



Meeting 10 September 2020, Via Zoom (2.00 – 5.00pm)

Notes of Meeting

Members present: Carol Fowler (CF), Fiona Cooke; (FC) Dan O’Neill (DON), Emma Milne (EM); Katharine Williams (KW), Clare Rusbridge (CR) (Part), Camilla Pegram (CP), Vicki Betton (VB), Tania Ledger (TL), Polly Smith (PS) Lesley Field (LF) Rowena Packer (RP)

Part Meeting Samantha McQuigg;

Apologies: Andrew Gillon; Emily Davies

1. Matters arising

Healthy Champions

The Kennel Club has not been written to, and the working group set up consisting TL CF EM and LF have not met since the last meeting in June. It was agreed that EM would draft a letter to the Kennel Club and circulate to the working group for sign off.

Action EM

2. DBRG Areas of Focus

The meeting set up to discuss areas of focus was a success and a working document has been produced. Due to positive developments in other countries it was pointed out that conformation issues, particularly relating to BOAS should not be left out. It was agreed to revisit the document to ensure that this issue is given a high enough priority.

It was discussed whether the document should be sent to the CFSG and published in its entirety on the website. However it was agreed that the document is an internal working document for DBRG members only. However it would be a good idea to publish a precis on

the website so that potential charity donors have a better understanding of what areas of focus are important to DBRG and give them an incentive to donate.

3. Inspectors Training Module

City of London have a training module in place and it was questioned whether DBRG should approach them directly to find out how it works. However it was pointed out that City of London are actually working with the Pet Industry Federation in the development of their training module. Marissa Heath, CFSG Administrator and DBRG Associate Member is going to undertake the training module in November, and it was agreed that DBRG would contact her and ask her to report back. A particular interest is whether there is an element in the module relevant to genetic health. Marissa's feedback should be included in the agenda for December's meeting.

It was noted that there may be an opportunity to liaise with Welsh Government as a 3 year trial is being mooted in Wales. Also there is likely to be a Scottish review of animal breeding leading up to the 2021 election. It was agreed that DBRG should keep up to date with these developments and input where possible.

Action CF (to contact Marissa)

4. DBRG as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation

DBRG registered the trade mark 'A Voice for Dogs' but during the registration process it became apparent that DBRG is not a legal entity in its own right. Therefore the trade mark is actually owned legally by the trustees. Opinion was sought whether DBRG ought to be a Charitable Incorporated Organisation which would mean it could own property (including intellectual property) in its own right. This would also mean that the trustees would not be financial liable for any potential loss.

The document explaining the constitutional difference between a charitable trust and an incorporated organisation is to be circulated to all trustees and discussed at the next meeting.

Action KW

5. Policies Update/Definition of a Healthy Dog

Policies had been circulated to all and agreed upon.

The definition of a healthy dog was discussed and the description amended. It was agreed that it is a reference point for DBRG members and is not a document to be circulated outside DBRG.

Action CF

6. Kennel Club Information

The document produced by LF has been updated and is a very thorough description of the KC and its structure. It is a useful document for DBRG to focus upon when considering who to approach relevant to the subject matter. It was noted the Puppy Contract on the KC website is the Assured Breeder version and has not been updated since 2017.

CF has written to the Kennel Club to ask if there is a more recent version, but to date there has been no response. It was also discussed whether the Assured Breeder Puppy Contract and the AWF/RSPCA Puppy Contract ought to be combined. (DBRG promote the AWF/RSPCA contract).

It was then discussed how DBRG should approach organisations like the KC. It was agreed they should be approached by DBRG as an organisation rather than individual members. Or at least one member should be the point of contact depending upon the issue involved. For example, if Breed Health Plans are to be discussed then the contact should be LF on behalf of DBRG.

It was agreed that CF (representing DBRG) should write to the new CEO introducing DBRG.

Action CF

7. Symposium

The working group have already organised the speakers and a date in November 2021 will be finalised shortly. To be updated at December's meeting. At a separate meeting between CR and CF, it was agreed that CR would be responsible for sponsorship and that DBRG veterinary members should advertise and promote the Symposium. LF, as before, should promote the Symposium to KC representatives and breed health co-ordinators. It was felt, that DBRG is not in a position to subsidise breed health co-ordinators this time. Possibly the breed clubs themselves or the KC could do so. CF and Samantha McQuigg will do all of the admin, documentation and preparations as before. Tickets will be sold via the website as before. Filming of the presentations must be ensured (there were problems with the equipment last time)

Action CF, CR

8. Tailwise

A few members/trustees have seen the Tailwise on line podcast/presentation and agree that the principles are good. However there were concerns about the inspection of breeding establishments, and whether DBRG want to be associated with a commercial enterprise. It was agreed that Tailwise is not far enough advanced for DBRG to put a link on the DBRG website.

There was discussion about whether Tailwise is using the DBRG Standard for Dog Breeding, and this was an issue to be verified. DBRG would be happy to share its standard at this stage. Tailwise is happy for DBRG to submit additional ideas regarding the breeders' online application process.

9. Social Media Update

Social Media is working well with Whatsapp group sharing ideas and verifying content before it is posted. Ideas were mooted such as 'Dog of the Month' and sharing dog owner's stories – to encourage users to engage.

Action PS and All

10 Google Ads

Google Ads has been set up, and EM and AG have agreed to do the monthly updates, or at least manage them. (EM may be able to delegate).

Action EM AG

11. BOAS

Encouraging news from other European countries such as Germany, who have banned exhibiting certain flat faced breeds. France and Holland are also banning breeding from dogs suffering from BOAS. It was agreed that DBRG should build upon the momentum from these countries. Once the information from has been collated DBRG should write to DEFRA endorsing the action that these countries have taken, and asking why the UK is not taking the problem as seriously.

It was also discussed whether the KC should also be written to, and noted that it is the showing community who exert influence upon the buying public. If flat faced dogs cannot

be shown, then demand would fall. The matter will be discussed at the next meeting when there will be more information available about the success of the legislation in other countries.

It was agreed that this issue should be at the forefront of DBRG campaigning in the future.

Action All

12. Work Styles and Achieving Goals

It was noted that there are often more emails sent to DBRG members than there is time to read them. However it was agreed that if there is an expert in a particular field they always respond. This is an ongoing issue as most members are volunteers with limited time available for DBRG work.

13 AOB

Code of Practice for Dog Breeding

The Code of Practice for Dog Breeding has now been approved, the only outstanding issue being the artwork. This has been briefed and the published version will be circulated to all.

There was then discussion about whether the Code of Practice should supersede the Standard for Dog Breeding, however time was limited and it was agreed that this should be discussed at the next meeting.

Action CF (to add to December's agenda)

AWF Study of Puppies in the Pandemic

AWF have sponsored RVC (Rowena and Dan) to undertake a six month study about puppy buying during the Covid pandemic. It was agreed that where possible DBRG; the Code of Practice and Puppy Contract would be promoted.

Student Ambassadors

It was agreed that new Student Ambassadors should be introduced by Instagram and Twitter.

Action CP PS

DEFRA Petfishing

DEFRA will be running another petfishing campaign and would appreciate help promoting it. The link should be put on DBRG social media platforms

Action PS

Brachycephalic Working Group

It has now been accepted that the evidence of poor health in these dogs is overwhelming and strong action is required in the UK. This will be reinforced by the action in other countries.

End of Meeting

Next Meeting

Date of Next Full Meeting 3rd December 2020 (at BVA or via Zoom)