



Meeting 12 September 2019, British Veterinary Association (2.00 – 5.00pm)

Notes of Meeting

Members present: Carol Fowler (CF), Lesley Field (LF); Dan O’Neill (DON); Katharine Williams (KW); Fiona Cooke (FC); Polly Smith (PS) and Andrew Gillon (AG)

1. **Welcome to attendees from BVA and Kennel Club** Kelly Thatcher (Canine Health Schemes BVA) Sarah Bartrip (Manager of Kennel Club Assured Breeder Scheme)
2. **Apologies for absence:** Rowena Packer, Tania Ledger, Clare Rusbridge, Camilla Pegram, Vicki Betton
3. **Matters arising**

Action points from June meeting:

3.1 **Breed Conservation Plans**

Plans available on some breed club webpages, Kennel Club do not wish to publish in one place at the moment. It is an evolving process. Any developments to be updated at each DBRG meeting. Noted that Katy Evans who had oversight of the BCPs has now left the KC

Action LF

3.7 **Canine Health Schemes**

BVA have undertaken market research into knowledge of the Breed Health Schemes with a sample of approximately 3000 and this will be reported in October with a copy of their findings sent to DBRG.

Canine Health Schemes is going to hold a ‘breeders forum’ which will include cross breeds, to exchange experience of the health schemes and their use. Canine Health Schemes will be attending Discover Dogs.

It was brought to Kelly Thatcher's attention that the list of where breeders/owners can obtain MRI scans needs to be updated.

Canine Health Schemes will have a drive in January to engage the most popular breeds (eg with Labrador rescue) on their social media outlets

Action KT

4. Symposium

Plans are now complete for the Symposium and 74 tickets have been sold to date.

All members attending are encouraged to post pictures to PS so that she can update social media about events on the day.

4. DBRG'S Primary Purpose

This question occupied most of the meeting, and was considered a constructive use of DBRG member's and trustee's time.

The question was asked – what is the point of DBRG? This provoked a discussion about the purpose of the group and how DBRG are perceived by the general public and other animal welfare organisations.

Topics such as :

How does DBRG encourage the public to buy puppies which have been bought from responsible breeders? The meeting was reminded that DBRG's strap line is: 'A Voice for Dogs.' Should it be 'A Voice for Dogs and Dog Owners'.

It was pointed out that DBRG does not provide a service as such, but can point people towards services, such as the Canine Health Schemes, breed related health problems, available DNA tests, the DBRG Standard for Dog Breeding, the RSPCA/AWF Puppy Contract to ensure that the public are educated about puppy health and welfare.

The discussion progressed, and asked, should DBRG be challenging other groups such as the RSPCA or Kennel Club by asking what they are doing about specific issues.

It was agreed that DBRG should positively challenge other groups, and remember we are 'The Dog Owners Voice'. Positivity is key to challenging, but DBRG should not be reticent about doing so.

The final agreement was that DBRG should be 'an independent group to promote positive change through challenge'

Action All

5. Strategy Review

A great deal of time was spent discussing DBRG's primary purpose and progress was made, but it was agreed that strategy should flow from DBRG's purpose, and should be discussed at future meetings.

Action All

6. Membership Policy

An active as well as a passive membership policy was discussed, and it was agreed that both types of membership would be welcomed, and the detail discussed at later meetings.

Action All

7. Working Groups

Brachycephaly Working Group

The group continues to be active. The next press release will be about the registration counts of the three main breeds, and it was noted that Pug registration has dropped 31% year on year, and French Bulldogs by 8% and Bulldogs by 7%, which is a step in the right direction. It was discussed that these breeds are no longer as fashionable as they were, and do not feature in advertising as much as in previous years. The message about conformational harms appears to be getting through.

Action DON

Extreme Conformation Working Group

The group are working on specific guidelines being issued to make it easier to define extreme conformation and what should be acceptable and not acceptable in specific dog breeds.

Action DON

8. Dog Owner Policy (Questionnaire for Dog Owners)

The questionnaire was examined by members and agreed that it needed to be simplified before issuing to dog owners. We must not assume a level of understanding. It was agreed that it needed to be clearer and simpler and ask more direct questions. It was also noted that GDPR guidelines must be adhered to. It should be an information collecting exercise and DBRG would not become involved

in helping individual cases. DBRG should be a 'collective dog owners voice', but owners should be asked what they would like DBRG to challenge on their behalf.

Action KW to re-write

9. Code of Practice for Dog Breeding

DBRG have been asked by the Canine and Feline Sector Group (CFSG) to draft a Code of Practice for Dog Breeding for England. A draft Code of Practice for Kitten Breeding is already underway.

10. Report on SSPCA "say no to puppy dealers" Campaign

AG attended the meeting as DBRG representative and they are happy to have DBRG support. A link on the DBRG website to the SSPCA campaign was thought a good idea, and perhaps a link to the DBRG Dog Health Website from the SSPCA site. Social media is a key part of their campaign, and DBRG should be part of it.

Action CF, PS

11. Guidance Notes for Breeding Dogs 2018

CFSG have asked DBRG to provide input for the revision of the *Guidance notes for conditions for breeding dogs*. DBRG's input has been written by CF and FC and will be presented to CFSG on the 20th of September by CR.

Note that at the CFSG meeting on 20 September the draft CFSG revision of the Guidance Notes had already been written without the incorporation of DBRG's contribution. It was agreed that our comments would be sent independently to Defra officials.

Action CF

12. Appointment of a new Treasurer

A new treasurer is to be appointed to replace David Grimsell, and CF recommended Samantha McQuigg who currently helps with administrative tasks, and will be helping at the Symposium. It was agreed she is to be paid £15.00 an hour on a self-employed basis. Samantha will invoice DBRG for her work.

13. AOB

None

Next meeting at the BVA, Thursday December 12 at 2.00pm (Chaired by CR)