



## **COMPANION ANIMAL SECTOR COUNCIL (CASC)**

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Council's aim is to improve the health and welfare of companion animals (other than dogs, cats and equines).

The Council provides a collaborative forum through which stakeholders can provide coordinated advice to Government in a coherent and effective way. Members identify issues of common interest and, drawing on the expertise of its membership, provide a conduit to highlight issues of concern and present potential solutions.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- i. To provide coordinated advice to the Animal Health and Welfare Board England (AHWBE), the Animal Welfare Council, Defra Ministers and officials, the Devolved Administrations, Parliamentarians and more widely, in a coherent and effective way and based on best available information.
- ii. To work together with AHWBE, Defra and other bodies to develop workable policies that properly address the key issues facing the sector.
- iii. To be a reliable provider of expert and informed opinion quickly, for use in Government, media and other environments.
- iv. To contribute directly to the formulation of strategies, solutions and plans for practical delivery of both regulation and informal (non-Governmental) initiatives of relevance to the sector.
- v. To be able to plan for, and respond to, sector emergencies such as disease outbreaks including zoonoses.
- vi. To act as a sounding board and to advise AHWBE, the Animal Welfare Council, Defra and others on sector issues and facilitate and enable early open debate on issues of concern.
- vii. To provide input to assist with the alignment of legislation and policies across the devolved administrations.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Members of the **Companion Animal Sector Council** (CASC or 'the Council') may be representatives of any stakeholder body with an interest in the welfare of companion animals and shall be drawn from the keeping community, trade, rehoming organisations, welfare charities, veterinary professionals, policy officials, Government advisers, regulators, academia and the scientific community, or any other stakeholder group that meets the criteria.

Members will be listed on the CASC website.

The CASC shall admit new members where it is considered such membership would be beneficial to the aims, purposes or activities of the group. Organisations may apply for membership by filling out the application form on the website ([www.CASC.org.uk](http://www.CASC.org.uk)) and providing a summary of their organisations aims and reasons for wishing to join CASC. The application will be considered by the Steering Committee and, if approved by a majority decision, the member will be admitted. Initially membership is granted on a 12-month probationary basis.

Membership is annual and by the payment of an annual membership fee. Members joining after 31<sup>st</sup> August in any one year will have membership for 16 months after which fees will be due annually.

Members of the Council must:

- Have an interest in the health and welfare of companion animals (other than dogs, cats or equines).
- Be able to comment knowledgeably on the issues faced by their organisation and represent its views appropriately.
- Be able to make decisions on behalf of the organisation they represent.
- Propose issues for consideration and contribute constructively to discussions.
- Contribute to the identification of priorities, the development of any overarching strategy and the need for any Working Groups and make recommendations to the Steering Committee.
- Consider Steering Committee recommendations to admit new members or terminate a membership.

The Council will be coordinated by a **Steering Committee** and supported by **Taxa Sub-Groups, Working Groups, an Expert Advisory Panel** and any external expertise as deemed appropriate.

### **Members' and Officers Code of Conduct**

All members are expected to adhere to the members code of conduct.

- All members should act in a way that does not bring CASC into disrepute.
- All member organisations and their representatives are required to act professionally and to treat their fellow members with courtesy and respect.
- CASC will inevitably include organisations with conflicting views, however all members will be required to refrain from criticising another member organisation's policies whilst at CASC events, meetings or publicly when representing CASC. Counter arguments and opposing views expressed at CASC meetings will not be regarded as criticism providing such counter arguments are made professionally and respectfully. Outside of CASC members must be able to present their views and campaign according to the aims of their own individual organisations but should avoid referencing CASC where this could bring the group into disrepute or misrepresent CASC's position.

- CASC members are expected to approach discussions with a spirit of compromise.
- Member representatives are not permitted to have a conviction for an animal welfare or animal cruelty offence. It is the responsibility of each member organisation to ensure their representatives do not hold any such conviction.
- While it is accepted that individual organisations will hold their own views which they will seek to progress it is not permitted for any member to use their CASC membership as a campaigning platform to further their own individual campaigns.
- Unless expressly requested by Government or other body all CASC output is intended to be made public at the appropriate time. However, members agree not to share minutes and draft materials relating to ongoing work publicly, unnecessarily within their own organisations or with other non-member organisations. Only final output specified for release by the steering committee should be shared publicly.
- Members acknowledge that breaching the Code of Conduct may lead to their membership being revoked by the steering committee.

### **Termination of Membership**

Any member of the CASC may resign his/her membership or any position they hold in the Council by giving to the secretariat written notice to that effect. This resignation will take effect immediately.

Any member who brings the Council into disrepute, breaches the members Code of Conduct or otherwise acts in a manner not consistent with membership may have their membership terminated. Proposals for termination of a member will be considered by the Steering Committee.

The CASC Steering Committee may, by resolution passed at a meeting thereof, terminate or suspend the membership of any member if, in its opinion, his/her conduct is prejudicial to the interests and objects of the association, PROVIDED THAT the individual member or representative of the member organisation (as the case may be) shall have the right to be heard by the CASC Steering Committee before the final decision is made. This vote shall be done with a two thirds majority. A meeting may be physical or virtual.

There shall be a right of appeal to an independent arbitrator appointed by mutual agreement

## **OFFICERS**

### **Chair**

The Chair is a suitable professional with experience and expertise within the field of companion animals. They must be able to demonstrate the ability to act professionally and impartially, disregarding any bias towards a specific organisation or taxa whilst acting in the capacity of the CASC Chair.

Responsibilities of the Chair include:

- In consultation with The Steering Committee, to decide the strategic direction of the CASC.
- To Chair meetings of the AGM and Steering Committee and any other meetings as necessary.
- To represent the Council at quarterly AHWBE meetings and meetings with the AHWBE director with responsibility for companion animals, meetings with ministers, meetings with DEFRA and others as required. This responsibility can be delegated if appropriate.
- To hold a deciding vote if compromise position cannot be achieved.

Selection and tenure of the Chair:

- The opportunity to stand as a candidate for Chair must be made publicly available for 4 weeks prior to election.
- Candidates for the post may put themselves forward or may be invited to apply.
- Applications must be notified to the secretariat at least 2 weeks prior to the election.
- Candidates need not be a current member of CASC.
- The Chair will be elected by the Steering Committee by secret ballot.
- The Chair is elected for an initial term of 4 years.
- Chairs may put themselves forward for re-election.
- At the end of their term the Chair will assume the post of Vice-Chair to support the incoming Chair as per the terms of the Vice-Chair post.

### **Vice Chair**

Vice Chair(s) are drawn from, and appointed by, the Steering Committee. They are an individual with experience and expertise within the field of companion animals. They must be able to demonstrate the ability to act professionally and impartially, disregarding any bias towards a specific organisation or taxa whilst acting in the capacity of the CASC Vice-Chair.

Responsibilities of the Vice-Chair include:

- Support the Chair and, as necessary, guide the work of the Secretariat.
- Deputise for the Chair where necessary.

Selection and tenure of the Vice-Chair:

- There may be 1 or 2 posts of Vice-Chair. They are not required to be filled.
- The outgoing Chair will normally hold one of the posts of Vice-Chair.
- The outgoing chair may hold the post of vice-chair until the end of term of the current Chair.
- If an outgoing Chair does not wish to assume the post of Vice-Chair then the current Vice-Chair's term of office may continue as per the terms of the post.
- The Vice-Chair may be elected in the situation where there is no outgoing Chair willing to fill the post.
- In the event of an election for Vice-Chair;

- The opportunity to stand as a candidate for Vice-Chair must be made publicly available for 4 weeks prior to election.
- Candidates for the post may put themselves forward or may be invited to apply.
- Applications must be informed to the secretariat at least 2 weeks prior to the election.
- Candidates need not be a current member of CASC
- The Vice-Chair will be elected by the Steering Committee by secret ballot.
- The Vice-Chair is elected for an initial term of 4 years.
- Vice-Chairs may put themselves forward for re-election.

It is preferred that the Chair or Vice Chair will be members of CASC, or have knowledge of its work, but this is not a requirement.

### **Secretariat**

The Secretariat can be any individual with relevant organisational skills. Experience in or knowledge of the field of Companion Animals is desirable but not essential.

The Secretariat is chosen by the Steering Committee. The term of office is 1-year and the Steering Committee will review the post annually.

The post holder can re-appointed.

Responsibilities of the Secretariat include:

- Manage the work of the Council and liaise with all members.
- Coordinate the views and decisions of the Council, the Steering Committee and its Sub-Groups, Working Groups and the Expert Advisory Panel.
- Prepare reports as necessary.
- Oversee finances and administration.
- Organise meetings including coordination of agenda and preparation of minutes.

### **Taxa Sub-Groups and Expert Panel Chair**

Sub-Group and Expert Panel Chairs are individuals with experience and expertise in the field of companion animals. They must be able to demonstrate the ability to act professionally and impartially, disregarding any bias towards a specific organisation or taxa whilst acting on behalf of CASC.

- The opportunity to stand as a candidate for Chair must be made publicly available for 4 weeks prior to election.
- Candidates for the post may put themselves forward or may be invited to apply.
- Applications must be informed to the secretariat at least 2 weeks prior to the election.
- Candidates must be a member of the relevant Sub-Group or Expert Panel.
- The Chair will be elected by the members of the relevant Sub-Group or Expert Panel in a secret ballot.
- The Chair is elected for an initial term of 2 years.
- Chairs may put themselves forward for re-election.

### **Vice-Chair of Sub-Groups and the Expert Panel**

Sub-Groups and the Expert Panel may appoint a Vice-Chair if considered necessary.

### **Working Group Chairs**

Working group Chairs will be individuals with experience and expertise in the field of companion animals. They must be able to demonstrate the ability to act professionally and impartially, disregarding any bias towards a specific organisation or taxa whilst acting on behalf of CASC.

Working Groups will be created by the Steering Committee in response to an identified need. Their composition will be determined when the Working Group is formed. Chairs may be elected by the working group, or appointed by the Steering Committee, and will serve a term of a maximum of 2 years. The post is temporary and will last for the duration of the working group. Chairs can be re-elected.

### **Resignations**

Post holders may resign in writing at any time by emailing the CASC Secretariat and Chair. If possible, post holders should aim to give at least 3 months' notice to allow for their post to be filled.

## ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

### STEERING COMMITTEE

The **Steering Committee** will coordinate, guide and oversee the work of the Council ensuring the views of all are represented in a fair and balanced manner. It will meet at least 3 times a year, in person or virtually, and is chaired by the Chair of CASC. If the chair is unable to attend a meeting, then the CASC Vice Chair will assume the chair for that meeting.

- Responsibilities of the Committee include:
  - Oversight of the work of the Council.
  - Identification and delivery of the strategy, work plan and priorities, based on input and recommendations of the Council and any Sub-Groups and Working Groups and to make such recommendations to same.
  - Coordination of the advice of the Council and any Sub-Groups and Working Groups in the formulation of advice, strategies, reports and other material that represent the shared views of the Council.
  - Establishment of Sub-Groups and Working Groups and engagement of external experts as necessary.
  - Delegation of responsibility for the formation of strategies, policies and proposals to Sub-Groups or Working Groups.
  - Financial management, including agreement of subscription fees.
  - Approval of minutes of Council meetings.
  - Ensuring the broad membership of CASC is represented fairly, with due consideration to the size, influence and aims of the individual members and the purpose of CASC in advising government in the wider picture.

Membership of the Steering Committee will comprise:

- The Chair of CASC
- The Vice Chair of CASC
- Permanent members:
  - PDSA (welfare organisation)
  - BVZS/BSAVA (veterinary organisation)
  - OATA (key sector representative)
  - REPTA (key sector representative)
  - The Pet Charity (welfare and education charity)
  - SUN (Keeper organisation)
- The Chairs of each Taxa Sub-group
  - These are permanent posts on the steering committee. Taxa Sub-Group chairs are elected from the Sub-Group members and may be drawn from any Council member organisation.
- The Chair of the Expert Panel
  - This is a permanent post on the steering committee. The Expert Panel Chair is elected from the Expert Panel members and may be drawn from any relevant Council member organisation.
- The Chairs of each temporary Working Group.
  - These are temporary posts on the steering committee that exist while the Working Group is active.
  - Working Group chairs are elected from the Working Group members and may be drawn from any Council member organisation.

- The post automatically ceases when Working Group is disbanded.
- Specialists, advisors or Council members as required
  - These are temporary posts on the steering committee appointed by the CASC Chair to assist the Steering Committee in addressing specific items.
  - The post ceases when no longer required.
- Additional members, either permanent or temporary, may be proposed for inclusion by members of the Steering Committee, subject to the approval of the Chair.

Members of the Steering Committee must be able, and willing, to:

- Bring expertise and knowledge, being able to comment knowledgeably on the issues faced by their sector or organisation and represent their views and contributions appropriately and fairly, with consideration to the 'big picture' and purpose of CASC.
- Represent the views of the wider Council membership, not just their own organisation.
- Contribute sufficient time to actively contribute to meetings and to the development of advice and other materials.
- Make decisions on their organisation's behalf.
- Utilise their resources to promote the work and positions of the Council.
- Attend at least 50% of Steering Committee meetings.
- Contribute constructively to decision making processes.

## **TAXA SUB-GROUPS**

Sub-Groups create the opportunity for Council members to input into issues relevant to CASC and represent the views of their organisation. Taxa Sub-Groups feed coordinated views into, the Steering Committee enabling it to reach conclusions on issues of common interest. Taxa Sub-Groups are open to all relevant interested groups and societies and should be balanced to represent genres of keeping (e.g. pet owners and show breeders), trade, welfare organisation etc. There is no limit to the number of members. Members should take due consideration of the requirements of membership and be sure they are able to contribute fully.

Responsibilities of the Sub-Groups include:

- The identification of issues of common interest, coordination of views and submission of reports and recommendations to the Steering Committee.
- The formulation of taxa-specific advice, strategies, reports and other material.

Criteria for determining the individual membership of Sub-Groups include:

- Bring expertise and knowledge.
- Contribute constructively to the decision-making process with reference to the purpose and aims of CASC.
- Comment knowledgeably on the issues faced by their sector or organisation and represent their views and contributions appropriately.
- Make decisions on their organisation's behalf.
- Contribute sufficient time to actively contribute to meetings and to the development of positions.

There are five Sub-Groups:

- Mammals
- Reptiles and amphibians
- Fish

- Birds
- Selling animals

Sub-Groups may form smaller working parties from their members to focus on specific niche interests.

Sub-Groups meet when and as often as the Chair considers appropriate. The Chair is selected from the membership of the Sub-Group and can be selected from any Council member organisation. At least one member from each Taxa Sub-Group will sit on the Steering Committee. This would normally be the chair of the Sub-Group but may be another Sub-Group member if the Sub-group members consider this more appropriate.

The Sub-Group representative on the Steering Committee will:

- Provide a channel for all Sub-Group stakeholders' views to be fed into the Steering Committee.
- Ensure that the views of Sub-Group members are fully represented.
- Contribute to the Committee's consideration of priority issues and the need for any cross-cutting Working Groups.

## **WORKING GROUPS**

Where cross-cutting issues relevant to all taxa are identified Working Groups may be established subject to the approval of the steering committee. These groups will remain active until the specific issue they are addressing has been resolved. Working Groups will be open to all interested organisations and will aim for balanced representation across genres of keeping (e.g. pet owners and show breeders), trade, welfare organisations etc.

The working group will gather views, information and evidence relevant to the purpose of the working group to develop a fully informed view of the issue. It will then formulate advice, strategies, reports and other material and make recommendations to the Steering Committee as appropriate.

The chair of each Working Group will be invited to attend Steering Committee meetings and will be responsible for ensuring the views of Working Group members are fully represented.

Working Group members should meet the same criteria as Sub-Group members.

Working Groups will meet when and as often as the Chair considers appropriate. The Chair will be selected from amongst the membership of the Working Group and can be selected from any Council member organisation. At least one member from each Working Group will be a member of the Steering Committee for the duration of the Group. This would normally be the chair of the Working Group but may be another Working Group member if the Working Group members consider this more appropriate.

## **EXPERT ADVISORY PANEL**

The **Expert Advisory Panel** provides a panel of expert knowledge that can provide input and advice to the Council, Steering Committee, Taxa Sub-Groups, and Working Groups according to need. Panel members would be drawn from the veterinary profession, academia/education, the scientific community, policy advisers from Defra or the devolved administrations, regulators and the AHWBE. They may also be individuals who represent expertise in their field.

Members of the Panel must be:

- Highly knowledgeable individuals in their area of expertise.
- Able to contribute constructively to decision making process.
- Able to comment knowledgeably on proposals under development by the Council or any of its groups.
- Able to contribute sufficient time to actively contribute to meetings.

Responsibilities of Panel members include:

- To provide Expert or specialist opinion.
- To examine and advise on particular issues or to provide advice and support to the Council, its Steering Committee and any of its Groups.
- Contribute to briefings and reports.
- Speak or present at meetings.
- Attend Steering Committee, Sub-Group and Working Group meetings as requested.

The Expert Panel will meet when and as often as its Chair considers appropriate. The Chair will be selected from amongst the membership of the Panel. The Chair of the Panel will be a permanent member of the Steering Committee.

## **MEETINGS**

Steering Committee

- The Steering Committee shall meet at least three (3) times each year.
- The quorum for a meeting shall be five (5).
- All meetings must be minuted.
- All papers and briefings required for a meeting agenda item must be provided to the secretariat at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting.
- All papers and agenda information will be sent out to members at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting.
- The steering committee shall allocate time for the administrative matters of the CASC including financial matters, elections, re-elections, resignations, terminations and membership fees.

The Council

- The CASC shall meet at least one (1) time each year.
- The meeting may be in person or virtual.
- The quorum for a meeting shall be 40% of current CASC members.
- All meetings must be minuted and minutes published on the CASC website.
- All papers and briefings required for a meeting agenda item must be provided to the secretariat at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting.
- All papers and agenda information will be sent out to members at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting.

## **MANAGEMENT OF CASC WORK**

CASC operates with an ongoing work cycle.

- Any member may propose a topic for consideration by the steering committee as a CASC workstream at any time by informing the secretariat. The proposal should detail the issue, the work required, any potential funding requirements, its aims, outputs, timelines and the welfare benefit it would deliver.
- The steering committee will consider proposals in the wider CASC context and agree if and how the proposal can be progressed.
- The steering committee should be updated regularly with progress of the project and any outputs.
- Outputs will be presented to the steering committee prior to being released and the steering committee will agree the how output will be used and the timelines.

The CASC will aim to hold regular (annually if possible) meetings where CASC members can receive updates and input into discussions around current topics and issues. These discussions can provide feedback and information to identify future workstreams which the steering committee can consider.

## **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

- The council is not for profit. Funds accumulated should not exceed 3 years running cost of the council and monies more than this should be used to further the aims of CASC and not accumulated.
- The Council will be funded by an annual subscription, determined by the Steering Committee, external sponsorship, grants or donations.
- The fee structure should recognise the limited budgets of many of the organisations involved.
- All organisations should meet their own costs for attendance at meetings.
- If the Council or any of its Groups needs resources for any particular purpose they should seek the advice of the Steering Committee. Special projects or reports commissioned are conditional upon acquiring the appropriate funding. Funding sources are to be identified in advance.
- Any money obtained by the Council shall be used only for the purposes of the Council's agreed activities.
- The Steering Committee will ensure that the Council stays within the budget.
- A financial update will be provided at every meeting of the Steering Committee by the Secretariat.
- The Council will have a bank account held in its name. All monies received and paid will be paid via this account.
- The Steering Committee may, by a majority decision, instruct that the bank account requires 2 signature authorisation for transactions above £100.
- The Secretariat will be paid from the Council's budget monthly with the sign off from Chair or Vice Chair.

## MEMBERSHIP FEES

Minimum of £2000	<b>Large organisations.</b> Large charities/welfare organisations, Trade Associations, Businesses, Hobby Groups with income of over £1m
£1,000	<b>Smaller organisations.</b> Charities/welfare organisations, Trade Associations, Businesses, Hobby Groups with income of between £50,000 and £1m
£200	Hobbyist groups, small independent charities, rescues organisations, other organisations that have an income .
£100	Very small "micro" hobby groups, small organisations in the first year of their existence, organisations that have no income or show severely restricted funding where payment of a higher fee may severely affect them.
£0	Invited individuals or organisations that would not normally be members

- Membership fees are set by the Steering Committee and are reviewed annually prior to the AGM.
- Membership fees are due by the 31<sup>st</sup> of January annually.
- Members who have not paid their membership fee by 31<sup>st</sup> January will automatically lapse and will not be able to receive minutes or be to attend meetings.
- Where membership fees are paid late, but within 6 months of lapsing then the member will automatically be reinstated.
- Where membership fees are paid late, but more than 6 months from lapsing then the member will have to formally re-apply for membership.
- No refund of membership fees is provided in the event a member terminates their membership.

## ALTERATION OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

- Proposals for amendments to this constitution must be delivered to the secretariat in writing.
- Proposed changes will be notified to CASC members for consideration.
- Any changes to the CASC constitution must be agreed at an open meeting of CASC members. At least 7 days notice must be given of the meeting date.
- Changes must be agreed by at least two thirds of the CASC members present at the meeting.

## DISSOLUTION

- The CASC may be wound up at any time if agreed by 90% of those members present voting at any general meeting.
- Any monies remaining in the CASC bank account after its winding up will be distributed to charitable causes decided on by the steering committee.