

# GREYHOUND FORUM

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2pm by Zoom

## MEETING SUMMARY

**In attendance:** Battersea Dogs & Cats Home; DEFRA; Greyhound Board of Great Britain; Greyhounds in Need; Greyhound Trust.

**Apologies** were received from: Blue Cross; Dogs Trust; Dogs Trust Ireland; Kennel Club; RSPCA; Wood Green

- The ongoing Dogs Trust and RSPCA review of greyhound racing was discussed. None of the members present had any additional information on the timeline for the review and whether its findings would be published.
- GBGB advised that the Racecourse Promoters Association was keen to re-join the Forum. A request to re-join had also been received from Greyhound Rescue Wales. It was agreed to defer discussion on these applications to the next meeting.
- GBGB provided an update on their work to implement their Welfare Strategy (A Good Life for Every Greyhound). Their focus was on initiatives that could be funded from existing budgets, whilst discussions with betting companies to secure additional funding remained ongoing. Recent progress included:
  - Annual CPD training days have been prepared and planned for track veterinary surgeons in the coming months
  - An Animal Welfare Assessment Grid is being developed and will be piloted, with input from the University of Surrey.
  - New guidance documents for trainers and owners were in development. The Fireworks Policy was being updated and would be shared with Forum members.
  - An audit of transport certificates by track veterinary surgeons to assess levels of compliance.
  - Recruitment of a team of Regional Regulatory Veterinary Surgeons who would carry out veterinary inspections of trainers' kennels and also provide advice and support to trainers on issues including biosecurity. GBGB confirmed that retired greyhounds in the care of trainers would be closely monitored by this team.
- GBGB was seeking input from the welfare members of the Forum to take forward specific initiatives within the Welfare Strategy. The Forum discussed these in some detail and agreed how these could best be advanced, with a particular focus on plans to: develop a welcome pack for new owners of retired greyhounds; improve greyhound traceability; and establish a behaviour assessment framework for greyhounds retiring from racing. It was agreed that in respect of each of these initiatives, GBGB should organise separate working groups and invite input from interested members and update the Forum on progress at the next meeting.
- It was noted that BSI had already commissioned a review of PAS 251:2017 for Greyhound kennelling. Only one welfare member present had been invited by BSI to contribute to this review. GBGB would raise this with BSI to ensure other welfare members had the opportunity to suggest amendments to the PAS.
- GBGB's budget for 2023 was expected to be £7.3 million. Before the Covid-19 Pandemic, 60% of betting on greyhound racing had taken place in retail shops and 40 % online; this had now reversed.
- GBGB confirmed that many actions in the Welfare Strategy required additional funding and discussions with betting companies to increase the voluntary levy from 0.6% to 1% of turnover were ongoing.

- The meeting considered the impact of the Cost-of-Living Crisis on the ability of welfare organisations to rehome Greyhounds. GBGB noted that fewer greyhounds were being bred and it was not unusual for races to involve fewer than the usual six greyhounds.
- GBGB reported a significant challenge from some trainers and racecourse promoters to its new rule requiring a minimum three day gap between a greyhound's races or trials. The rule had been introduced on the back of evidence received by the Board. The Forum confirmed its support for evidence-based welfare policy.