

BRIEFING PAPER

THE SOCIETY FOR COMPANION ANIMAL STUDIES.

1. Background.

This paper has been prepared for consideration by the membership of the Society for Companion Animal Studies (SCAS) so as to better enable all SCAS members to be fully aware of the changes which have occurred in the way in which SCAS carries out its charitable objectives and the background to those changes.

Members will know that, as a Charitable Company, SCAS has, for a number of years carried out its work, effectively in conjunction with the Blue Cross. That relationship was advantageous to the Charity in so far as it enabled SCAS to have access to resources—which might otherwise not have been available to it as a Charity; but members will probably know that the relationship which existed with the Blue Cross was effectively brought to a close as at the 31 December 2012.

The ending of that relationship has obviously necessitated the Board of SCAS having to consider carefully the future operations of the Charity as an independent organisation, particularly in the light of the financial background within the United Kingdom at this time. Indeed one of the options open to the Charity was simply to wind up its affairs and to transfer any residual assets to some other suitable charitable organisation. The Members of SCAS will appreciate that, to some large degree, this decision making process has by no means been straightforward and was particularly dependant on what financial resources were to be available to SCAS in the future.

The Board has taken extensive legal advice on these issues. As a consequence of those legal steps, as well as accountancy involvement and ongoing discussions with the Blue Cross the Board are pleased to be able to report to the Members:

1. That whilst, in future SCAS will, at least in the shorter or intermediate term be faced with some considerable financial hurdles, its financial position is such that the Board will be able to continue to administer

and manage SCAS as a separate and independent Charity, albeit that this will, during that shorter or intermediate term, necessitate some hard decisions being taken concerning the Charity's future operations and how best its charitable objectives are to be achieved.

2. It is likely that, for the foreseeable future, SCAS will need to work with its membership base to consolidate its financial position and curtail some of the activities it has undertaken to date, although it is hoped that new research into the human/animal bond will commence almost immediately with a view to the dissemination of that information for the public benefit over the next twelve months. It is hoped to couple this with a possible grant making function, some training and educational work, as well as seeking new funding and fund raising opportunities to improve on those services in the future.
3. That the Board need to put into operation urgent and positive means to further enhance the current financial position by raising further sums, again so as to better enable SCAS to achieve both its Objects and its vision in the longer term.

2. The Charity's Governing Documentation.

To facilitate these steps members will find amongst their papers a proposed special resolution altering the Objects of SCAS somewhat so as to give it a broader feel and thus enable the Charity to be better placed to meet any changes in the future.

The Board commends that resolution to the membership and seeks their approval of it.

3. The Membership.

The Board sees the Charity's membership as a vital component of these changed circumstances and as the engine that will enable SCAS to grow in the future. The Board would therefore invite all of the

current members to maintain their membership of SCAS although the ending of the relationship with the Blue Cross has meant that SCAS has needed to open new bank accounts which may affect membership subscriptions.

We are currently advised that those members who pay by direct debit may experience some difficulties whilst we make the necessary changes to our banking service user number over the next four to six weeks and that direct debits from members accounts may be delayed slightly. You should therefore consider this when managing your monthly budget. We will, however, notify members when the new service number is in place and any delayed payments will then be taken. If your subscription is not to be taken from your account during the next 4-6 weeks you should not be affected. Standing orders will also need to be updated with our new bank details to avoid any disruption in payment handling. New standing order mandates will be issued to those affected.

The Board would, however, appreciate it if all members would continue to be members of the Charity and to that extent the Board, in considering the future finances of SCAS, will be exploring with the Inland revenue whether membership subscriptions could be treated as gift aid donations thus enhancing the financial benefit to the Charity and contributing to the achievement of its goals.

Conclusions.

The Board would accordingly commend the accounts to its members for approval and would welcome their input at the forthcoming AGM to SCAS's future operations.

Signed:

Michael J. Harbottle
Secretary to the Board