

**National Assembly for Wales All Party Group for Animal Welfare (APGAW) Meeting
28.06.05**

In attendance:

Chair, Lorraine Barrett AM (Lab, Cardiff South and Penarth)
 Brynle Williams AM (Con, North Wales)
 Claire Lawson, RSPCA Cymru Wales
 Sarah Marsh, Greyhound Rescue Wales
 Phillip Jones, International League for the Protection of Horses
 Wendy Davies, British Horse Society
 Lionel Ford, Donkey Sanctuary
 Roy Peckham, Pit Pony Sanctuary
 Sian Edwards, Dogs Trust
 Phil Buckley, Kennel Club
 Holly Lee, Kennel Club
 Secretariat: Abigail Hughes, Lucy Merredy and Dylan Bowen: Morgan Allen Moore Cymru

Item 1: Chair's Welcome and Introduction

Lorraine Barrett AM welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Phil Buckley and Holly Lee from the Kennel Club.

Item 2: Presentation by Phil Buckley and Holly Lee on the Kennel Club**Introduction**

Mr Buckley thanked the group for inviting the Kennel Club to give the presentation. He gave a brief introduction to the Kennel Club and the role it plays:

- The Kennel Club was founded in 1873.
- Although it has been perceived to be an 'old boys network' in the past it has attempted to change that perception in recent years. The role of the Kennel Club is to protect and promote the role of dogs in society. The Kennel Club works to represent all dogs including cross-breeds and mongrels.
- The Kennel Club is viewed as the first port of call for any issues relating to dogs and is regularly contacted by people from all areas including the canine industry and the media. The club covers all areas including events, registration and lobbying and has a breeders scheme which is viewed as the benchmark for the industry.

Current Issues

Mr Buckley pointed out that the Kennel Club is currently involved in a number of different issues:

- **The Hunting Ban** – Mr Buckley stressed that the Kennel Club has taken a non-political stance on the recent hunting bill. It is primarily concerned with the plight of 20,000 hounds, adding that he has spoken to Ian Cawsey to highlight the Kennel Club's concerns.
- **Access** – Mr Buckley reported that the Kennel Club was concerned about access following the introduction of the Countryside Rights of Way Act. They had received queries from dog walkers who were concerned that land managers were using the Act to restrict access.
- Brynle Williams AM stated that he had received many complaints regarding the issue of access, including incidences where stiles had been broken by dog walkers. Wendy Davies noted that she had also heard of cases where gates had been left open by dog walkers. Mr Buckley stated that there were information leaflets available from the Countryside Agency.
- **European Union** – Mr Buckley reported that the Kennel Club was involved with Companion Animal Welfare, adding that it is "going to be a long fight".
- **Commonwealth** – Mr Buckley stated that the Kennel Club had been involved in a number of meetings with other Kennel Clubs from around the Commonwealth.
- Mr Buckley reported that the Kennel Club was working with the Metropolitan Police Force on seeking an amendment to the Dangerous Dogs Act, arguing that the Act is "clearly not working".
- Ms Lee noted that although the Kennel Club welcomed the Veterinary Medical Directorate, they have concerns relating to the sending of medicines by post.

Ms Lee also commented on the following issues:

Animal Welfare Bill

The Kennel Club welcomed the Animal Welfare Bill, especially the clause relating to duty of care. However added that there are also issues of concern:

- The Act should have banned the sale of puppies in shops. The sale in shops often means removing them from their mothers at a very early age, something which can cause psychological harm to the dog. If the practice is not banned, the Kennel Club recommends that it should be a legal necessity for shops to provide information on how to care for the animals.
- Although the issue of electric shock collars has been addressed, they have not been outlawed and are still available.
- The welfare clause discusses Animal Welfare Inspectors. The Kennel Club recommends that these inspectors should be qualified and should be subject to animal cruelty prosecution checks.

Docking

- Ms Lee stressed that the Kennel Club believed that the decision to dock a puppy's tail should be left up to the owner. There is evidence to suggest that puppies do not possess fully developed senses in the first days of life. As a result, docking a puppy's tail at this time may not be harmful.

Dangerous Dogs Act

- Ms Lee reported that the Kennel Club is disappointed that the Dangerous Dogs Act has not been reviewed as in their opinion "it has not worked".

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act

- The Act will handover the task of dealing with stray dogs from the police to local authorities. However, local authorities are not funded to deal with the problem, which takes place most often outside working hours. The Kennel Club believes that funding is required to deal with 'out of hours' cases to prevent public safety problems arising.
- Dog control orders will replace byelaws. The Kennel Club is concerned that local authorities might use these orders too frequently in order to raise revenue.
- The Kennel Club has had meetings with the Dogs Trust, the RSPCA, Ministers and Civil Servants to discuss the Act.

Kennel Club Events

Mr Buckley reported that the Kennel Club is involved with and runs a number of events around the country including:

- The 'Discover Dogs Show', which is a family fun show that focuses on choice, care and training.
- 'The Wag & Bone Show', which is now in its third year. The show includes all canine organisations and allows anyone to bring along their own dogs.
- 'Scruffts', which has many different categories including cross-breed of the year.
- 'The Companion Show', which includes all dogs including cross-breeds and mongrels.
- 'The Westminster Dog of the Year show'. All MPs and Peers are able to bring along their own dogs to the show, which is in association with the Dogs Trust. The show also acts as a platform to discuss issues and to raise the club's profile.
- Although the Kennel Club owns 'Crufts', the show is more widely known than the club itself. The show involves 24,000 dogs and 120,000 visitors and gets a large amount of press coverage, some 11 million viewers on the BBC. The show has recently entered the Guinness Book of Records as the largest dog show in the world.

Item 3: Questions

Mr Buckley and Ms Lee received questions a number of questions:

Devolution

- Lorraine Barrett AM raised the issue of devolution stating the need for the Kennel Club to recognise Wales and Scotland.

- Mr Buckley stated that there is, in fact, a Welsh Kennel Club and a Scottish Kennel Club. However, these clubs did fall under the umbrella of the Kennel Club in England. Mr Buckley pointed out that here are Welsh members of the club's committee.
- Lorraine Barrett AM responded by stating that she has had no contact with the Welsh Kennel Club and that with regards to the first point of contact claim, she would contact the Dogs Trust or the RSPCA with any potential issue.
- Mr Buckley replied that was the reason why they were attending the All Party group meeting.

Kennel Club Name

- Lorraine Barrett AM enquired whether the Kennel Club had considered changing its name as the current title conjured up ideas of "posh dogs and the middle class".
- Mr Buckley responded that a change of name had been discussed when the Dogs Trust changed from the National Canine Defence League. However, they decided against a change as they liked the old fashioned name. Mr Buckley reported that there was likely to be a split in the Kennel Club between the membership and the professional staff.

Kennel Club Rules

- Wendy Davies stated that she was involved in agricultural shows where the dog shows are run by Kennel Club rules, but nobody knows what these rules are or where they can be found.
- Phil Buckley invited Wendy Davies to take some literature on the Kennel Club. He stated that if a show has been licensed by the Kennel Club then the event is insured.

Kennel Club Registration

- Sian Edwards voiced her concern regarding the Kennel Club registration system; particularly some irresponsible owners can still be Kennel Club registered breeders. She suggested that an alternative would be that breeders should meet certain criteria before being awarded Kennel Club registration.
- Phil Buckley responded that it is not illegal to breed dogs, it only becomes illegal when it is done "extremely badly". Puppies from commercial breeders are registered; this gives the Kennel Club some influence over these types of breeding organisations.
- Lorraine Barrett AM asked whether the Kennel Club inspects commercial breeders.
- Phil Buckley responded that when a dog is registered the owner has to sign a declaration that it will conform to Kennel Club regulations. If problems are then later revealed, for example by the RSPCA, then action can be taken and their registration may be suspended. The Accredited Breeder Scheme is helpful although it is not compulsory to join but it is promoted as much as possible. It still provides a benchmark which has attracted 1000 breeders so far.
- Sian Edwards argued that Kennel Club registration allows people to be "fooled by bad breeders".
- Brynle Williams AM said that he now understood the workings of the Kennel Club and could see that it is the governing canine body. He also reflected his anger at a recent high-profile case where 200 or more animals were kept in bad conditions. Brynle Williams AM argued that if the Kennel Club takes money from these people it should thus provide an inspection service before registration.
- Phil Buckley responded by saying that the "Kennel Club registers dogs, not people".
- Brynle Williams AM urged the Kennel Club to take more responsibility.
- Lorraine Barrett AM asserted that when there is an advertisement with 'Kennel Club registered' she expects "quality dogs". This may not be the case; she argued that the organization should not register without inspections
- Phil Buckley responded that the Accredited Breeder Scheme will help even more; it includes spot checks carried out annually.

Welfare

- Lionel Ford asked where welfare came into the Kennel Clubs operations.
- Phil Buckley responded that £250,000 has been put into trusts, it has a welfare fund and it employs a Health and Welfare Officer.
- Lionel Ford continued by asking if there was anyone that carried out welfare inspections.
- Phil Buckley responded by saying that they do not.

Lorraine Barrett AM thanked the Kennel Club for their presentation.

Item 4: TB Action Group Update

Lorraine Barrett AM stated the following:

- Concerned that the Action Group is recommending a cull of wildlife “in all but name”.
- Three intensive treatment areas have been set up in Wales to perform tests and post-mortems on wildlife. However, it is likely that there will not be enough natural deaths or road traffic accidents deaths to be meaningful.
- The concern is that badgers will be killed to “make up the numbers”.

Claire Lawson added:

- The TB Action Group has been reaching crisis point lately.
- The RSPCA, Countryside Council for Wales and Defra all agree that there should be no removal of wildlife.
- Tamsin Dunwoody Kneafsey AM has now sent a letter to the Minister highlighting that the TB Action Group is not in agreement over the issue.

Item 5: APGAW Conference

- Lorraine Barrett AM asked Claire Lawson about the progress made towards the holding of a conference.
- Claire Lawson responded that it will take place on the 27th July 2005 and forms need to be returned as soon as possible.
- Lorraine Barrett AM added that it will be held at 10:00 – 16:00 and there will be a debate on a range of topics.
- Claire Lawson stated two speakers on the rearing of pheasants for shooting purposes have been booked adding that the biggest producer of pheasants in the United Kingdom is based in Wales.
- There will be updates on the Animal Welfare Bill, and the Greyhound Forum will also be reporting back.

Item 6: APGAW Website

Claire Lawson reported that a draft website had been produced, however it was yet to be approved. She also stated that a form would be sent out to members of the group shortly. Members should fill in the form including any details they wish to be advertised on the website.

The website should be ready for launch in Autumn 2005.

Any Other Business

Lorraine Barrett AM raised the case of Ann the Elephant.

Philip Jones referred to the semi-feral section of the Welfare for Horses Strategy and expressed his concern over the facts relating to semi-feral horses in Wales.

Claire Lawson responded that there is an equine group which sits later this year and it would be best to raise it there.

Wendy Davies asked if the registering of sanctuaries will be included in the Animal Welfare Bill

Claire Lawson responded that the Bill is still being drafted.

Abigail Hughes and Lucy Merredy