

**Meeting 12 March 2020, British Veterinary Association, 7 Mansfield Street, London W1G 9NQ (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), Camilla Pegram (CP), Vicki Betton (VB), Tania Ledger (TL), Andrew Gillon (AG); Emily Davies.

Via Skype: Rowena Packer; Lesley Field (part)

**Apologies for absence:** Polly Smith

**1. Matters arising**

Action points from December 2019 meeting:

**1.1 Questionnaire**

The final version of the questionnaire was presented and discussed. It was agreed to add questions asking:

- a) if those completing the questionnaire are aware of the changes to the law introduced in 2018 and to be amended in April this year.
- b) age of Dog when acquired, as it may not just apply to puppies

It was suggested that an on-line version would be the most useful tool and agreed that IT would be briefed. IT consultant should also add a reply thanking for the input and stating that the completed questions can be withdrawn within 14 days if requested to comply with GDPR regulations.

Revised wording to be sent to members and agreed

Action CF      New Leaflet and Distribution

2.1 New Leaflets have been printed, and 300 were sent with TL to Crufts for distribution on the Cavalier Matters stand.

Local Authorities will be given leaflets ad-hoc when requested.

It was agreed that an electronic pdf version should be available to download as a resource for Local Authorities, and prospective puppy buyers.

Social media should be used to promote the availability of the leaflet

#### Action CF and PS

#### 2.2 Owner Guidance Leaflet

Presently there are two versions, one completed by CF and one EM. It was agreed that the one drafted by EM should be the one used for print purposes, but there is no reason why both can't be on the website for downloading and printing.

It was suggested that a QR code be generated so that it can be scanned and downloaded by prospective owners.

IT to be briefed.

#### Action CF and EM and IT consultant

### 3. DBRG Policies

A list of prospective policies was circulated and agreed upon.

DBRG Purpose was discussed further to previous discussions, and 'a good life for dogs' should be included in the purpose campaigns, not 'a life worth living' which is the minimum requirement. A good life is more realistic for companion animals.

Another issue was the definition of 'healthy.' DBRG should have a definition of what it believes a healthy dog should be. It should be over and above a dog being health tested. Temperament is not currently mentioned, and is a key part of a dog's health and welfare. It was agreed that a definition will be drafted taking note of psychological, physiological and sociological elements.

#### Action EM

### 4. Campaign Issues

A draft list of issues had been prepared, it was agreed that it would not be possible for DBRG as it is currently comprised to tackle all of the issues this year. It was agreed that microchipping and the retention of breeder information should be one area, and another the number of litters a bitch should be legally allowed to have in her life time.

As far as microchipping is concerned a position paper has already been produced, recommending that breeder details should be retained, and that there should be a central database. The position paper needs updating. A campaign strap line should be developed perhaps using the strapline *+chipforlife*.

It was agreed that before any campaigning could take place on the issue of litter numbers sound evidence of the detrimental effect of a bitch having more than 4 litters should be sourced. A rough guide was discussed, and breed specific recommendations suggested.

### Action All

Training for LA Inspectors was agreed as a priority campaigning issue, particularly as the law is about to change in April.

It was suggested that DBRG was in a good position to produce an on-line learning resource for LA inspectors. This could potentially be an excellent opportunity to gain funding from animal welfare funding bodies. Dogs Trust was mooted as a potential sponsor as they are currently asking for applications. However on researching their criteria it was noted that a better fit may be the Jean Sainsbury Foundation.

KW agreed to complete the application form and this is priority and an excellent way to bring DBRGs aims to the fore.

VB to inform the best way forward with her experience in producing on-line learning resources

### DBRG Campaign Issues

- *Animal sentience law to be enacted*
- *Reduce the number of litters a breeding female can have to 4 maximum*
- *Microchipping regulations to be tightened - microchip databases to retain breeder details, limit number of databases, standardise format. Ideally one national database.*
- *LA registration of all breeders (in addition to licensing of three and above)*
- *All advertisements for sale of puppies to include a breeder's LA registration number*
- *Animal Welfare Education a compulsory part of the school curriculum*
- *An expectation that appropriate health testing is carried out on all dogs used for breeding*
- *Training for LA Inspectors in inherited health and welfare problems (as well as other welfare issues such as appropriate socialisation)*
- *All advertisements for sale of puppies to be accompanied by the LA licence number*
- *Register of independent vets to inspect breeding premises*
- *Code of Practice for Dog Breeding made available on local authority websites*
- *Promotion of The Puppy Contract by all welfare bodies and the KC*
- *An end to large scale commercial breeding*
- *Advice to Government on dog breeding should be independent of any commercial consideration*
- *Base dog welfare reform on the welfare of dogs rather than public demand. The market demand does not have to be satisfied in the case of dogs (or other sentient animals)*
- *Effective education of owners*
- *Education of dog breeders (focusing on health and temperament)*
- *Guidance on Extreme Conformation on LA and Defra websites*

## **5. Finances and Fundraising**

A profit and loss account was presented and signed off by Trustees. It was noted that it is not a requirement of the Charity Commission that DBRGs accounts are presented or audited as they are below the Charity Commission's threshold of

## **6. Symposium October/November 2021**

It was agreed that the potential date for the next symposium will be November 7<sup>th</sup> 2021, and the subject will be Skin Diseases.

The topic will include allergic skin diseases; conformational skin disease and behavioural conditions due to skin diseases.

A number of likely speakers were put forward, but it was agreed to attract speakers of the right gravitas payment would be required. The sum of £150.00 per speaker plus expenses was agreed, and potentially 4 speakers.

There is sponsorship opportunity with this topic. CR to investigate

Action Veterinary and research members to approach potential speakers

## **7. Student Ambassadors**

There are currently 7 Student Ambassadors from different vet schools. The idea of a symposium roadshow was put to them and all thought it a good idea, however if there is a cost involved it was not so popular.

A proportion of the Student Ambassadors will be leaving vet school this year, it was therefore suggested that they recruit their own replacements.

It was also suggested that they are asked what topics they would find useful at a travelling symposium. CR would be happy to give a lecture, but to get attendance it was suggested that free food should be on offer.

It was also agreed that the Student Ambassadors should be acknowledged on the website, just as the members – it would be an incentive for them to become ambassadors. A certificate could also be produced for them.

An another idea was they could proof read –documents such as the questionnaire to ensure that they have wide appeal.

Action CP

## **8. Membership**

It was agreed that any requests for membership should be vetted by current members and usually offered associate membership. It was agreed by all that Annie Wilson should be made an associate member with immediate effect. Associate membership means that the requirement to attend at least 2 meetings a year does not apply. However if associate members wish to attend they are welcome. This ensures that DBRG is more inclusive to potential members who do not live with commutable distance of London.

CF to check with Associate Members whether they wish to receive all emails (provided that all members remember that email discussions as well as meetings are subject to Chatham House rules)

## **9. Kennel Club Structure**

LF had prepared and sent a very comprehensive document about the Kennel Club. It was well received by those who had read it, however not everybody had time to read it before the meeting. It was therefore decided to discuss at the next meeting in June.

## **10. Cavalier Health Booklet**

TL distributed her Cavalier Health Booklet to those present. She had produced the book for Cavalier Matters Charity, and had handed it out at Crufts 2020. All thought that it was an excellent resource and an example of the type of user friendly document DBRG should aspire to. Such a booklet for owners of all breeds would be excellent.

## **11. Presence at Dog Events**

KW presented a costing for attending Discover Dogs, as an example of an event that could be attended by DBRG. The cost of producing the stand was more competitive than members expected. However there was some discussion about the type of event which would be most beneficial for DBRG. It was thought that outdoor events, where the cost of space may be less expensive would probably be more productive. Again it was stressed that DBRG should be clear on the objective and measuring the success of the events.

It was agreed that a stand should be produced in readiness for when DBRG could attend events. The objective should be to educate the general public with regard to puppy purchase.

Action KW

## **12. BOAS conference (Royal Society of Medicine)**

LF will represent DBRG at the conference when it is rescheduled. Other members also expressed an interest in attending

## **13. 'Extreme' Bulldog - South Staffordshire Council/Epic Bullyz**

Advertised on the *Tudor House Stud Dogs* FB page. DBRG's concerns with regard to the above have been flagged to the relevant local authorities. CF will follow up.

Concern was also expressed regarding *Epic Bullyz* but no action has been taken to date. It would seem that these breeders operate within the law but nevertheless are producing large numbers of dogs whose conformation is likely to cause suffering, at least in later life.

Both breeders use artificial insemination and elective caesarians.

## **14. DBRG support/membership of Vets Against Brachycephalism**

It was considered whether DBRG should support the above initiative, and it was agreed that it should be revisited in a year after the membership and initiatives have had time to gain momentum.

Meetings Chairs going forward:

June	AG
September	FC
December	CR

AOB – none

Date of Next Meeting:

4<sup>th</sup> June 2020 (providing country not in lockdown)