



Meeting September 8th 2022 (2pm- 5pm via Zoom)

Members present: Carol Fowler (CF), Fiona Cooke (FC), Dan O'Neill (DON), Emma Milne (EM), Katharine Williams (KW), Andrew Gillon (AG), Annie Wilson (AW), Alison Skipper (AS), Clare Rusbridge (CR), Sean McCormack (SMc), Sam McQuigg (SM) (last 30 mins)

Apologies: Rowena Packer; Tania Ledger; Vicki Betton; Michelle Farrow

Meeting chaired by Fiona Cooke

1. Matters arising

Breed Posters Update (AS)

41 breeds have now been checked and are published on the website.

AG informed the group that the SSPCA will be using them when their inspectors visit breeding premises.

It was agreed to release one breed poster per week on DBRG social media

Sam Gaines (RSPCA)

Sam will be joining DBRG, but was unable to attend today's meeting

2. Symposium

12 tickets sold to date. By the same date in 2019 many more tickets had been sold. Lack of sales likely to be due to post Covid fall out, and cost of travel. It was agreed that all members should publish on social media to promote.

Sponsors to be contacted to find out if there is a minimum attendee number they would accept, to keep the sponsorship.

It was agreed to review the situation at the beginning of October and work out a minimum number of attendees required to break even. AG agreed to undertake this task, once furnished with the costs and attendee numbers.

Peter Egan a key speaker has another engagement on the same day which he is willing to cancel. However, it was suggested he could record his introduction for DBRG so that he can attend the other engagement. CF agreed to liaise with him.

ACTION: EM Sponsorship; AG cost analysis; CF Liaison

3. **DBRG Definition of 'Normal Behaviour' for a Dog**

It was agreed that 'normal behaviour' is difficult to define. Both words have different connotations to different people. It was decided not to use the word 'normal'. Instead, the word 'natural' was suggested. There was discussion about whether this may not be the right word either, and 'innate' more suitable. However, it was questioned whether the general public would understand the word 'innate.' It was also agreed that behaviour varies by breed, for example herding behaviour is obviously apparent in herding breeds, but not in other breeds.

The discussion moved on to who the definition was aimed at. If it was for internal DBRG use a more academic description would be acceptable, but if needed for the general public a plain English version would be required.

It was agreed that an expert opinion should be sought. Sarah Heath, an Animal Behaviourist, was suggested as a suitable expert once DBRG members had agreed a framework.

ACTION: CF

4. **Local Authority Inspectors Training Module**

It was reported that there are no new meetings scheduled, however Sharon Edwards has agreed that a 'traffic light' system would very helpful and practical. For example, dog breeds flagged red would mean that they require more investigation. On this list would be brachycephalic breeds particularly Bulldogs. There is further work to be done. The working group will report back at the next meeting in December.

ACTION: LA Working Group (VB, CR, AG, EM, FC)

5. **Kennel Club**

It was agreed that a liaison sub group should be set up for communication with the Kennel Club. EM, CR, and AS volunteered. It was also suggested the TL with her experience would be an asset to this group, and the matter should be discussed at the next meeting. Discussion continued about the difficulties encountered when meeting with the Kennel Club, and the slow response times.

It was agreed to invite Joanna Iliska (KC Canine Geneticist) to the next meeting. A list of questions should be drawn up before the meeting and agreed via email between members, so that Joanna will be fully prepared before the meeting.

ACTION: CF initially then EM CR AS TL to follow up

6. **Veterinary Engagement in Dog Health Issues**

AW is keen to get vets more engaged in dog health issues to make owners and breeders aware of the importance of health testing. It was suggested that the best way to do this might be through the BVA, as their Brachycephalic intervention has been effective. In addition, it was suggested that the RCVS could write professional guidelines. Would it be a good idea to approach them? Both proposals seemed feasible and it was agreed to discuss this further at the next meeting.

7. **Student Ambassador Update**

MF was unable to attend the meeting but did send an email update before the meeting itemising the work that she and the student ambassadors are undertaking. This included:

(1) A Student Ambassador Recruitment Poster - to be circulated to prospective ambassadors through vet schools, etc.

(2) A student ambassador welcome pack - this will be given to new ambassadors and includes points that students must acknowledge and adhere to.

(3) Poster to advertise the Symposium

ACTION MF and Student Ambassadors to promote the Symposium

8. **Position Papers**

It was noted that no new position papers had been drafted for two or three years. The position papers currently published on the DBRG website should be reviewed. It was agreed that this should be on the agenda for the next meeting.

9. **Updating Areas of Focus**

In light of the August 2022 APGAW Report, '*Improving the Effectiveness of Animal Welfare Enforcement*' it was agreed that we should look again at our Areas of Focus document with a view to updating it.

ACTION CF

10. **Succession**

So far, a replacement for CF has not been found. Therefore it may be necessary to re-think the way DBRG is managed with specific areas of responsibility assigned to different trustees or members. This requires more discussion at a further Trustee meeting.

The most urgent items which require cover are:

1. Response to correspondence from third parties, for example, CFSG, CAWGW, APGAW, DEFRA, IPFD
2. External representation on the above Sector Groups
3. Providing the agenda for meetings
4. Maintaining and updating the DBRG website (CF is happy to continue to do this, with technical assistance from Steve Tolmie) It should be noted that currently this technical support is funded by Cavalier Matters charity.
5. CF also happy to forward any relevant emails from external sources and sectors

11. **Meeting Dates for 2023**

AG agreed to compile a Doodle Poll, for the 2023 DBRG meeting dates for next year, and for a separate Trustee meeting to discuss Succession.

ACTION AG

Next Meeting 8 December 2-5pm via Zoom

