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**MINUTES OF THE ANIMAL WELFARE MEETING**

**HELD REMOTELY ON 25th JANUARY 2021 at 4:00 PM**

**PRESENT:** Martyn Evans – Chair - Animal Welfare Visitor (ME)

 Caroline Herbert – Animal Welfare Visitor (CH)

 Lisa Winnett – Animal Welfare Visitor (LW)

 Elis Park – Animal Welfare Visitor – (EP)

 Louise Crawford - Animal Welfare Co-Ordinator, Dog Trust (LC)

 Martyn Smith - Chief Inspector (MS)

 Andrew North – Police, Constable, Dog Section (AN)

 Nicola Warren – Scheme Administrator, OPCC (NW)

 Ceri Davis – Assistant Scheme Administrator, OPCC (CD)

**The meeting commenced at 4:06 p.m.**

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|  | **Notes and Actions** | **Action** |
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| **1.** | **Apologies** |  |
|  | Apologies for absence were received from Gillian Hathaway, Jennifer Deasington, Laura Buchanan-Smith and Sergeant Julie Pearse. |  |
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| **2.** | **Minutes and Actions from Previous Meetings** |  |
|  | The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.We noted that all actions had been completed. |  |
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| **3.** | **Scheme Update** |  |
|  | NW advised us there were currently seven visitors on the scheme and visits were not being carried out at present due to Covid 19 lockdown regulations and visitors would be advised when visits could re-start. NW advised us that all visitors should have received the Risk Assessment and Operational Policy. There were two visitors still to confirm receipt of the papers. NW asked if they could be read and confirmation emailed to her.NW thanked the visitors for their responses regarding the recruitment criteria and advised us that the application form had been updated accordingly. NW informed us that the recruitment drive for additional visitors would begin within the next few months and ideally before visits were started again. This would enable the new visitors to attend visits with an experienced visitor in order to gain the required experience. NW reminded the visitors to ensure their vetting was all up to date in readiness for visits to commence as soon as the restrictions were lifted. We noted CD would contact all visitors in advance to inform them when their vetting was due to for renewal.NW thanked the scheme members for their continued support. | **NW****CD** |
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| **4.** | **Operational Update from the Dog Section** |  |
|  | MS advised the visitors that a summary of the operational work undertaken had been provided to CD for circulation to the visitors. MS informed us that AN now handled Police Dog (PD) Ozma due to PD Ozma’s handler retiring. AN had some fantastic operational results with PD Ozma.MS informed the visitors that due to various long-term health concerns a decision had been made to retire PD Noah. Noah was remaining with PC North for his retirement. PD Taylor who was PC Porter’s dog was due to retire following a health condition. A new dog was being sought for PC Porter for general purpose duties. MS advised us that the drugs training course had been delayed as all forces had stopped external training for handlers and dogs. A retired dog handler had been recruited on a temporary basis to ensure that new dogs could be accredited, and the remaining dogs could receive refresher training to ensure compliance with the accreditation, as all dog training was initially suspended due to Covid 19.MS advised the visitors that with the collaborative approach with South Wales with all aspects of policing including the review of the kenneling arrangements had been put on hold. The relocation of the Police Headquarters was a priority and that the relocation of kennels had not been discounted and would be reviewed following the move to the new Headquarters.NW asked why the local Summerhill Vets had stopped providing support to retired Police Dogs at a reduced cost. MS informed us there used to be a local agreement that Summerhill Vets provided minor support, but this was no longer the case as a complaint had been made by a member of the public about the Force advertising Summerhill on their Force vehicles.LC asked if there was a possibility of the PCC providing funding for the trust/charity for retired dogs. NW confirmed that AN had been informed of the funding process and how to submit a funding request to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. LC requested contact details from the Force should a rescue dog become available. NW agreed to provide MS and AN with email addresses. | **CD****NW** |
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| **5.** | **Thin Blue Paw Foundation** |  |
|  | PC Andrew North introduced himself as a dog handler for the force. He informed us that he had been exploring all options available with regards to starting a Gwent Police Dogs Charity Fund. This would assist owners of retired police dogs with veterinary care costs should they require veterinary care after retirement as there were often unable to be insured.  All scheme members supported the idea.LC informed us that the main charity for retired Police Dogs was the Thin Blue Paw Foundation which supported working and retired dogs. Many Animal Welfare schemes had set up independent charities prior to the Thin Blue Paw charity being set up. However, some of these charities now gave donations to Thin Blue Paw due to it being a bigger charity as it could release the pressures on a small charity. LC advised a Benevolent Fund could be the most suitable charity to set up but would be dependent on the amount of funds expected to be raised within a twelve-month period.LC informed us that if Gwent had an individual charity the Thin Blue Paw would not exclude them from requesting funding should they require it. However, Gwent Police Dogs would have to be registered with The Thin Blue Paw prior to this.AN advised us that he would like the charity to be solely for Gwent Police Dogs and asked the scheme members if they would consider being a trustee for the charity. AN informed us that the charity required another four trustees, as he would be a trustee himself and there need to be five. The visitors agreed to consider the offer away from the meeting. LW offered to assist with any accounting processes. AN informed us that a website and Facebook page would be created for the Charity.NW agreed to contact all of the visitors to ask them if they would consider becoming a trustee or if they could offer any administrative support to AN. NW informed us that Dyfed Powys had set up a private charity and could possibly advise and assist with information. NW to provide details to AN.A discussion was held around the most suitable form of charity for Gwent. This could be a Charitable Trust Fund or a Non-Profitable Charity. AN advised us that he would continue to explore the options available.AN informed us that PD Ozma had settled in well. PD Noah and PD Ed were all enjoying their retirement. AN advised us that he had a trainee Labrador Max who should be attending a drugs course within the coming weeks and was expected to be operational after six weeks.AN advised the visitors that there was a proposed drugs course due to take place with three dogs and handlers and a fourth dog was being sought but proving to be very difficult at present. LC requested to in be kept informed when a new dog was being sought in order for her to keep us updated of any available dogs. MS advised that it did not have to be a member of the Animal Welfare scheme to be involved with the charity or become a trustee, but they would need to be security vetted prior to involvement.  | **NW****NW****MS** |
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| **6.** | **Any Other Business** |  |
|  | LC informed us that the Dogs Trust had updated their Animal Welfare Scheme handbook and it would be ready in the next few weeks. An electronic copy would be distributed to CD to forward to all visitors and a hard copy would be sent to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. CD to inform LC of address of which to send the hard copy version. | **LC/CD****CD** |
| **7.** | **Date of Next Meeting** |  |
|  | The next meeting will be held at 4**pm, on the 26th April 2021, to be held remotely via a Teams meeting.**  |  |

**Meeting concluded at 4:46pm**

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| **Actions from Meeting dated 25th January 2021** |  |  |  |
| **MinuteNumber** | **Action** | **Owner** | **Update** |  |
| **3.** | NW advised us there were currently seven visitors on the scheme and visits were not being carried out at present due to Covid 19 lockdown regulations and visitors would be advised when visits could re-start.  | **NW** | Will discuss at meeting. |  |
| **3.** | NW reminded the visitors to ensure their vetting was all up to date in readiness for visits to commence as soon as the restrictions were lifted. We noted CD would contact all visitors in advance to inform them when their vetting was due to for renewal. | **CD** |  | **Ongoing** |
| **4.** | MS advised the visitors that a summary of the operational work undertaken had been provided to CD for circulation to the visitors.  | **CD** | Summary circulated to all. | **Complete** |
| **4.** | LC requested contact details from the Force should a rescue dog become available. NW agreed to provide MS and AN with email addresses. | **NW** |  | **Complete** |
| **5.** | NW agreed to contact all of the visitors to ask them if they would consider becoming a trustee or if they could offer any administrative support to AN.  | **NW** | Any emails received have been forwarded to PC Andrew North to respond to directly going forward. | **Complete** |
| **5.****5.** | NW informed us that Dyfed Powys had set up a private charity and could possibly advise and assist with information. NW to provide details to AN.LC requested to in be kept informed when a new dog was being sought in order for her to keep us updated of any available dogs.  | **NW****MS** | Details have been provided | **Complete****Ongoing** |
| **6.** | LC informed us that the Dogs Trust had updated their Animal Welfare Scheme handbook and it would be ready in the next few weeks. An electronic copy would be distributed to CD to forward to all visitors and a hard copy would be sent to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.  | **LC & CD** | An electronic copy of the AWS booklet has been sent to CD. | **Complete** |
| **6.** | CD to inform LC of address of which to send the hard copy version. | **CD** | The address has been provided to LC**.** | **Complete** |