



Notes of DBRG Meeting 1 December 2016 (AGM)

British Veterinary Association (BVA), 7 Mansfield Street, London W1G 9NQ

Members Present

Carol Fowler (CF), Dan O'Neill (DON), Chris Laurence (CL), Tania Ledger (TL), Charlotte Mackaness (CM), Lesley Field (LF) (via teleconferencing), David Grimsell (DG) (via teleconferencing), Clare Rusbridge (CR), Fiona Cooke (FC)

Advisors present

Sheila Crispin (SC), Vicki Betton (VB)

Apologies

Marisa Heath, Julia Carr, Julia and Stephen Charlton, Gudrun Ravetz

1. Matters arising

None

2. AGM

- Julia Charlton, Lesley Field and Chris Laurence were re-elected as trustees for a further three years
- Charlotte Mackaness was elected as a new trustee for three years
- Financial report to December 1 2016. It was noted that we need an annual income of £5000 to apply to the Charity Commission for registered charity status. It was agreed that accounts will be produced each calendar year. Current statement of accounts agreed. An updated account up to the end of December will be sent to members in the New Year.
- Annual Report to be completed by CF in January 2017.

2. Aims and Objectives Update

The current Aims and Objectives were discussed and some minor changes agreed: the addition of the Objective 'Facilitate the translation of good scientific research into practical tools and advice that improves dog genetic and breed health, breeding and rearing' and 'Be a voice for dog owners.' An item that needs further research and discussion relates to the statutory duty to implement the AWA.

The discussion developed into the need for and definition of an *independent* body to advise Government on the welfare interests of companion animals. Our definition is that an independent body describes a group of experts in that field that are appointed according to Nolan principles by merit rather than being selected to represent certain organisations. This differentiates such a body from stakeholder groups.

3. EFRA Committee Report: Domestic Pets

DBRG regrets that although many of the EFRA Committee Report's Recommendations are very welcome we are at a loss to understand the proposal regarding the role of the RSPCA in prosecuting animal welfare breaches. We would argue that the RSPCA has a wealth of experience and expertise in its prosecution activities.

4. Change of DBRG Strapline

The decision was made to change the DBRG strapline to 'A Voice for Dogs.'

5. National Dog Breeding Inspection Scheme (CL)

STANDARD FOR DOG BREEDING WORKING GROUP UPDATE

Now that the Standard has been approved by DBRG, the group has been considering the implementation of the inspection scheme that will underpin it. The recruitment and training of inspectors will be critical to the success of the scheme. We have begun work on defining the skills required and the training necessary to ensure a consistent standard of inspection.

We have considered how all this might be financed and run. Our next steps are to produce a realistic five-year business plan and then look for finance. One of the reasons for suggesting a separate inspection organisation is that we consider there should be separation between the standard setting organisation (DBRG) and the inspectors. We believe our 'kite mark' will allow authorities to lighten their inspections as long as they are able to access our inspection

reports. The DBRG Scheme is intended to fit into local authorities' risk based approach to the licensing of dog breeding establishments. Much work is still needed to enable the inspection process to be up and running.

6. Position Papers

A considerable amount of work has already been done on 'Puppy Farming,' 'Dog Owners' Voice,' 'Inbreeding,' by a working group. These have been sent to the whole group with five days provided for any further comments.

'Licensing and Registration of Dog Breeders and Sale of Puppies' is also near completion.

7. Role of a Canine Geneticist

Dr June Swinburne has agreed to advise on genetic issues. Dr Swinburne is a molecular geneticist, formerly from the Animal Health Trust, and now has her own business, *Animal DNA Diagnostics*.

8. The Animal Welfare Act and the Protection of Progeny: how to take this forward?

A position paper for DBRG is being produced, awaiting input from Mike Radford. Specifics of the secondary legislation, particularly in the light of the Efra Committee recommendation, need to be included in the position paper. It was noted that this issue will be included on the agenda of the newly reconstituted APGAW Dog Sub-Group in 2017.

9. Dates of Meetings 2017

- 2 March
- 22 June
- 14 September
- 30 November

All meetings will be held on Thursday afternoons (2.00 – 5.00pm) at the BVA, 7 Mansfield Street, W1G 9NQ