



MINUTES

All-Party Parliamentary Group on Cats (APGOCATS)

March 2024 Annual General Meeting

Election of officers (12.00-12.15), policy discussion meeting (12.15-12.30), 19th March 2024, Room W3 off Westminster Hall in Parliament.

Attendees:

- Sheryll Murray MP
- Lord Black of Brentwood
- Lord Goddard of Stockport
- Mark Tami MP
- Greg Knight MP
- Patricia Gibson MP
- Richard Clare (Battersea Dogs and Cats Home)
- Charlotte Broad (Cats Protection)
- Annabel Berdy (Cats Protection)

Item	Lead Speaker	Time
1. Welcome and opening remarks	Sheryll Murray MP - <i>Chair</i>	

Sheryll Murray MP noted the importance of the group and thanked members and secretariat for their work.

2. AGM

- Election of Officers (done via ballot papers by members present at AGM). 5 officers were up for election and the elected necessary four officers were:
 1. Sheryll Murray MP elected to position of Chair
 2. Andrew Gwynne MP- elected to position of Vice Chair
 3. Lord Goddard of Stockport- elected to position of Vice Chair
 4. Lord Black of Brentwood- elected to position of Vice Chair

3. Secretariat & Policy Update

- Microchipping for pet cats (England) *Cats Protection- Secretariat*

Cats Protection highlighted the excellent news that starting 10 June 2024, all pet cats in England must be microchipped. Cats Protection outlined that microchipping a cat gives them the best chance

of being identified and returned to their owner if they are lost or stolen. Cats Protection's CATS report 2023 estimated that there are 2.3 million cats that are not microchipped. Cats Protection noted that themselves and Battersea have been working to urge owners to make sure their cat is chipped and the details are up to date.

- Action- secretariat to share messaging for members to help raise awareness of the new law.

- *Pet Abduction Bill*

Cats Protection- Secretariat

Cats Protection noted that it's brilliant news that the Pet Abduction Bill, supported by the Government, crucially includes the abduction of cats as well as dogs and highlighted that it is positively making swift progress and it's next stage (Report Stage) is scheduled for the 19 April 2024. Group discussed Lord Black of Brentwood taking the Bill through the House of Lords (likely May).

- *Animal Welfare (Import of Dogs, Cats and Ferrets) Bill* Cats Protection- Secretariat

The Animal Welfare (Import of Dogs, Cats and Ferrets) Bill had its First Reading on 15 March and passed unopposed. Secretariat noted that it is brilliant news that, in the Bill, cats and kittens are also protected with the proposals to prevent pet smuggling. Secretariat outlined how the Bill includes almost everything they had called for including: ban on the importation of cats who are more than 42 days pregnant, ban on import of kittens below 6 months and a ban on cats which have been mutilated. Secretariat mentioned how it's Committee Stage is to be confirmed but that they would be following closely.

- *Pet Friendly Housing*

Battersea Dogs and Cats Home - Secretariat

Secretariat highlighted the benefits of responsible pet ownership in the Private Rented Sector. Mentioned the Renters (Reform Bill) which has a provision that will stop landlords unreasonably refusing requests for pets. Concerns raised about the Bill- given that no progress has been made since November 2023. Members mentioned about section 21 opposition and Bill being held up by other measures but not the pet clause. Members discussed how pet friendly housing could be progressed through the APPG after the election.

Electronic shock collars

Battersea Dogs and Cats Home - Secretariat

The secretariat highlighted the Government regulations to ban electric shock collars linked to handheld devices were due to come into force on the 1st February 2024. However, while the statutory instrument had their necessary stage in the Lords in June, they hadn't received a date for the Delegated Legislation Committee debate in the House of Commons and therefore the regulations timed out. Secretariat raised concern and surprise over the u-turn from the Government on the ban. Members discussed how more education was needed on the impact of these collars on pets.

- Action- To discuss at future meetings how this can be progressed in the next Parliament.

4. Concluding remarks and actions

Sheryll Murray MP- Chair

The officers having been duly elected; the meeting was closed. Sheryll Murray MP thanked members and secretariat and wished luck to Lord Black of Brentwood for the Lord stages of the Pet Abduction Bill.