



Meeting 3 June 2021(Via Zoom) (2.00 – 5.00pm)

Members present: Carol Fowler (CF), Fiona Cooke; (FC) Dan O’Neill (DON), Emma Milne (EM); Katharine Williams (KW), Vicki Betton (VB), Tania Ledger (TL), Andrew Gillon (AG); Lesley Field (LF), Rowena Packer (RP), Annie Wilson (AW), Alison Skipper (AS); Guest Attendee Marissa Heath (part meeting)

Apologies: Camilla Pegram (CP), Clare Rusbridge (CR), (part meeting)

Meeting chaired by Andrew Gillon

Alison Skipper welcomed to DBRG as new member.

1. Matters arising

Trustee Document is being sent to each Trustee for signature and is currently with RP

2. The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 Local Authority Steering Group.

MH presented the status of the pilot training programme for local authority inspectors which she has attended as an interested party due to her role at CFSG. DEFRA are taking the training of local authority inspectors seriously, and most local authorities wish to improve the inspection of breeding establishments. Due to the recent increase in puppy sales LAs are inundated with breeding establishments, but lack the expertise, and also the staff, to properly inspect premises.

It was agreed that if DBRG are to become involved in producing additional support to LA Inspectors particularly in relation to genetic health and welfare, the material should be in a simple, graphic format. The programme will not be used as a legislative tool yet, but the aim would be to enshrine it in legislation when the Regulations are reviewed in 2023.

It was discussed whether some breeds should be granted a licence at all due to their extreme conformation if the criteria in the regulations are applied stringently. This may be a difficult decision for inspectors, as it has been for vets inspecting breeding premises. There is also the issue of a conflict with Kennel Club breed standard. It was agreed that there is not an ‘easy fix’ of this issue.

It was then debated whether the training module should be breed specific, perhaps inserting one page for each breed. However it was also pointed out that the local authority inspectors are not necessarily experts in animal welfare. Indeed they may also inspect food premises, licensed premises etc, and it might be more manageable to create a programme with a wider approach. Depending upon the success of this programme, breed health aspects could be added later. It was suggested that Breed Health Coordinators might be involved and the specific Breed Health and Conservation Plan utilised.

It was also pointed out that the regulations do not catch all breeders, as some breeders consider themselves 'hobby breeders' when in reality they are no longer in this category. This is particularly relevant due the vast increase in the prices of puppies during the pandemic. This issue needs to be addressed.

The working group should firstly approach likely sources of funding as DBRG now have an idea of how the programme would work. MH would be happy to present the proposal to CFSG for their support and a one page proposal should be prepared.

Action CR VB TL

3. Sector Issues

CFSG : The Big Tent Meeting will be on the 2nd of July , and DBRG to put forward issues for discussion.

Action All to put forward likely issues to CF

CAWGW: No update as the new Chairperson has yet to be appointed.

BWG: A new message has been published on the BWG website, "**Stop and think before buying a flat-faced dog**". It is hoped that this will go some way to informing the general public. The link is to be included on DBRG website .

Heat related illness is another issue which is currently being discussed by the working group, and also the changing of Breed Standards for Brachycephalic dogs, which it was agreed will be a slow and difficult process.

Action DON to send link to CF

APGAW: APGAW is running an enquiry into enforcement of animal welfare legislation and the conclusion is to be published later this year.

APDAWG

APDAWG have 4 parliamentary debates due to be heard

- 1 Importation of dogs to the UK;
- 2 Ear Cropping
- 3 Microchips to be scanned when a dog is taken to a vet
- 4 Breed Specific Legislation.

4. Norwegian SPCA Court Action Against Dog Breeders

The Norwegian Society for Protection of Animals has brought a case before the Oslo District Court against the Norwegian Kennel Club, the Norwegian Cavalier Club, the Norwegian Bulldog Club and six breeders of English bulldog and Cavalier King Charles Spaniel. The Oslo District Court has now agreed to hear the case. Unless the ruling is overturned on appeal, the case will be heard later this year. It was agreed that this is a key legal issue, which would have major implications in the UK, if not the world, if upheld in Norway .

This topic will be revisited at September's meeting. Ashild Roaldset from N SPCA will attend the meeting to update DBRG.

5. Government Plans to improve animal welfare related to dog breeding

The government's Action Plan for Animal Welfare sets out their plan, to implement a programme of primary legislation, secondary legislation, and other non-legislative measures as stated in their manifesto, and relevant to the UK after the exit from The European Union. Those specifically relevant to DBRG are:

- 1 Puppy Smuggling
- 2 Pet Theft
- 3 Animal Sentience

An update on this issue will be discussed at September's meeting.

6. Meeting the Kennel Club re ABS Puppy Contract PIP and AWF Puppy Contract PIP

Feedback from the meeting has been shared via email and a list of action points have been forwarded to the Kennel Club. A second meeting with the KC is scheduled for October.

We understand that the SSPCA are currently discussing improvements to their Assured Breeder Scheme and this could impact on raising breeding standards throughout the UK. It was agreed to invite a member of SSPCA to September or December's meeting to present the scheme's merits.

The idea of putting together an infographic for the general public, available on the DBRG website and social media showing the difference between the different schemes was suggested. It was agreed that it would be an excellent resource for potential puppy buyers. The comparison could include:

Breeder adhering to COP KC Assured Breeder SSPCA Assured Breeder

This could be done in an objective way, by comparing the standards and differences similar to the BVA scheme for farm animals (tick box)

Action AS AG. EM

7. Cavaliers and Summary of KC Breed Records

The breed records for Cavaliers for 2020 was very disappointing. It illustrated that there is very little health testing. TL has put together an infographic intended as help for potential puppy buyers. This has been shared widely on social media.

It was agreed that information similar to the one for Cavaliers should be produced for other breeds, and posted on social media.

AW to produce the first infographic for Bernese Mountain Dog and each DBRG member to sign up to producing one in a simple and easy to understand format using TL's template.

LF to contact Breed Health Coordinators to gain information for the project

Action AW ALL

8. Symposium

This year there is an automatic ticketing system. No update on number of tickets sold this is to be advised by IT technician. It was agreed that AG will be a photographer for the event. Sponsorship achieved to date is £4500 and further sponsorship opportunities are being investigated.

9. Call to Action – wording for second banner

It was agreed that a DBRG banner which directly addresses the general public should be produced. Wording: 'Put health and welfare first when you choose your puppy. See our website for advice and guidance.'

10. AOB

Student Ambassadors have agreed to put together graphics for the Symposium

Suggestions for changes to the ABS Code of Practice and CFSG Code of Practice have been finalised and will be sent to the KC.

Discussion about what DBRG should recommend to puppy buyers when they ask. It was agreed that no specific scheme should be recommended, but signposted to DBRG website and Code of Practice for Dog Breeding.

End of Meeting

Date of Next Meeting 9 September 2021