



Meeting 12 December 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); Polly Smith (PS) and Andrew Gillon (AG); Clare Rusbridge (CR); Camilla Pegram (CP) Samantha McQuigg (SMc), and Vickie Betton (VB) via Skype

Apologies for absence: Rowena Packer; Tania Ledger; Fiona Cooke.

1. Matters arising

Action points from September meeting:

1.1 DBRG Owners Questionnaire

A revised Owners Questionnaire was presented, and its purpose discussed. It was agreed that receiving information from dog owners when things go wrong is worthwhile. The data might be used to identify problems in specific dog breeds or other patterns may emerge. Individual owners and breeders would not be identified. An owner who contacts DBRG for help or guidance will be able to download a form for this purpose. The Questionnaire was signed off and its core purpose agreed.

Action CF

2 DBRG Core Purpose

‘DBRG’s purpose is to be an independent voice for dogs to ensure that they are bred to the highest possible standards of health and welfare, including genetic health, and free from problems arising from exaggerated and unnatural conformations. We provide help and guidance to members of the public who are seeking to buy a healthy puppy.

As an independent organisation with expertise DBRG will campaign for improvements in statutory regulations and challenge existing substandard practices.'

This description was discussed and agreed prior to the meeting.

Further discussion ensued involving our campaigning role and the differences between 'campaigning', 'lobbying' and 'advocacy.'

Where appropriate we will join and support the campaigns of other welfare organisations related to dog breeding within which we can act as the dogs' and dog owners' voice. We will also initiate our own campaigns specific to our own areas of concern and expertise.

A number of campaigns likely to be instigated by DBRG were discussed; such as campaigning for a single microchipping database which must include and retain the breeder's details; non-licensed breeders to be registered with their local authority; maximum number of litters for one breeding bitch reduced to four (currently 6); training for LA inspectors to include knowledge of breed-related health and welfare issues; all advertisements for sale to include the breeders licence number or registration number.

It was agreed that the SSPCA campaign is a good example of DBRG supporting third parties with their campaigning activity. DBRG's support of the CFSG and CAWGW are further examples of collaboration to effect change.

It was however agreed that the animal sentience campaign, led primarily by ALAW should be the next campaign that DBRG ought to support due to the urgency of the situation post BREXIT. Contact will be made with ALAW to offer support.

It was agreed that 2020 should be the year that DBRG's purpose is defined, and the strap line agreed at the meeting in September was reiterated: A Voice for Dogs

Action CF/KW

3. DBRG Leadership

CF stated that she is happy to remain as DBRG Leader for the time being. However, it was agreed that the chairing of meetings will be rotated and that others should take on specific roles. For example Camilla Pegram - Student Ambassadors; Polly Smith - Social Media; Katharine Williams - Governance/Charity Commission liaison; Dan O'Neill – scientific publications; etc.

It was agreed that DBRG could be innovative in the way it does things and not necessarily follow traditional lines. The charity needs to look to the future in order to be sustainable and that includes electing a new leader when it becomes necessary.

4. Membership Policy

It was pointed out that the same members are always absent from meetings even though they receive the full email correspondence. Also the same core members attend DBRG meetings. It was therefore agreed that a new membership structure was needed:

- Trustees attend at least 2 meetings per year and specified Trustee meetings where necessary.
- Full Members attend at least 2 meetings a year and participate fully in discussions and tasks.
(Core Membership includes trustees and full members)
- Associate Members includes those who wish to receive group emails where appropriate and help where possible but do not necessarily attend meetings.
- The Advisors category is ended.
- Honorary Members - Professor Sheila Crispin and Marisa Heath
- Student Ambassadors

Core members will receive all email correspondence. Associate Members and Honorary Members will receive selective emails agreed by the core group.

Other current members who do not meet either criteria will be deleted from the mailing list and will no longer be deemed members with immediate effect.

Samantha McQuigg has been appointed our Finance Officer and may attend appropriate meetings as she wishes.

We are delighted to welcome Emma Milne as a full member.

5. Student Ambassador Scheme

There are currently 7 student ambassadors led by CP. They represent students from veterinary colleges and animal welfare colleges. They were helpful in promoting the Symposium and now need a new project to promote. It was suggested that fundraising may be the way they could help. However they require an end fundraising goal. It was suggested that fundraising for a student road show could take the format of a mini symposium at different veterinary or animal welfare colleges. Helping with dog events around the country where DBRG might have an information stand would also be an appropriate role for Student Ambassadors.

Action CP

6. Symposium

The Symposium was deemed a great success. Attendees' feedback was positive and in many cases enthusiastic. New ideas were mooted for the next one, such as:

- Behaviour – which could encompass socialisation of puppies; epilepsy; pain and behaviour; separation anxiety.
- Epilepsy and Movement Disorders (eg Paroxysmal Dyskinesia aka Spikes Disease) as a stand alone subject
- Spinal Disorders
- Skin Diseases
- Welfare Issues such as diet and exercise

Social media will be used to garner opinion on subject matter and reported back at March meeting.

Action PS

Car parking should be more clearly marked as this was the only criticism of the day. AG volunteered to guide and supervise parking on the day.

7. Income and Expenditure Statement

The income and expenditure statement was presented. The Symposium had generated a small profit but the exact amount was not known as invoices had not yet been received from the University of Surrey. It was therefore agreed that a more comprehensive profit and loss account should be presented at the next meeting. Before another symposium is organised DBRG need to know where money could be saved or spent.

Action SMc

8. Fundraising CVS

CF has another meeting with CVS planned but it wasn't clear how much further CVS can help without a specific fundraising objective. It was agreed that a fundraising objective is the key to motivate any donations. Corporate bodies may not wish to contribute generally and need to know where their money is going to be spent.

An example of specific funding requests would be presence at public events such as Discover Dogs and the National Pet Show. It was agreed that costing for DBRG's attendance at Discover Dogs will be prepared and presented as a fundraising goal.

Action KW

9. Code of Practice for Dog Breeding

The Code of Practice had already been distributed to core members via email with an opportunity to comment. Prepared by CF and FC, it will be presented to CFSG with the hope that it will be adopted. Group to be updated at next meeting.

Action CF/FC

10. External Working Groups

DON updated members on the Brachycephalic Working Group whose progress is ongoing.

DON also updated members on the CFSG Extreme Conformation Working Group which has prepared a *Code of Practice for Dog Conformation*. Comments on the draft COP have been offered by CF but it remains unclear if those comments will be incorporated.

11. AOB

The **website** has been updated and members were happy with the new, clearer design

The DBRG **main leaflet** needs updating in the light of the new regulations and priorities.

It was agreed that a second, **simplified leaflet** should also be prepared with the emphasis on aiding the general public when considering buying a puppy.

Action CF and All

Dates for Meetings in 2020

All at BVA 7 Mansfield Street

- **12 March at 2pm**
- **4th June at 2pm**
- **10th September at 2pm**
- **3rd December at 2pm**