

The Gazette



The twice yearly round up of news and developments in the Animal Behaviour and Training sector

Welcome to the fifteenth edition of the ABTC Gazette. The Council continues to develop as does its growth in support and influence in the animal training and behaviour sector but the Covid 19 pandemic seems to have coloured much of the news in some way.

Alongside some regular features, this issue takes a look at what impact the virus has had on the animal behaviour and training sector, the Council and the wider animal welfare community over the last year as well as some thoughts on the future.

A look back at the impact of the pandemic

Covid-19 impact

Since the very beginning of restrictions being imposed ABTC has been engaged with Central Government on a range of topics from raising the plight of the self-employed with the Treasury to ensuring that the drafting of changing restrictions took into account the welfare of animals and the continuing need for the services of trainers and behaviourists.



Our established chain of communication to Defra meant that the interpretation of working restrictions could be published quickly and the politicians had the best advice from ground level.

Up to date and authoritative advice for owners and practitioners across England and the devolved administrations has been and continues to be available on the ABTC website.

ABTC on Social Media

The recruitment of additional trustees early last year turned out to be a very timely move. All have been very busy in the newly created range of sub-committees not least of which is the Social Media group.

Regular dissemination of information on studies being carried out, quality webinars, general news items and of course, Covid-19 updates has seen the ABTC audience grow at an astonishing rate. In April this year it stands at approaching 7,200 followers on Facebook.

With a dedicated team responsible for managing our social media accounts it means that readers can be engaged with and questions can be answered promptly.

Member organisations can also send in their news and events to be posted on our social media feeds making the most of this great promotion tool.



Accreditation of ABTC



Everybody has had to adjust their priorities over the last 12 months and more and the RCVS is no exception.

The planned accreditation process for ABTC is therefore understandably delayed. We are however in regular contact with those responsible who are at pains to reassure all concerned that the project is very much alive and will continue as soon as possible.

Special points of interest:

- > RCVS accreditation
- > Covid-19 impact
- > Social Media



Update to Ethical Dog Training Advice

Our long-standing Ethical Dog Training leaflet has been revamped and is available for download on the ABTC website at:

<https://abtc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Ethical-Dog-Training-leaflet-January-21.pdf>

Further leaflets are in production dealing with the ethical training of other species. Watch out for the announcement when they are published.

'Promoting excellence in Animal Behaviour' and Training'

Membership Categories (new fee structure for 2021)

There are a number of different categories of membership of the ABTC.

Practitioner Organisation

Practitioner organisations are those that directly represent practitioners of animal training and behaviour therapy. Membership fee £250 annually.

Advisory Organisation

Advisory organisations are those that are animal welfare related stakeholders but do not directly represent practitioners. Membership fee £200 annually.

Individual

Individuals can only be members by invitation of the ABTC and they must have a particular skill or specialist knowledge that will benefit the work of the Council.

Supporting Organisation

Supporting organisations are similar to Advisory organisations although they have a much reduced membership fee. They may take part in discussions and consultations but they do not have any voting rights. Membership fee £75 annually.

Applications are always welcome and the necessary forms can be found on the website

Individual practitioner registration fees (suspended last year) will be reinstated at £15.

Has anything good come out of the pandemic?

Quite rightly most of the news surrounding the Covid-19 emergency has focused on the devastating effect it has had on society and at the family and individual level. With well in excess of 125,000 lives lost in the UK we are only now beginning to understand the longer term consequences for many many more, not to mention the widespread damage to so many businesses and charities.

As a charity ABTC has weathered the storm and remains relatively unscathed by the impact of the pandemic thanks to prudent financial planning and the dedication of its trustees and members. Other animal welfare charities have been harder hit from a serious drop in fundraising activities compounded by a dramatic increase in need for their services. The pet buying boom that was reported last year is now beginning to provide a consequential increase in need for rehoming services, often down to behaviour problems. Poor socialisation and separation issues are emerging as the most common culprits and while there is no 'quick fix' they can usually both be successfully addressed with some good advice and a little dedication on the part of the owners.

Much has been learned in a very short space of time about how to operate under the strict social distancing and isolation rules that we have all experienced for more than a year now. From a management perspective ABTC has gone from meeting up twice a year to hardly a week going by without a sub-committee meeting or trustees' meeting to discuss pressing matters thanks to the new norm of video meetings.

Trainers and behaviourists have had to adapt too and while there is no better solution than being face to face often with several owners and their pets, technology has provided some solutions here as well. We have even had reports of some behaviourists successfully dealing with cases internationally thanks to safe remote practices.

Being forced to review how we all work has brought about some short term changes that we hope will be temporary but some changes have brought about greater efficiency that could well be permanent features going forward.

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BSI Membership

Because we're committed to
the highest standards

The Equality Register

Member

'Promoting excellence
in Animal Behaviour
and Training'

New Membership

Another two organisations have joined the ranks of ABTC as Supporting Members since the last newsletter:



Hartpury University and Hartpury College are among the UK's leading specialist education providers in agriculture, animal, equine, sport and veterinary nursing. Their teaching and learning is rated Gold in the Teaching Excellence Framework (2019).



Sparsholt College has been offering Higher Education since the late 1970s and has worked with the University of Portsmouth, its validating university, since the early 1980s. They too achieved a Teaching Excellence Framework Gold award in June 2018

Equine group

A new group has been formed within the ABTC management structure to deal specifically with equine matters. It recently held its first meeting and is already working on training and behaviour guidance documents and more. We will hear more soon.

Forthcoming events

A system of advertising quality events of an educational nature that support the aims of the ABTC is available. Such events will be publicised on the ABTC website and social media for free. Applications to admin@abtc.org.uk in the first instance. The right to withhold publication is reserved.



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