

Companion Animal Welfare Forum
Wednesday 24th June 2009
Council Chamber, Ruthin, Denbighshire

Present:

Jane Morgan – Animal Transport Volunteer
Jill Hughes – Happy Days Kennels
Jane Lloyd – HACK
Basil Farrant – RSPCA
Claire Davies – RSPCA
David Johnson – RSPCA Clwyd & Colwyn
Rebecca Williams – WAG
Rob Davies – Animal Health

Local Authority Representatives:

Ian Millington - Denbighshire County Council
Dave Rowlands - Denbighshire County Council
Sarah Lee – Wrexham County Borough Council
Graham Capper – Wrexham County Borough Council
Kevin Jones – Wrexham County Borough Council
Ella Povey – Wrexham County Borough Council
Alaw Vaughan Jones - Gwynedd County Council
Euron Thomas – Gwynedd County Council
Dave Dodd – Flintshire County Council
Claire Eriksson– Flintshire County Council
Jane Waltham – Isle of Anglesey Council
Susan Rogers – Isle of Anglesey Council

Apologies

Carly Harp – Anglesey Canine Society
Pauline Baines – Anti-Docking Alliance
Lisa Tate – Battery Hen Welfare Trust
Wendy Davies – British Horse Society
Gary Pritchard – British Koi Keepers Society
Lee Campbell – Chin Up Animal sanctuary
Sian Edwards – Dogs Trust
Rosemary Clarke – Donkey Breed Society
Claire Bessant – Feline Advisory Bureau
Kathie Wilks – Hay Cat Rescue
Beth Gowling – National Farm Attractions Network
Meriel France – Pet Care Trust
Steve Goddy – The Blue Cross
Molly Lloyd – The Donkey Sanctuary
Laura Vallance – The Kennel Club
Adrienne Howes – Welsh Equine Council
Gwyneira Edwards – Welsh Pony & Cob Society
Mandy Jenkins – Grate Dane Care Charitable Trust
Rev James Thompson – Christians Against All Animals Abuse

Simon Shaw, North Wales Police
Rob Taylor, North Wales Police
Jane Gough Roberts – Dyfnog Stud
Harold Burrows – Search & Rescue Dog Association
Fiona Leadbitter – WAG

1. Welcome by Cllr Sharon Frobisher, Lead Member for Communities

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 4 March were accepted as a true record

3. Education Plan

- Both the International and National Eisteddfod removed from Action Plan. Other events to remain as planned. Volunteers for assistance are requested – attendance or leaflets / materials would be a help. If you are able to help then please contact the authority in which the event is located to organise something as each will have their own plan on how the event will run.
- Additionally local authority may look at other local shows – the plan is the forum Education Plan for North Wales
- Local authorities have stickers, pens books etc that can be used at these events and are available for Forum members for their own events – contact your own local authority for supplies.
- Press release on time – covered in the North Wales Press – Daily Post. Each local authority organised for their own local press.
- CAWES committee have requested copies of any press release promoting working in partnership. Send to Kevin Jones at Wrexham and he will forward to Fiona Leadbitter (WAG). More evidence may support decisions on future funding.

This is the first year of the educational plan always add to this and build as we go along – so if there are any ideas then feed them in

4. Local Authority Update

Ian Millington - Denbighshire County Council

- Currently advertising for Animal Health & Welfare Officer and hope to have someone in post by July/August.
- Disappointing news that recent welfare prosecution has gone to appeal. As the appeal is on conviction there will need to be a full re-trial and all witnesses have been notified.

Ella Povey – Wrexham County Borough Council

- Feedback on the work on the base line return. Identifying and visiting businesses involved in dog breeding (for which a database is being compiled), home boarding (where people take cats and dogs in own home in exchange for money) and equines. Conditions have been drafted for home breeding and are being considered by councillors for home boarding.
- Education tasks in schools, Brownies groups Scouts etc

- Website due to be re launched
- Pet week on 4th May meant presence at Supermarkets, Country Parks, Library, Summer Fairs
- Offered micro chipping of dogs and managed to do 40 dogs
- In discussions about a joint educational day at HACK sanctuary in Wrexham.
- Highlighted an issue with exotic species animals being sold by pet shops - a Water Monitor that was taken on as a pet – do we know what is sold in our pet shops? More partnership working / sharing of intelligence may identify those issues.
- The lack of powers for inspectors was discussed and considered to be a barrier for officers e.g. powers of entry for suspect illegal breeding. The forum considered this to be an important issue which needs to be resolved.

Dave Dodd – Flintshire County Council

- Dave Dodd is now lead officer, replacing Lorraine Allen
- Appointed a Companion Animal Welfare Officer, who is currently developing material for use at the Denbigh & Flint Show.

Jane Waltham – Anglesey Council

- New Companion Animal Welfare Officer started on Monday.
- Also taken on a new Dog Warden
- Placed and advert about responsible dog owners
- Stand at Anglesey Show - used Codes of Practice, sticker, pens etc
- Organising an educational event for just before Bonfire night. Combined event with Trading Standards, Fire Officer, Animal Health Officers and Dog Warden

Alaw Vaughan Jones – Gwynedd & Powys Council

- Monitoring adverts for dog breeding – no unlicensed breeders found
- Livery yards discovered looking at adverts, websites
- Sanctuary problems with privately owned premises in Gwynedd
- Increased service request from public, welfare complaints from neighbours, dealing with what they can cope with at present and most in domestic dwelling – minor welfare concerns. Expectation that workload will increase – so cost sharing / working together must be encouraged
- Talks with YFC, Urdd, Youth Clubs, educational stickers, pens and books useful for 7-11.
- Free Micro Chipping day for Dogs to promote responsible dog ownership
- Progress Animal Welfare Assessment/ baseline assessment

Sarah Lee – N E Wales Equine Project

- Establishing the number breeding establishments and how to register those. Finding that there is a lot of inbreeding, although can't be proved but herds wild and unhandled

- Import and exports – Horses moving into the Country, need to find out how they are coming in, when and where. French horses been imported and carry disease – any information about imported French horse to Graham Capper at Wrexham (France / GB / Ireland have agreement that health certification is not required between the 3 countries so may be going unnoticed).
- Continuing roadside checks along with Police support.
- Educational evening – speakers from local authority (Graham Capper) and British Horse Society to cover legislation, driving hours, care. To be held at Coleg Llysfasi at the end of July
- Organised for Blue Cross to go to Northop College looking at 7-11 course, leading to OCN course. Girl Guide or Youth Groups – teach horse welfare to young persons
- Soil sampling – testing to see if link to welfare in relation to feet
- Laminitis – feed sampling
- Working closely with 3 LAs (Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham) visiting equine premises and gathering intelligence from officers about any breaches in the area.
- Contingency Plan has been completed and is currently with NEWC (National Equine Welfare Council) for comment
- Passport deadline 30 June for non electronic ID horses so been promoting this. All horse chipped after 1st July and has a leaflet prepared

The forum were advised of a new recognised qualification for a Higher Diploma offered by the CIEH although details not yet known

5. Welsh Assembly Government Update – Rebecca Williams

- All baseline return forms received and are slowly being collated but huge task
- The CAWES review (for LAs) is to be held in September and it is hoped an expert in reptiles will attend – the baseline returns have identified issues regarding reptiles.
- It is hoped that a CAWES Conference will take place in the Autumn, but likely to be in Cardiff or Builth Wells
- Projects have been approved - Equine projects; Puppy breeding; Cat breeding – no licence requirements at moment
- Looking at what we've learnt with LA and other working partners and these will be discussed with the Minister
- Reminder that educational material is available for all forum members as mentioned previously (contact your local authority)
- Intending to send letters out in September to all Head Teachers in Wales from Minister re CAWES project - this may help gain access to school,
- Reiterate the request to send any press releases and pictures – this is good evidence for future funding
- The CAWES Committee have produced a best practice guide to help facilitate meetings any suggested top tips to WAG by end of June.

- Fiona Leadbitter has produced a leaflet for horse ID. Contact WAG for stock
- Dr Christianne Glossop and Fiona championed CAWES at a LACORS (Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services) event and the scheme is recognised across UK and seen as the way forward. Also produced an article in TS magazine (Trading Standards publication).
- Rabbit Code of Practice – out to consultation
- WAG looking at establishing performance indicators for LA work
- Advised that although EU regulation regarding horse passport will be in place by 1 July the domestic Wales legislation will not be. This in effect means there are no enforcement powers but the EU regulation becomes law so immaterial that no domestic legislation
- Generic email address for contact with WAG - companionanimalwelfare@wales.gsi.gov.uk

6. Forum Partners

Basil Farrant RSPCA

- Changes to RSPCA structure on 13 July and North Wales region will be losing Shropshire. More inspectors being replaced by Animal Welfare Officers
- The team consists of 1 Chief Inspector, & Inspectors, 1 Animal Welfare Officer and 3 market inspectors (who have done over 300 days at market)
- Received 2710 complaints, resulting in 895 instances of advice given, 70 Verbal warning, 6 cautions and 16 convictions. There were 2648 rescues and 811 collections.
- Ammanford RSPCA – 119 dead horses, sent to prison and ordered to pay costs of £400,000, son wife and daughter on community service. Overall cost of £1million to RSPCA
- Margaret and David O'leary – Chris Dunbar & Norman Brown assisted Wrexham LA. 17 charges, pleaded guilty to 9 including obstruction, she was banned from keeping equine for 2 years.
- Macleod and Mason – Fred Armstrong investigated cruelty to dogs owned by two serving police officers. One pleaded guilty to 2 charges and given 180 hours community work, the other 120 unpaid work, banned from keeping for 5 years – ordered to pay costs. Additionally they were suspended from front line duties fined 10 days pay but kept their jobs.
- Goats on the Great Orme in Llandudno
Males used to be culled every winter but now moved to birth control. With help of Welsh Guards all (92 nannies, 10 Billy goats) caught and treated in one day but herd still needs to be managed. Billy goats moved to other part of the country
- Norman Brown, who has retired from World Horse Welfare, has been nominated for RSPCA award

Jane Lloyd - HACK

- Hold regular educational days, Saturday afternoon club for riding and horse care. Looking at having a theory and practical course on horse care. Different courses aimed at 7-11 and 11-19 have a set programme and a final award, lots of hands on experience. Hopefully will be able to offer course for disadvantage children, maybe teach them and offer OCN qualification on completion.
- Planning an Open day at the Sanctuary but will include space for other organisations e.g. for dogs or cats etc

7. Open Forum

- Q – Will there be a Code of Practice for Ferrets?
A - Not aware of any future code
- Q – Any other codes of practice in the pipeline?
A – None
- Q - The forum discussed a written observation from Freshfields Wales on the subject of Codes of Practice, particularly in relation to dogs, and how they can be used to improve welfare, an example given of chained dogs.
A - All codes of practice are available on the internet, library or by telephoning and requesting a copy. Use education to reach everyone
- Q - Is there a standard practice with stray dogs and what numbers are involved?
A - Not really but trying to get one standard throughout Wales. Dave Rowlands of Denbighshire indicated that in DCC 30 dogs a month were found with 1/3 of them claimed last year, an improvement from 1/2 of these claimed 18 months ago. All unclaimed dogs were rehomed and now offering the chance to chip the dogs for £5. Additionally, it was highlighted that LAs would keep records of numbers of stray dogs which may be available upon specific request.
- Q – Why are some bitches come out of compound pregnant, have evidence that the bitch conceived at compound.
- A – Advised that it is likely that the pound is a boarding kennel and that condition is to house dogs separately. It was suggested that Janet Morgan raise the issue with the relevant County.

The Forum was advised of a potential derogation in relation to the identification of horses. This has the potential to increase problems with equines in so far as people may want to move them illegally to gain derogation or dump them if derogation not cost effective. Any derogation would apply to specific owner not every pony. Following consultation the Minister will decide.

8. Any Other Business

It was agreed that future forum meetings should have 2 different associations/organisations to give feedback on their work so as to inform the group on the broad range considered. Volunteers should make themselves known for future meetings, contacting the relevant LA organising the event.

Date of next meeting (Venue details nearer the time)

Wednesday 21 October 2009 – Anglesey CC

Monday 22 February 2010 – Flintshire CC