

SUMMARY MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMPANION ANIMAL WELFARE COUNCIL HELD AT 1055 AM ON 14TH NOVEMBER 2005 IN COMMITTEE ROOM G 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)
Mr L Leather (LL)
Dr A McBride (AM)
Professor D Mills (DM)
Mr M Radford (MR)
Sir Colin Spedding (CS)

In attendance: Mr J Bourne (JB)
Mr H Hoppe (HH)
Ms K Newland (KN)
Mr G Thurlow (GT)
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; Dr J McNicholas; Dr P Scott; Dr E Svendsen and Mr W Swann.

ITEM 2 – WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS OF COUNCIL AND DEFRA REPRESENTATIVES

2.1 The Chairman welcomed new Members of Council (Professors Lamb and Mills) and DEFRA representatives (Ms Newland and Messrs Bourn, Hoppe and Thurlow).

ITEM 3 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1 Council accepted the previously circulated Unconfirmed Minutes and Summary Minutes subject to minor textual revisions.

ITEM 4 - MATTERS ARISING

4.1 The following topics were raised during the Agenda Item:

4.1.1 Report on Chairman/Browning Meeting. Council was updated by Sir Colin on the extremely useful Browning (EIG Chair) meeting. The England Implementation Group (EIG) proposed to operate in partnership with other organizations and Sir Colin outlined his suggested three main threads: establishment of baseline summaries of the present situation; identification of priorities in CA issues; and identification of action needed. The EIG was to be the bridge between DEFRA and others. The Secretariat was to liaise at working level with DEFRA and the EIG, and also seek potential study topics from Council members. Mr Radford noted that Scotland and Wales had comparable committees to the EIG, recommended that similar approaches be made to them, and suggested that the Chairman wrote to both Groups.

4.1.2 Update on CAWC/WFCA Meeting Progress. Dr Kirkwood confirmed that the CAWC/FAWC meeting had yet to be scheduled. The matter was still ongoing but timing depended upon when the new FAWC Chairman was in place.

4.1.3 Update on Proposed Meeting of Liaison Group of Animal Welfare Bodies. The proposed meeting had yet to be arranged.

4.1.4 Other Matters. The report faxed by Professor Ahmedzai prior to the September Council meeting had not been received by all Members. The Secretariat was to check the files and forward the document to all. The Chairman outlined the dialogue with WSPA concerning CA during disaster relief.

ITEM 5 – TREASURERS REPORT

5.1. Miss Cooper updated Council on her previously circulated reports and reiterated that she was not yet a signatory for accounts or cheques. She outlined that Working Groups were to have designated budgets and codes in order to facilitate expenses monitoring and payment. Also, Council indemnity insurance was due for renewal in January. Three tenders were to be obtained in order to achieve best value for money and Council would be advised of progress and arrangements by e mail. It was agreed that the operation of Advisory Bodies be investigated outside of the meeting with DEFRA.

5.2 Budget figures were to be maintained as several Working Groups were due to have reports published soon.

5.3 It was agreed by Council to write off aging equipment and allocate up to £2k for general renewals. It was also agreed that all documents and the web site were to be backed up regularly. The Secretariat was to investigate and cost the requirement.

ITEM 6 – CAWC WEBSITE REVIEW

6.1 Council members were asked for their views on the current CAWC website. Mr Leather considered it essential to update the site regularly, ideally professionally. The Secretariat was tasked to liaise with the webmaster to identify update mechanisms and site improvements. It was further agreed that the Council should purchase the domain name

companionanimalwelfarecouncil.co.uk (£75 plus VAT for 2 years) but also retain the current site identity.

ITEM 7 – POLITICAL REVIEW

7.1 Differences between the Scottish and English legislative processes were helpfully outlined by Mr Radford. CAWC had the option to submit views to the Scottish Welfare Bill by November the 18th. CAWC involvement in the process would be helpful in raising the Council's profile. Mr Radford reported that the work on Regulation was still ongoing.

ITEM 8 DEFRA OVERVIEW

8.1 Mr Bourne provided a comprehensive overview of DEFRA issues and priorities. The prime area of work, which was consuming considerable resources, was the Animal Welfare Bill, and associated Secondary Regulation. Surveillance was another important strand of work. DEFRA was working hard on how to address Companion Animal issues, considered that there were no easy answers, and were particularly interested in CAWC studies, although measurement was always difficult to put in place.

8.2 Mr Bourne also indicated that horses, for example, as CA were different to the normal perception and CAWC views would be useful. He wished to focus on the major problem areas, but viewed Welfare Surveillance and Assessment as likely primes.

8.3 Mr Radford was attracted to forming a group addressing Dog Breeding as this subject would be particularly useful in raising the CAWC profile in Scotland. DEFRA indicated that the Breeding of Dogs Act was under review and that CAWC advice would be helpful

8.4 Sir Colin argued strongly for the need for survey and then assessment together with identification of priorities. As to the spectrum of studies, he considered the CAWC needed a wide range of topics.

8.5 Dr Mc Bride noted that disease as well as welfare should be considered and that Puppy Farms, as well as private breeders, was a most worthwhile study subject. Mr Bourn suggested that it would be useful if CAWC members (as the Council has a role to direct comments to Government and wider organizations) sat on the DEFRA group when it was set up and that common sense should prevail on all issues. Mr Leather's comment on closing was that enforcement may be difficult due to lack of clarity and wider issues such as training and quarantine need to be considered.

ITEM 9 REPORTS FROM WORKING PARTIES

9.1 **Companion Animals in health and Social Care Institutions.** Professor Ahmedzai was not present and had not provided a written report for Council. The Chairman advised that he had discussed the Report delays with the Group Chairman and received his apologies.

9.2 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.

9.3 Unregulated Companion Animal Services in relation to Training Exercising and Care. Ms Cooper warmly welcomed Professors Lamb and Mills to the Group. She reported a recent dialogue with the RCVS in which the Society was considering an overarching regulating body and confirmed that her Group was making sound progress.

9.4 Phenotypic Modification Through Selective Breeding or Application of Modern Biotechnology, and the Welfare of Companion Animals. Dr Kirkwood reported that comments on the recent draft were being received and it was hoped to recirculate the document to the Group shortly with the aim of finalizing the text early in 2006. A Report launch date was required, and an initial view was that March 06 would be a good planning option.

9.5 Methods of Welfare Assessment for Companion Animals. Mr Swann was not available but had circulated the latest draft of the paper within the Group. It was agreed that the paper should be sent to all members of Council and DEFRA (John Bourn).

9.6 Other Issues. The requirement to identify future Working Group tasks was raised by the Chairman. It was decided that the Secretariat would canvas Members of Council by e mail.

ITEM 10 – COUNCIL MEETING FOR 2006

10.1 Council considered dates for meetings in 2006, the following were agreed: 11 January, 15 March, 8 May, and 10 July.

ITEM 11 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 No formal AOB items had been notified prior to the meeting. Dr McBride proposed Dog Breeding as a Working Group topic and it was agreed that this should be formally brought forward at the next meeting.

ITEM 12 – DATE AND VENUE FOR NEXT MEETING

12.1 It was agreed that the next meeting, 11 January 2006, should be in London. The Chairman undertook to try and book Room 132 at No 2 Millbank.