

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

**Date:** 9th September 2024

**Venue:** Backweston campus

**Meeting Time:** 14:00 – 16:00

### **Attendee's:**

Seán O'Laoide (Chair), Mary McCarthy (DAFM), James Choiseul (DAFM), Mairead Cooney (DAFM), Catherine Lawler (DAFM), Hana Scanlan (DAFM), Aiden Maguire (DAFM), Siobhan Mullan (UCD), Maureen Byrne (APDT), Jim Stephens (IKC), Chris Conneely (Irish Blue Cross).

Online: Claire Meade (The Cat Hospital), Cyril Sullivan (ISPCA), Alan Rossiter (Veterinary Ireland), Suzie Carley (Dogs Trust), Sarah Lynch (Dogs Trust), Alan Walsh (DAFM).

Apologies: Conor Dowling (ISPCA), Paul Lawless (IKC).

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

**Action point:** DAFM to amend previous minutes as per Chair's comments

**Action point:** Chair to contact EuroFAWC in relation to links embedded in previously circulated document.

**Action point:** DAFM to develop flowchart/contact list to give guidance on contacts in relation to specific animal welfare issues.

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

Minutes from previous meeting and all other action points, accepted.

### **2. Legislation Update**

DAFM updated ACCAW on:

**EU Regulation on the welfare of dogs and cats, including traceability:** All member states have been involved in drafting this legislation, public consultation results highlight that all dogs and cats should be microchipped.

**Surgical AI:** Veterinary Council Ireland (VCI) public consultation, resulted in the VCI amending their code of conduct, to prohibit surgical AI in dogs, except for greyhounds, as legislation already in place for this procedure. DAFM public consultation results, indicate surgical AI should be prohibited in all dogs, including greyhounds. The next step of the DAFM public consultation will be to approach the Minister with the findings and consider potential legislation.

**XL Bullies:** A discussion took place on this issue, with Minister Humphreys announcing that from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024, new restrictions will apply in relation to XL Bullies and from 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2025 owners must apply to their local authority for an exemption to own, or continue to own, an XL Bully dog, not doing so will be illegal.

**Dog Wardens:** Upcoming dog warden training, and recruitment of additional dog wardens, to be appointed early 2025, will aid in the area of control of dogs.

**Pet abduction Bill:** This Bill has been adopted by the UK and NI, it recognises pets as sentient beings and carries severe penalties.

### **3. Website update**

Draft website presented, with ACCAW discussing potential structural and content changes.

**Action Point:** Requests for input on Landing page text and structure, to be received before 16/09/24.

**Action Point:** Add Dogs Trust Ireland to Council Member list.

**Action Point:** Remove member names from Council member list, only using organisation names.

**Action Point:** Add link to DRCD Gov.ie site on News page.

### **4. Update from Working Groups**

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

- Group submitted comments to a UK Brachycephalic innate health document, which should be published soon.
- Introduced new monthly comms strategy, also discussed how to track usage data, with a new post in UCD expected to contribute to this endeavour.

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

- Plan in-place to publish cat ownership leaflet.
- Will investigate innate cat health.
- TNR program.
- Examine control of on-farm cat population.
- Explore potential research initiatives.

#### **Exotics sub-group**

- Develop exotic pet definition and categories.
- Consider positive and negative listings.
- Inspection and enforcement recommendations, to Government, on premises.
- Education campaign.

**Action Point:** ACCAW to consider recommending a cat information campaign to the Minister.

**Action Point:** DAFM to follow up with Corporate Affairs on policy regroup logos.

**Action Point:** DAFM to follow up on possibility of inclusion of pet ownership question in a future Census.

## **5. Veterinary Council of Ireland Letter**

Group discussed Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI) letter on the subject of Transvaginal Artificial Insemination. Chair noted ACCAW discussed this issue in the previous meeting, under agenda item 4 and ACCAW should draft a response and send to VCI.

**Action Point:** Chair to draft response to VCI letter, for ACCAW input and approval.

**Action Point:** DAFM to consult with vet meds division in relation to feasibility of expediting the application approval process for a licence to import medication to treat FIB in cats.

## **6. AOB**

Upcoming, Hungarian led, Animal Welfare protection week, with a focus on children, was discussed, however with the short timeline, in relation to the event, ACCAW decided that it was too late to provide input.

**Action Point:** Exploration of organising a week of school visits, to be kept on future agendas.

**Next Meeting:** 04/12/2024 2-5pm