

## **Advisory Council on Companion Animal Welfare**

**Date:** 4th December 2024

**Venue:** Backweston campus

**Meeting Time:** 14:00 – 16:00

### **Attendees:**

Seán O'Laoide (Chair), Catherine Lawler (DAFM), Hana Scanlan (DAFM), Sandra Nicholson (UCD), Maureen Byrne (APDT), Chris Conneely (Irish Blue Cross), Alan Walsh (DAFM).

Online: Conor Dowling (ISPCA), Sarah Lynch (Dogs Trust).

Apologies: Mary McCarthy (DAFM), James Choiseul (DAFM), Mairead Cooney (DAFM), Claire Meade (The Cat Hospital), Jim Stephens (IKC).

### **1. Minutes and Action points from previous meeting**

**Action Point:** Dogs Trust to circulate Nature Watch Presentation to the members.

Minutes from previous meeting and all other action points accepted.

### **2. ACCAW Review**

ACCAW terms of reference and membership due to be reviewed in 2025, which coincides with the new incoming Government.

**ACTION POINT:** Brachycephalic sub-group to contact third level schools/colleges of journalism, to refresh/reinforce the Brachycephalic information campaign, with students and the journalistic profession, in general.

### **3. Update from Working Groups**

#### **Brachycephalic sub-group**

- Launch of innate health campaign and monthly comms plan in January 2025.

#### **Cat Welfare sub-group**

- Plan to publish responsible cat ownership leaflet.
- Information campaign to target farmers/farms on neutering for cats and dogs.
- Cat TNR program, management of feral and stray cats, will look to produce recommendations for Government.
- Develop innate cat health leaflet.
- Invite guest speakers to group.
- Exploring potential research areas.
- Will look to give advice on cat health to Government agencies, in particular to services for elderly people.

**Exotic sub-group**

- Produce interim report before Christmas, for review by ACCAW Chair.
- Will investigate how to better utilize existing legislation and develop proposals for new legislation.
- Education campaign on responsible ownership of exotic pets.
- Positive and negative listing discussions are ongoing.

**4. School visits**

Discussed potential for organising school visits and a pet awareness week.

**Action Point:** Dogs Trust to revert on suitability of 4<sup>th</sup> October 2025, as the base date for a pet awareness week.

**Action Point:** Dogs Trust to revert on spay voucher programme.

**5. Website update**

Discussed updates to draft website content and structure.

**Action Point:** DAFM to organise updates to draft website.

**6. AOB**

Discussed XL bully regulations, introduced 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024.

Discussed DAFM public consultation on Surgical Artificial Insemination in dogs.

Different types and configuration, of electric shock collars appraised.

Updated on the RASFF alert system, in relation to illegal movements of pets into and within the EU.

Group observed the potential for standards and practices, in relation to dog grooming operators and equipment used for grooming dogs.

Local authority vets will join DAFM from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025.

**Action Point:** Chair to contact UCD to confirm representative participation in ACCAW.

**Next Meeting:** 06/03/2025 2-5pm