



Notes of DBRG Meeting 14 September 2017

British Veterinary Association (BVA), 7 Mansfield Street, London W1G 9NQ
2.00 – 5.00pm

Members Present

Carol Fowler (CF), Dan O'Neill (DON), David Grimsell (DG) , Fiona Cooke (FC), Julia Charlton (JC), Stephen Charlton (SC), Katharine Williams (KW), Tania Ledger,

Advisors present

Sheila Crispin (SMC), Gudrun Ravetz (GR)

Guests

Teri Watson (Breedright Business Consultant), Claire Calder (Dogs Trust)

Apologies

Clare Rusbridge, Rowena Packer, Charlotte Mackaness, Lesley Field, Sean Wensley, Marisa Heath

1. Matters arising

There were none

2. Guest introduction

Teri Watson was welcomed and her role in the Breedright framework, database and business plan was introduced.

3. Chance Pixies v North Kesteven District Council and Little Rascals Pets (Swindells Farm) (July 2017) Implications of the Judgement by Mr Justice Garnham.

Heidi and David Anderson from Chancepixies were unable to attend in person but provided a written statement in which they expressed their dismay at the outcome of the case. A lack of financial support meant Chancepixies was unable to appeal the judges' decision. However, Heidi and David took hope from the fact that the AWA is now linked with breeding regulations and will continue their campaign.

DG interpreted the judge's decision to mean that the Breeding of Dogs Act (1973) entitles a local authority to consider factors other than the specified licensing conditions in awarding a licence. While this is formally discretionary, consideration of AWA criteria would be 'overwhelmingly material' and it would be unreasonable for a local authority not to do so. The judge decided that this did not mean that a local authority was required to follow directly each criterion for care detailed on the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs.

This appears to be a potentially important case precedent as it implies local authorities should in practice consider the 5 Freedoms under Section 9 of the AWA when licensing dog breeders, and could be subject to judicial review if they failed to do so.

4. Breedright update (JC)

Nominations for DBRG appointed Breedright Trustees (Fiona Cooke, Julia Charlton, Katharine Williams) were agreed. Chris Laurence has been appointed as a non-DBRG trustee.

The working group has continued to develop the Scheme and now has a draft Inspector Training Syllabus.

Teri Watson will advise on a database/website development and the Breedright business plan.

The working group is planning to produce an outline of the Scheme which will be shared with relevant and interested parties.

A discussion arose about the recently published Kennel Club document, *Collaboration is Key: the way forward for breeding regulations* and KC Assured Breeder Scheme (ABS). It was felt that the Breedright Scheme would not necessarily be in competition with the ABS as it would include breeders who did not register their puppies with the Kennel Club and also crossbreeds (ie around 60% of puppies produced in the UK).

5. Puppy Contract Stakeholder Group

The Animal Welfare Foundation (AWF) held a meeting on July 10 2017 to announce that it is re-launching the Puppy Contract and Puppy Information Pack (PIP). This will involve the formation of a new charitable incorporated organisation (CIO). The AWF and RSPCA are jointly funding the creation of a new website and online tool and re-branding of the Puppy Contract. As DBRG has supported and promoted the Puppy Contract from the outset and the Breedright Scheme will also make its use compulsory, it is hoped that DBRG will be included as a stakeholder in developing the project in the future.

6. Changes at APGAW and clarification of the Defra Expert Panel

APGAW: The All-Party Group for Animal Welfare has been re-structured in order to make its recommendations to Government more effective. DBRG and other organisations will be invited to become Associate Members and invited to attend meetings when the topic is relevant to them. APGAW is currently Co-Chaired by Angela Smith, MP and Henry Smith, MP.

There are concerns within DBRG that the new APGAW structure appears to have a strong industry component.

Defra Expert Panel / National Companion Animal Focus Group (NCAFG): It is noted that Defra has appointed an Expert Panel for the purposes of implementing the Animal Establishments Licensing proposals. Membership relevant for dogs includes Defra officials, National Companion Animal Focus Group (NCAFG), CFSG, Kennel Club, RSPCA, BVA, Pet Industry Federation (PIF), Animal Plant and Health Agency (APHA).

7. Meeting with Lord Gardiner

CF and Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, MP, met with Lord Gardiner and Phil Alder (Defra) on 7 September. The meeting went well and we were re-assured by

Lord Gardiner's view that dogs were of tremendous value to humans and society as a whole and that they need to be protected from welfare harms. Breed-related health and welfare issues, including conformation issues, were most definitely on the agenda. Currently the focus is on the new licensing regulations.

DBRG notes that progress is being made and hopes that there will be some ministerial continuity to enable the implementation of reforms.

8. DBRG Symposium 22 October 2017

CF reported that ticket sales for the Symposium were going well

9. National Pet Show (NPS) 4-5 November

This year we will share a stand with the Cockapoo Club of GB (CCGB). Leaflets and flyers will be available to be given out and it is hoped that there will be a few items for sale, such as greetings cards, note pads, and book marks.

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