



Annual Report 2018

With greater knowledge we can improve dog breeding in the UK

www.dogbreedingreformgroup.uk

Registered Charitable Trust No. 1176163

Membership

Trustees Dr Fiona Cooke, Lesley Field, Carol Fowler, David Grimsell, Dr Dan O'Neill, Charlotte Mackaness, Prof Clare Rusbridge, Katharine Williams

Members Julia Carr, Tania Ledger, Dr Rowena Packer, Dr Pete Wedderburn

Advisors Prof Sheila Crispin, Andrew Gillon (BVA), Vicki Betton (PDSA)

Meetings

Meetings were held on March 22, June 7, September 6, December 6 at the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) Camden, London.

Charitable Aims

Our charitable aims are: To promote humane behaviour towards animals by providing and supporting initiatives to improve dog welfare related to:

a) genetic and breed related health, breeding, rearing and selling practices; and

b) to inform the general public about irresponsible dog breeding in order to make them aware of the potential impact on their dogs' health and welfare.

DBRG's Strategic Plan for 2018-2021 is: 1) Developing DBRG as a sustainable organisation, 2) Education and raising awareness, 3) Legislative change to meet the needs of dogs in the 21st century, 4) Bringing experts together and disseminating expertise, 5) Changing behaviours of owners and breeders.



Chairman's Introduction

2018 has been a busy and momentous year: our first year as a Registered Charitable Trust. Highlights have been the completion of our three year Strategic Plan; uploading important advice to puppy buyers on our website;

producing a new information leaflet; helping to achieve major changes in the regulation of dog breeding (*Regulations for Animal Activities Licensing*, October 2018); helping to achieve the Government's promise to ban the third party sale of puppies; winner of the CEVA Animal Welfare Award for Best Charity Team of the Year; invitation to become a collaborative partner in International Partnership for Dogs (IPFD); becoming an Associate Member of the Canine and Feline Sector Group (CFSG); presenting our position paper, *The Animal Welfare Act and the Protection of Offspring* to the Canine And Feline Sector Group Annual General Meeting; achieving DBRG representation on the CFSG working group on Conformation Welfare Problems; launching our Student Ambassador Scheme.



External meetings and events

January

CF attendance at Dogs Trust Research Meeting: Project Investigating size, source and movement of domestic dogs in the UK.

CF meeting with Helen Black (Community Voluntary Service, South Gloucestershire) to work on the three year plan, wording of leaflet to comply with Charity Commission (CC) requirements, writing a brief history of DBRG for the CC.

February

Recruited Wotton volunteers, Sally Davies (Funding Applications), Samantha McQuigg (Clerical)

March

APGAW Big Tent Meeting. Attended by Defra Minister, Lord Gardiner, Chairman of the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England, Michael Seal, Mark Berry, Local Authority Animal Welfare Group. The meeting outlined the new risk-based system under the new Animal Welfare Licensing Regulations. In the working groups, DBRG requested that the issue of the Protection of Offspring be taken forward by the All Party Group for Animal Welfare (APGAW), the Canine and Feline Sector Group (CFSG), and the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England (AHWBE). Several members of DBRG attended.

APGAW Panel discussion and networking event: **Implementing Sentience Policy** Key speakers, Paula Sparks, ALAW, Mike Radford, Animal Welfare Law, University of Aberdeen, Dr Penny Hawkins RSPCA, Dr Steven McCulloch, Centre for Animal Welfare, University of Winchester. CF represented DBRG.

April

DBRG is awarded winner of the Best Charity Team of the Year at the CEVA Animal Welfare Awards in Birmingham.

May

DBRG attended the **Canine and Feline Sector Group (CFSG) Big Tent** meeting. At this meeting the 2018 Regulations on Animal Licensing Guidance were outlined. A proposal was put forward by DBRG that the programme of work for the CFSG for 2019 should include additional regulatory protection of offspring under the Animal Welfare Act.

June

DBRG will be represented on the **CFSG Conformation Working Group** by Dr Dan O'Neill.

At the DBRG meeting Ian Seath, Dachshund Breed Health Co-ordinator, presented the Breed Health Plan for the Dachshund breed. It is hoped that

other breeds would bring out similar plans to improve the health of their own breeds. Recognition was acknowledged of the crucial role that Breed Clubs and Breed Health Co-ordinators had in setting the standard for ethical breeding.

Animal Welfare Foundation (AWF) RSPCA Puppy Contract

The AWF and RSPCA launch the new Puppy Contract to assist breeders and puppy buyers. Use of the Contract will ensure that a breeder has done everything s/he can to breed healthy puppies. In turn the puppy buyer undertakes to provide a good home and care for their new puppy. DBRG has supported the Puppy Contract from its inception and it can be downloaded from our website.



July

Meeting with Defra Officials Carol Fowler and David Grimsell met with Defra officials to present the DBRG's position paper on the Animal Welfare Act and the Protection of Offspring. It was acknowledged that the New Licensing Regulations, Schedule 6.6 *Protection from pain, suffering, injury and disease* includes the statement, *No dog may be kept for breeding if it can reasonably be expected, on the basis of its genotype, phenotype or state of health that breeding from it could have a detrimental effect on its health and welfare or that of its offspring.*

The Defra officials (Philip Alder, Rebeca Garcia, Andy Howarth) listened to our concerns that such a duty of care should apply to those breeding dogs outside

the licensing regime also. The officials indicated that they were favourably disposed to the development of a Code of Practice for the Breeding of Dogs.

August

CF and Julia Carr were invited to a **Garden Party at Number 10 Downing Street** to hear Defra Minister, Michael Gove, announce the Government's intention to ban the third party sale of puppies and enact 'Lucy's Law'



September

At the DBRG meeting, Dr Tom Lewis gave a presentation on **Canine Genetics** and the possibilities for breeders provided by the use of DNA testing, use of the Canine Health Schemes and Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs). EBVs are now available for Hip and Elbow Dysplasia in some breeds which if used widely by breeders will lower the incidence of these two painful and debilitating genetic diseases.

Carol Fowler attended the **Kennel Club's Breed Health Co-ordinators Symposium** at Stoneleigh in Warwickshire. Also present were DBRG members, Dr Dan O'Neil (Vet Compass, Royal Veterinary College), Dr Rowena Packer

(Royal Veterinary College), Andrew Gillon (BVA Canine Health Schemes) and Lesley Field (Springer Spaniel Breed Health Co-ordinator).

At the Symposium Dr Mike Starkey gave a presentation on Canine Cancers.

Dr Rosario Cerundolo gave a presentation on Common Skin Problems in the Dog.

International Partnership for Dogs (IPFD)



DBRG was invited to be a collaborative partner in the International Partnership for Dogs (IPFD). This organisation holds Dog Health Workshops at different countries in Europe every two years where national Kennel Clubs meet with scientists in an effort to share good practice and work together to address canine health and welfare concerns worldwide. To date DBRG is the only organisation representing dog owners. We have an important role to play in ensuring that the needs of dog owners for a healthy and happy pet dog are given priority.

IPFD now has a **Harmonisation of Genetic Tests** website, listing all of the available DNA tests on a breed by breed basis. Our own DogBreedHealth website has been updated to reflect this development.



Members of DBRG will be attending the 2019 IPFD Dog Health Workshop held at Windsor, UK in May, hosted by the UK Kennel Club.

DG and CF attended the **Canine and Feline Sector Group (CFSG) Annual General Meeting** to present our position paper, The Animal Welfare Act and the Protection of Offspring. Our paper was well received and CFSG have agreed

to move forward in creating a **Code of Practice for Dog Breeding** which DBRG will be closely involved in. Lobbying for additional statutory regulations to protect offspring from health and welfare harms will be considered at a later date.

October

A revised **DBRG information leaflet** has been produced to reflect the October 2018 Regulations for Animal Activities Licensing.

DBRG Student Ambassador Scheme is launched

DBRG Student Ambassadors

The launching of our Student Ambassador Scheme was a major development this year. Our student members 2018-19 are: Louise Skinner, Veterinary Student, University of Budapest; Laura Davies, third year Bioveterinary Science, University of Chester; Hannah Gill, Graduate, Animal Health and Welfare, Harper Adams University; Ebony Judge, first year Biology, Liverpool University; Ben Erentraut, third year Veterinary Science, University of Surrey; Grace Mee, second year, Veterinary Science, University of Liverpool.

As student members they have undertaken to promote DBRG and its aims via their own social media groups, establish links with other veterinary or animal welfare students, represent DBRG at public events and engage with the public about the work of DBRG and help in setting up the Associate Membership. Student Ambassadors will receive copies of all relevant documents and may attend any of the DBRG meetings.

CF Meetings with Helen Black, South Gloucestershire County Council Community Voluntary Service (CVS) for advice on fund raising and ensuring that DBRG is fulfilling requirements from the Charity Commission.

November

CF Meeting with Annie Wilson (Paws Against Elbow Dysplasia) to explore how we can work together to ensure that the Canine Health Schemes (CHS) Elbow Dysplasia Scheme (ED) and Kennel Club's Estimated Breeding Values (EBV) online facility is more widely used by breeders.

December

A new way of working The DBRG meeting (AGM) in December focused on how specific work streams and responsibilities could be delegated in order to share the workload amongst members and trustees.

Website development

- Completion of new website page: Canine Health Schemes
- Completion of new website page: Help With Finding a Puppy
- Completion of new website page: What To Do When Things Go Wrong
- Update DogBreedHealth website Breed Pages in the light of new edition of '*Breed Predispositions to Disease in Dogs and Cats.*' (Gough, Thomas, O'Neill)
- Update DogBreedHealth website Breed Pages List of DNA tests based on the IPFD Harmonisation of DNA tests and the UK Kennel Club's Breed DNA tests
- Setting up DBRG Online Shop



Responses to official consultations:

- Consultation on the draft Animal Welfare (Sentencing and Recognition of Sentience) Bill
- Ireland Public Consultation on the Review of Dog Breeding Establishments Guidelines
- Welsh Government Consultation Revision of the Code of Practice to the Welfare of Dogs

- Scottish Government Consultation on the Licensing of Dog, Cat and Rabbit Breeding in Scotland
- Defra Consultation on the Third Party Sale of Puppies
- Defra Consultation on Banning the Commercial Third Party Sale of Puppies

Policy Position Papers completed:

- An Independent Committee to Provide Expert Advice on Companion Animal Welfare
- Third Party Sale of Puppies
- The Animal Welfare Act and the Protection of Offspring
- Obesity in Dogs

Carol Fowler