a disappointingly low number of UK breeders attended the event, and it was agreed that efforts would be made to redress this at future meetings.

Attendees from DBRG were able to promote our organisation, act as representatives of dog owners and learn more about the issues in dog breeding worldwide. The emphasis on changing dog breeding practices in order to produce more healthy pedigree dogs and using science to serve this purpose was stimulating and enlightening. As ever, an event such as

this provided invaluable networking opportunities and a common purpose across national boundaries. The next DHW will be in two years' time and will take place in New York.

### **Report on SSPCA 'Say No to Puppy Dealers' Campaign**

This campaign is endeavouring to end the illegal puppy trade in Scotland. It is supported by the Scottish Government, DEFRA and HMRC. The campaign promotes the notion that 'unless you know your dog is from a reputable breeder don't buy it.' It is an educational campaign aimed at the general public, asking them to sign an on-line pledge. The SSPCA is also hoping to launch an 'Assured Puppy Breeder Scheme' in Scotland which will be free to join.

### **5. Symposium Progress**

The symposium planning is in its final stages and an advertisement/press release was suggested to go in the Vet Times, along the lines of 'Surrey University Vet School welcomes DBRG.'

Conference bag contents needs to be finalised and also catering and IT arrangements. 30 tickets had been sold so far via DBRG's website PayPal online payment. All is in hand in terms of the organisation of the Symposium. The most important thing now is to promote it as widely as possible

An idea was mooted that perhaps a film ought to accompany the lectures on the day, showing how Hip Dysplasia has affected the life of a dog and its owner. It was noted that there is someone who may agree to feature in the film.

**Action CF/TL/CR/KW**

### **6. Student Ambassador Liaison**

CP has taken on the role of student ambassador liaison with immediate effect.

**Action CP**

### **7. Social Media Responsibility**

It was noted that there is currently a gap in DBRG personnel managing the social media accounts, such as Twitter; Facebook and Instagram.

CF has been doing as much as she can to keep the feed open, but there is a requirement for a person to take on the responsibility.

KW suggested Polly Smith would be keen to do this as she has a media degree, and will be studying Animal Management from September. CF agreed to forward log in details to PS.

**Action KW/CF/PS**

## **8. Who are we? (What is DBRG primary purpose and USP?)**

There was a discussion about how DBRG could be described to the average person in the street. It was difficult to explain exactly what the purpose is. It was agreed that it was important to know what DBRG means from outside the group before a strategy can be discussed.

It was agreed that the Dog Breed Health website is an excellent example of DBRG doing something very well. Also the symposiums discussing inherited conditions. Therefore should the USP be inherited diseases?

Questions were asked such as is DBRG here to offer advice, or be an advocate or disseminate scientific research or be a campaign group? Or is DBRG trying to do all these things?

It was agreed that the message has to be simple so that the general public know what DBRG means, and perhaps the most simple message is that DBRG is the place to go to find out about inherited conditions in dogs. Education and awareness must be key to this. Other campaign groups are fighting puppy farming, and licensing issues.

It was suggested that DBRG could convene and/or sponsor a round table meeting bringing together experts in the field, consisting of dog/animal charities, dog owners, and bodies likely to prosecute under the specific regulation:

‘not to breed from any dog if it can be reasonably expected on the basis of its genotype, phenotype or state of health that breeding from it could have a detrimental effect on its health or welfare or the health and welfare of its off-spring.’

DBRG and CF in particular is periodically contacted by people who have bought puppies with inherited diseases, and as yet DBRG are not in a position to offer individual advice. It was suggested that an important role for DBRG might be to act as a ‘general advocate’ for the welfare of dogs subject to adverse effects arising from poor breeding, but that it may have limited potential to act as an advocate for individual complainants.

***Action All***

## **9. Strategy Review and Fund Raising Strategy**

DBRG have to be clear what the basic message is before a successful strategy can be launched.

It was agreed that the discussion with regard to DBRG’s primary purpose was useful and at the next meeting will be committed to paper. Both the strategy and fund raising strategy will flow from this.

***Action All***

## 10. AOB

1. The group were informed that with immediate effect Lesley Field has resigned as a trustee from DBRG, she will however remain as a member.
2. The role of CF has been agreed since DG is now chairing meetings and KW acting as Secretary. The decision was that CF should be referred to as 'Founder' in any external communications. Also her title would be Director, External Relations.
3. Email correspondence between a member of the public and DBRG had highlighted the importance of adhering to the GDPR regulations. The group need to have a firm policy and guidelines to follow. It was agreed that this would be drafted and discussed at the next meeting.

***Action KW/CF/DG***

***End of Meeting***

***Next Meeting at BVA 12 September 2019***