

SUMMARY MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMPANION ANIMAL WELFARE COUNCIL HELD AT 1045 AM ON 11TH JANUARY 2006 IN THE MILLBANK COMMITTEE ROOM OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

Present: Lord Soulsby (Chairman) (LS)
Mrs S Bell (SB)
Ms B Cooper (BC)
Lady Fretwell (MF)
Dr J Kirkwood (JK)
Professor D Lamb (DL)
Dr A McBride (AM)
Dr J McNicholas (JM)
Mr M Radford (MR)
Sir Colin Spedding (CS)

In attendance: Mr A Waldron (AW)

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from: Professor S Ahmedzai; Professor N Gorman; Mr M Herrtage; Mr L Leather; Prof D Mills; Dr P Scott; Dr E Svendsen and Mr W Swann.

1.2 The Chairman welcomed Dr June McNicholas as a new Member of Council.

ITEM 2 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 Council accepted the previously circulated Unconfirmed Minutes and Summary Minutes. The Summary Minutes were to be passed to the Webmaster for publication by the Secretariat.

ITEM 3 - MATTERS ARISING

3.1 The majority of matters arising from the previous meeting were dealt with during the subsequent Agenda items.

3.2 Suitability of meeting dates was discussed and it was agreed that, in the main, these should revert back to Mondays.

ITEM 4 – TREASURERS REPORT

4.1 Ms Cooper updated Council on financial matters and noted that End of Year Accounts were being finalized and were currently on track for presentation at the next meeting. Council

insurance had been renewed with AON.

4.2 The Chairman advised that he had received a draft letter from Dr Svendsen which she intended to send to CAWC sponsors ideally within the week.

4.3 Sir Colin Spedding considered that the potential programme of work would require additional resources and the Chairman agreed to undertake some informal groundwork. Ms Cooper proposed that Fundraising be a regular Agenda Item; this was agreed.

4.4 The Chairman thanked Ms Cooper for her excellent work as Treasurer and was particularly grateful for her assistance during the transitional period as she took over from her predecessor.

ITEM 5 – CAWC WEBSITE REVIEW

5.1 Council was updated on the Website review by the Secretariat. Arising from the last meeting: the domain name companionanimalwelfarecouncil.co.uk had been purchased and was operational; the DEFRA web link had been approved but was not yet in place. Council viewed that the website was a very important ‘shop window’ and should be updated but CAWC report quality remained paramount.

5.2 Lady Fretwell kindly offered to source appropriate photographs, but also indicated some elements of the website could not be downloaded.

ITEM 6 – POLITICAL REVIEW

6.1 **Animal Welfare Bill and Regulation.** Whilst programmed as separate Agenda items, the Animal Welfare Bill and Regulation topics intertwined. Mr Radford reported that the Animal Welfare Bill was moving quickly and had been well received in the Commons. Council discussion covered issues including duty of care and licencing and it was agreed that Mr Radford should produce a short statement outlining why Regulation was important.

6.2 Mr Radford viewed the Scottish Animal Welfare Bill as forging ahead apace. The Bill was due to be debated in Parliament on 22nd February and it was possible that it would be on the statute books by the Summer.

6.3 Sir Colin Spedding considered the Radford report (action item in para 6.1) as crucial and that in order to expedite production it should be agreed electronically. Discussion then focused on CAWC, its role, workload and membership

6.4 **Code Working Groups.** The Chairman advised Council that DEFRA was forming several Code Working Groups over the next few years covering a range of species. Ms Cooper had agreed to represent CAWC on the first Group which was to consider Dogs

6.5 **England Implementation Group.** Sir Colin Spedding noted that the EIG meeting was to be held on 8th March, that CAWC would be invited to participate. It was agreed that Mr Swann should lead a small group, with powers to co-opt as necessary, to take the matter forward.

ITEM 7 REPORTS FROM WORKING PARTIES

7.1 Companion Animals in Health and Social Care Institutions. Professor Ahmedzai was not present, however, Dr McBride had received some data on January 10th and proposed that she and Dr McNicholas select a suitable venue, review the evidence and write up the paper over a concentrated period. This was warmly accepted by Council.

7.2 Working Party on Enforcement and the Animal Welfare Bill. Mr Radford advised that progress was ongoing and there was nothing to add to his earlier briefing.

7.3 Unregulated Companion Animal Services in relation to Training Exercising and Care. Ms Cooper outlined Group progress and considered that the revised draft Report would be ready for the next meeting of Council.

7.4 Phenotypic Modification Through Selective Breeding or Application of Modern Biotechnology, and the Welfare of Companion Animals. Dr Kirkwood distributed the latest revision of the Report in hard copy for Council review. The Report launch date had yet to be decided but was likely to be about a month after final Council endorsement and the Chairman agreed to start bidding for potential dates.

7.5 Methods of Welfare Assessment for Companion Animals. Mr Swann was not available but Lady Fretwell reported that he had chaired a meeting of the Working Group in December, had refined the draft report subsequently and re-circulated it for comment.

ITEM 8 – POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR FURTHER ENQUIRIES

8.1 Dog Breeding. Dog Breeding was a potential report topic suggested by DEFRA. Sir Colin Spedding commented that early action and response would therefore be appropriate and it was agreed to form a Group to determine Terms of Reference. The following Council Members kindly volunteered: Prof Lamb; Mr Radford; and Dr McBride, who also viewed that Prof Mills would be a suitable member.

8.2 Companion Animal Welfare Surveillance. The Chairman noted that Surveillance was also a DEFRA proposed study topic. Room availability time constraints precluded a full topic discussion.

8.3 Rehoming Protocols and Ethics of Rescue Charities. Dr McBride outlined her concerns on current rehoming policy in general, especially lack of clarity in some definitions such as euthanasia decisions. The Chairman asked Dr McBride to prepare a short paper on the topic; Dr McBride and Prof Lamb were requested to draw up Terms of Reference. It was also agreed that Dr McNicholas should be co-opted in the Swann Group.

ITEM 9 – ANNUAL REPORT

9.1 The Chairman advised Council that preparation for the Annual Report for 2005 was now being initiated.

ITEM 10 – NEW YEAR MESSAGE FOR THE CHAIRMAN

10.1 Matters relevant to the New Year message from the Chairman were covered within earlier Agenda Items.

ITEM 11 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 No formal AOB items had been notified prior to the meeting

ITEM 12 – DATE AND VENUE FOR NEXT MEETING

12.1 It was agreed that the next meeting, 15 March 2006, should be in London.

January 2006