

**International Sheep Dog Society  
Annual General Meeting of Directors  
Holiday Inn, Lancaster,  
Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2024, 09.15am**

Directors attended National Section Meetings prior to AGM collective meeting.

**1. Meeting opened at 9:30am**

Welcome to all from Chair, thanked everyone for attending and venue information shared.

**2. Minutes silence observed for lost members.**

**3. Apologies**

Directors sent apologies in advance of meeting.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Nation</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Nation</b>
Anna Prothero	Wales	David Murray	Scotland
William Cormack	Scotland	Kate Birkett	Scotland
John Palmer	England	Dan Morrissey	Ireland
Gwyn Owen	Wales	Simon Mosse	Ireland
John Templeton MBE	Scotland	Eamonn Connell	Ireland
Danny Wild	England	Bill Seale	Ireland
David Kennard	England	Arthur Mawhinney	Ireland
Jed Watson	England	Robbie Harrison	England
Bevis Jordan	England	Angie Blackmore	England
Matthew Evans	Wales	Mike Northwood	England
Derek Scrimgeour	England	Alastair Lyttle	Ireland
John D Robinson	Scotland	Aled Owen	Wales
Malcolm Ellis	Wales	Scott Macauley	Scotland
Mike McNally	Scotland		

**4. Approval of Minutes of last meeting (Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2023)**

- a) Wyn Edwards raised concerns over an incorrect statement to do with judge qualifying and selection of judges for the World Trial.

**Proposed: Con McGary**

**Seconded: Matthew Watson**

**5. Ratification of Officials**

**a. New Trustees**

- i) Scotland – Neil McVicar
- ii) Ireland – John McCullough
- iii) England – Robin Dean
- iv) Wales – Robert Ellis

**b. Standing down**

- i) Scotland – N/A as Fiona McMillan staying as President Elect.
- ii) Ireland – Peter Morgan
- iii) England – Matthew Watson
- iv) Wales – Kevin Evans

**6. Chairmans report**

It is sometimes strange how decisions made for the very best of reasons can have unforeseen consequences. When it was agreed to change our year end to May, but leave the AGM date end January, the question occurred to me should I be reporting on the financial year end date to May, or the point in time we have reached today. It seems to make sense to give a report relevant to where we are today rather than some eight months ago.

The past year has been very successful in almost all areas except of course one, our 22/23 financial results. I quote here directly from my chairman's message in the ISN spring edition of 2023. I wrote "Soaring costs of everything from a postage stamp to a grandstand and reduced income make poor bedfellows. Grants and sponsorship are very difficult to find in these austere times". My words then are ringing in my ears now with our 2023 bottom line result which at first sight is fairly breath-taking but is the outcome of a set of fairly unique circumstances which we will discuss fully very shortly.

Fortunately, the outlook for this year is very much better and this is why you have been supplied with the financial position at the 30th November. From these latest figures you can see that we are not into a frightening endless downward spiral. That said your Council is concerned and has already had several meetings to address finances and the solution as in any business will almost certainly lie in a mixture of measures to increase income and at the same time reduce costs.

This year has been very hectic especially for Isabel with all our usual major trials and then a World trial. I must record our thanks to all the members on trials committees and office staff for the huge effort put in to ensuring such well organised and delivered events. Ireland really pulled out all the stops and excelled in delivering a National, an International and following closely behind a World trial all of the highest standard. What a fabulous effort which I think deserves a show of appreciation.

Following our 2023 AGM Isabel began working with Intradev to help deliver the new trials entry and scoring systems. In my naivety of all things IT I assumed that a system was simply installed and was immediately ready to receive trial entries and churn out results. In reality, the installation took up an enormous amount of Isabel's time and effort to ensure everything was ready to receive the trial entries timeously.

This year we are as I speak ready to begin installing the new accounts system. Inevitably this will also take up a chunk of our CEO's time, but should ensure much greater efficiency and make it possible to track our financial position at any point in time. The reality is that updating and making fit for purpose our outdated IT systems is not only expensive and very time consuming, but at the same time absolutely necessary.

I must also record our thanks to members of Council for all their input to our Society and the many meetings now required to run an organisation of the scale ISDS has become. Council members have this year attended three sessions of instruction on the duties and responsibilities expected of a trustee of a charitable organisation. The sessions were hosted by Diane Thomas of Exact Consultants and proved very useful with lots of question and answer exchange to stimulate our thinking.

At last year's AGM Directors expressed a wish that a Health Committee should be set up to gather information and report regarding health issues that can affect our wonderful border collies. A committee was duly formed under the very able Chairmanship of our vice chair Thomas Longton. People who are experts in this field were invited to join the committee and I am delighted to report that all approached agreed to help. I personally attended a zoom veterinary meeting of the RSPCA, kennel club and other industry bodies. It proved very interesting with lots of problems in certain breeds. I came away thinking we are very lucky to have such a hardy breed which has at the heart of breeding programmes working ability. If any of you wish to know more about breathing problems in the pug breed or eye problems in French bulldogs, they should contact me after this meeting. As you can see from our agenda, we are fortunate to have Cathryn Mellersh to address us on health matters later today. We have deliberately not publicised the names of the panel members as it is not the intention that members should approach them individually about their own particular issues. If you wish to put any questions or concerns to the panel, please do so through their chair Thomas.

During the year the Trials Committee had numerous zoom meetings to discuss trials related issues and often queries arising from all manner of differing circumstances. The World Trial very much increased this work as entries came in thick and fast. Different countries had differing methods of picking their teams and many questions arose which were not clearly defined by the trial rule book. The vast knowledge of the Presidents ensured satisfactory outcomes.

The stud book Committee also had a busy year with many breeding and stud book queries arising. Many of the problems are caused by incorrect use of the ISDS procedures. How many of us don't always transfer a dog when we sell it. Many owners later call the office is trying to trace the whereabouts of the animal. Simple things can lead to a bigger problem.

I should report that during the year we had no disciplinary tribunals. I did however write on two occasions to members regarding their behaviour towards judges at trials. Apologies were offered and accepted which concluded the matter satisfactorily. However, it is worth noting that if I do write an official letter to a member a copy is kept on file. When I took up this post four years ago there were six live disciplinary actions to deal with. I considered most of them to be ridiculous and frankly there was widespread abuse of the disciplinary process and proved vastly wasteful of a CEO's valuable time but I was warned that if we did not discipline members who stepped out of line everyone would end up doing exactly as they liked. I prefer to believe that if we as the governing body of ISDS show a good example of proper behaviour then members will respond accordingly.

## **7. CEO Report on Finance**

CEO thanks Chair and Directors for attending.

CEO informs Directors they are very aware they took a special decision to move the financial year end in order to deliver accounts and audit on time to be ratified at this meeting. Explains there have been a number of things that happened meaning this year the deadline was not met. Assured the room the accounts are correct and true, and that the audit report was received just yesterday, with no special considerations to report apart from auditors should be in attendance during stock take on 31<sup>st</sup> May/1<sup>st</sup> June, which did not happen in 2023.

CEO went on to explain the audit couldn't be completed until the accounts were finalised, and as they chose to prioritise the performance of the 2023 trials and their financial progress, unfortunately, this meant the progress of the year end accounts and audit was delayed. Assured the room it would not have changed the outcome, but it meant they are not available today. CEO

believes this to be the right decision after working closely with Eamonn Connell and John McCullough and the trial accounts being finished and positive.

CEO explains the complexity of the finances and that the reconciliation processes being longwinded due to an outdated system, and that Kim came into the job by accident upon the department of previous CEO's and managers. Explained Kim has had several personal challenges in the last year and as a result has struggled to keep pace.

CEO informed Directors the new database and accounting system will be going online in the next couple of months which will greatly improve the pace accounts are reconciled and who will be doing the accounts is under review. Explained that a freelance bookkeeper is currently helping and they will also help with integration to the new system.

CEO finished by saying they wanted to assure the room that lessons have been learnt and things will be different going forward, with more regular reports and action being able to be taken faster if needed.

**a) Year-end accounts.**

CEO shares a breakdown of income and where it comes from, explained charity accounts are very complex compared to business accounts and reminded the room that 2022 is a 7-month period so cannot be compared like for like with these accounts due to the change in the year end.

Society income was £627,333, and expenditure is detailed over two pages. Highlights that trials are costing a lot to run and will come onto more analysis of this later.

Official ratification still needs to be done by council to adopt accounts.

The Society is in a net position of -£81,991. Some key things to point out here are throughout year, management accounts to end of February didn't look too frightening compared to other years.

CEO is now understanding the pattern of our accounts which shows January and February are our high-income months, then March, April, and May are all spend.

Auditors discussed apportioning income over the 12 months, which was subsequently discussed at council and felt it wouldn't be right as not how it has ever been done, and we should maintain same format to look at prior years and track to a budget.

The balance sheet and overall position shows the Society cannot continue to lose that money each year. A lot changed in couple of years, the trials in 2022 were still feeling the aftereffects of COVID-19, funding became more challenging, there were changes in personnel in council and the ISDS office, CEO changes, and Internationals proving to become more expensive to put on.

CEO believes we have got the time and ability to turn it all around and will move onto strategies later.

There is still £623,672 in the bank in reserves but must not deplete this too much.

The Society has a pot of £120,000 for trials support, put together by predecessors which is yet to be drawn on, therefore Directors must consider where does our charitable element comes in. Had this been used, we would not be in the position we are in now, but we must strive to make trials more profitable.

There was a change in the cash position of £105,728 and £81k lost in the P&L.

P&L brings in all different things, but if you look at the cash of £105k, half of that change in cash is investment, therefore the Cash position is not as alarming as the P&L.

To summarise, our cash is down by £105k, but we have spent over £40k on investments as well.

- i) *Dick Roper asked for clarification on actual figures for the database, when we have paid them, and if are they in tangible fixed assets. Asked if that is £41k for the last financial year and then £41k for the year in front, so it's capitalised?*

CEO responded by saying it was £84k in total that has been capitalised. Also capitalised repair of trophies.

CEO went on to explain part of discussions in council is what has changed the headline position and that headline items can be seen back in 2015 through to 2018, where trials were making a decent profit.

The Society was in positive £54k in 2015, positive £56k in 2016, positive £39k in 2017, then it dropped down to positive £408.00 in 2018.

Then issues arose to do with management and COVID-19 came, then the figures drop to negatives.

2022 had a small positive but had no trials in those accounts, then plummets again for 2023.

CEO explained looking at the income categories, trials income is self-explanatory, sales income is believed to be magazine, member related income is memberships, registrations, transfers, and general Society business, which is not doing too badly.

Overheads show the Society can't sustain its' operations to cover its 'overheads. Income that covers overheads is registrations, memberships, and sponsorship from Gilbertson & Page. That income is totalling £331,606 to cover £403,585 of overheads.

CEO says they dived into nominal activity to see where overheads are coming from.

Explained that there is a significant amount of overtime still being incurred for staff attending trials and about 50% of CEO time is spent on them before and during trials taking place, highlighting they incurred 46 days of overtime at end of 2022. Highlights this is unsustainable and other requirements of the CEO get neglected because of this.

Discussions have been had this year as to how to minimise costs with less office personnel attending trials, as all that adds up to £46K, to include getting to trials costs of fuel, hotels, food etc. Adds that although they do not always claim, trustees incur expenses for travelling to trials, checking sites throughout the year and attending meetings.

CEO goes on to explain that despite the shop showing it is making an £8k profit this is only on sale of stock, and that there is no share of premises, postage, staffing costs, and no costs involved to take the shop to trials.

The shop needs a whole review, it hasn't been looked at for years and as it is such an extensive job it hasn't managed to be started yet. CEO explains the shop is not fully operational on the current website, but the new e-commerce element on new website should help solve issues around postage costs.

CEO finishes by saying when the chartered accounts are reorganised this will all be much clearer to understand and it will be possible to split out what everything is costing, and analyse what changes

need to be made. No decisions have been made on anything in relation to this, just a demonstration to where costs are coming from.

*ii) Neil Gillon asked if the cost of trials is £7000, is it costing £1500 for the shop to be at the Nationals?*

CEO responded saying that the £19k is amount of time existing staff spend on shop, the £7336 is the accommodation, meals, van hire, in total for 2023 it cost £10,371 to get the shop to trials, so around £2000 a trial.

*iii) Neil Gillon asked if the shop is making that back at all.*

CEO responded saying that not currently but says that the shop did well from 2015 – 18, but on face value we are selling to the same crowd each year, so we need a revamp of stock and have items people want to buy, and ultimately the shop needs a full review.

*Tom O'Sullivan added that the merchandise is dated and that they feel we missed the boat big time on World trial stock.*

CEO responded by saying in hindsight we could have done more, but we decided to stick to low value items to ensure if there was a lot left over didn't hit us hard financially.

*iv) Con McGary added that the shop is a very small item in a big picture, and that we need to focus on stepping up trials to ensure they are making money or at least breaking even.*

*v) Sophia Long said that £46k is a lot, plus a lot of time from volunteers, so it would be helpful to see a breakdown into salaries for trials to see what costs is being put against the fundraising.*

Chair responded with local committees do a great job, and areas funding is available only gets harder. Reiterated that we don't want to put all costs against trials, but we need to attribute costs to what is causing them.

*vi) Con McGary said that it is excellent Directors are being made aware of this and it is an eye opener to everyone. Recalls when money had to be collected from society members to keep it running, and thinks members have to realise that we have to make money from the trials, and prepare for future problems similar to COVID-19, foot and mouth etc.*

*vii) James P McGee asked what the projected cost of each National are?*

CEO responded saying they all been quite different, and that in the trustees' report and the way the trial fund was set up, reads to them that trials were always the Society fund raisers, and the £120k fund pot was put in in case they didn't. CEO added they are adamant things will be done differently this year, as they are not confident with trials accounts in previous years, as a lot of figures were approximated. By moving the financial year, and doing accounts properly for 2022, we had a clearer picture and have worked hard to get as whole a picture as we can in the 2023 accounts. CEO explained they worked closer with committees and tracked their financial progress as they have gone along,

however we still only got that tidied off yesterday. Explained that this year every committee has been sent a shared file with a finance document, and that we aim to look at reports from 2023 and create outline budget for committees going forward. Explained we have also requested monthly statements from committees to go into our system in real time, rather than leaving until after the trial and creating a huge amount of work and leaving it until then to know how they performed financially. Says that they are also having to do further VAT corrections due to information being put in late, which will cost more money with the accountants. Finished by saying in short, it costs around £12k to run a National.

- viii) *James P McGee added that they are concerned with the amount of time individuals have when they are volunteering to help run these trials, potentially as much as a full-time job, and think it is too much to expect a person to be reporting regularly on top of organising a trial.*

CEO responded by saying they take that on board, but it is up to how the time is used as it is going to have to be done at the end of trial anyway, and added that we in the office can help, but we must receive the information, as we can't get to the end of the trials and find a huge loss, we aren't aware of.

- ix) *Anthony Warmington suggested that there be an honouree treasurer for local committees in the office so the information can be available without needing to chase committees.*

CEO said that it is something to come onto later, but as bank accounts are getting difficult to open they would like to remind everyone that the ISDS holds bank accounts for each nation, so when committees are planning, review if they need a local bank to satisfy local funding applications, otherwise we can get on changing mandates for committees and this will help with integrating to xero, making the whole process more streamlined and easy.

- x) *Neil Gillon asked to clarify if committees used the ISDS bank accounts for Nationals, would they still qualify for grant funding due to the savings the ISDS has.*

CEO responded saying it depends on what funding is applied for, and that the last 2 years trials accounts have been left open, so they are suitable if a local bank is needed. Added it would make things easier if each bank account has the National President and CEO on the mandate as well as the local treasurer.

*Tom O'Sullivan added that won't work in the south of Ireland, as leader funding comes from the EU and won't be approved if using an ISDS bank account.*

- xi) *Cyril Roberts asked that with regards to National funds, it was put forward from a National in 2014 that there would be £1000 available for each National committee.*

CEO responded saying that since they have been here, some committees have had £10k, some had £5k, some have had none, and that it has been essentially giving loans to ourselves. In short, there are funds there if needed, and that again we should look at the budget and manage cash flow at the ISDS. Added it

is important to note that sometimes it takes 90 days to release funds and they are not automatically available when asked for. Finished saying that invoices can be sent to us to pay for high value items, as it makes reclaiming VAT easier and quicker.

- xii) *Richard Smith said that if income is £532,593, inflation has been at 10% in the last year, so believes everything has to go up 10% as a blanket across everything, which will give us an extra £50k a year. Adds the reality is main trials are premier events of the Society, so should be great trial and run by a Society that can afford to do that, and thinks it is a great thing that we are drilling down in everything.*

*Ewen Mackinnon said that they also like we are drilling into costs and believe that it is about time the shop is looked at as previously it was not considered. Said that Con and James are right in saying that we are trying to make a profit for society, and it is difficult when you see a lot of cost going on getting the shop to every trial and it not covering its overheads. Added in terms of trial costs, we need to raise more funds, but the money isn't there which is frustrating. Said that costs for trials are only going up, and this year the Scottish National is looking like it is costing £24k, and difficult to set a blanket budget Nationals as each has different requirements such as fencing for example. Finished saying they are pleased this is all being finally looked into.*

CEO thanks both, and suggests applying a standard for trials to follow, such as type of event put on and expectations, then we can work on the individual trials and their circumstances, or do we say that Nationals are just a trial and do it as cost effectively as possible and make the International our "show piece" and plough more funds into that.

- xiii) CEO said they would like to add into all of that, basic year on year comparatives, sounds contrary to what we are saying, we are trying to be careful with overheads. Says we are looking at overtime going forward, and for the 12-month period to prior, we reduced overheads by £18k and are being careful in the office to make sure we are not abusing members' funds. Says that we do need to accept increases in future, but there is calming of inflation, however we don't know what happens tomorrow sometimes.

## **b) Management accounts**

CEO says that a lot has been covered already but wanted to reiterate and explain the several changes to the management accounts. Explained it takes 6 weeks to process accounts before they can go out as management accounts, and that they are striving for monthly accounts this year.

Informed Directors that it was agreed with council that a meeting will be held every third Tuesday of month, to report on accounts and then share with Directors. By the end of March, January management accounts will be available.

The accounts being shown today now also include the World trial income and the bulk of the International income, and all National trials.

CEO thanked everyone who did the work to get them in and highlighted that the World trial and International were both financially a huge success, but will go on to highlight the flip side of it.



i) *John McCullough said when looking at ISN magazine, the income changes a lot.*

CEO responds saying it comes back to apportioning costs, all the income for it comes in at the start of the year but it continues to cost throughout the year.

ii) *John McCullough asked in general how is the magazine performing.*

CEO responded saying the magazine was discussed in detailed yesterday as it is another neglected area. Saying that it has previously contributed a profit, but sadly in the 2023 accounts it made a slight loss of under £3k, and that this year it will be more because of the World trial edition, as uptake on purchasing it hasn't been a fraction of what was hoped despite our promotional efforts. Explained these costs were incurred from sending to regular subscribers as an extra service to members, so expect to see worse position at end of 2024 accounts. Finished by saying that a lot of work is needed, and that if you are a member here and not subscribing to ISN, please do as it is an important piece of the Society and needs supporting.

iii) *John McCullough asked about when most membership renewals are received.*

CEO responded saying members are written to 30 days before, and with the new system this will happen automatically.

*Sophia Long said they are yet to receive communication on their renewal despite it being due.*

CEO said it was their understanding these have been sent out, so will check this. Explained that we were considering membership rates changing but this wasn't going to happen in time for January renewals.

iv) *Sophia Long asked if a change in membership would need to be ratified by Directors.*

CEO says that they do not believe so.

v) *Sophia Long asked for some more explanation and disclosure of some of the numbers in the management accounts, with regards to the trial's costs.*

CEO responded saying if Sophia was asking for a breakdown of trials to accompany management accounts.

*Sophia Long agreed.*

CEO continued to say that looking at the bottom line you see overheads, and end of November brings into profit of £20,839.57, so an improvement on the accounts shared previously.

Brings attention to Society insurance costs and informs Directors they are in meetings with broker about the renewal, as they are not happy with how expensive it is.

vi) *Alex Wilkinson asked should we not be getting 3 quotes with every renewal.*

CEO responded saying that our current insurance ties us in for 3 years, so could shop around after.

vii) *Sophia Long asked about professional fees.*

CEO responded saying it is accountancy support, which we will be doing away with in the future as we can reduce this support and provide in house with new system. Said some other things included are Peninsula which is our HR system.

### **c. Budget**

CEO continued to say looking forward, the budget document shared has an expanded version and one is totals of the activity.

Actual figures are provided up to November 2023, and then projected figures through to the end of May.

Explains the budget was put together by analyzing figures and as a precaution adding 10% to standard overheads and leaving income on a like for like basis.

Registrations are seen to be dropping off a bit, but with the new rule on January 1<sup>st</sup> regarding age limit of pups being registered, we are seeing a positive side effect of that in that larger litters are being registered.

Sale of goods is projecting minimal change over course of the year, our business activity holds same which is our G&P sponsorship, which will be changed to Sponsorship in new accounts, and trials income shows no change as any income will be deferred to next financial year.

On the document operationally there will be two versions of that as there is an implication on cash flow. There will be monthly itemised things as we expect to receive them and spend the money.

Currently showing a lot of projected income at end of year but highly inflated due to the World trial and International income.

CEO would like to say at this point about the end of year 2024, that the Society is looking to make £48,919 to the positive, however without the World trial and International we would be looking at -£110k. Emergency meetings with council have been held to make changes and ensure it doesn't happen again.

Through to 2025 5% is added to overheads and maintained registrations at same level, with the same outlay each month from 2024 into 2025. CEO explains if we assume that each trial can contribute a bit, we are looking at negative £63,709 at end of 2025.

Brings attention to the amber column saying it contains some quite crude sums to show what increase in revenue needs to be looked at to change that bottom line position. 10% was added on all in house general business income, and highlighted business activities (which is sponsorship) as the World trial had additional sponsorship from G&P, which is reflected in 2024 accounts/2023 trials performance.

CEO finished by saying they took an average from performance from 2018 over the 5 years and applied average amount to trials income of £204,713, and average cost of £176k to trials expenditure, which brings to a bottom line of negative £23,965.

viii) *Sophia Long asked if expenses have been increased the same as revenue, at what point do we expect to see a return on investment from that increase in expenditure?*

CEO responded saying the accountancy will be reduced, but its things like premises, printing, and postage that have had 10% on fixed overheads applied to.

ix) *Dick Roper addressed the room and explained he is registered blind so has to memorise figures. Says they will speak in simplistic terms and says that they believe need to look at accounts realistically and sort them out. Says that in the year just finished, the Society spent £41k on the new database, which was put as a fixed tangible asset which is incorrect, as that implies it is something that can be touched, and has no intrinsic value, so questioned why it is being capitalised as it is an expense. Also asks why trophy repairs are capitalised.*

CEO responded saying that the trophy repairs were spread over 10 years and not capitalised.

x) ***Dick Roper said that in relatable terms why Directors may not want to keep IT system as a tangible asset and ultimately a vote was taken to change it.***

xi) *Cathy Freeman asked is there anything in the budget regarding IT maintenance.*

CEO explained the Society currently pay £4k a year in IT support and development and that there are two different support contracts, one for IT hardware and email licenses, and new database and trials management system under another. Reiterated the need for a big spend was due to the lack of updates to the system, and going forward it can be done in a more manageable way.

CEO went on to inform Directors of discussions held by council regarding how we can improve the Society and its membership offering and that there are a few items under discussion, one being a possible levy on open trials, another being developing a subcommittee dedicated to seeking more sponsorship and partnerships with other organisations.

CEO also explained matters have already been taken to reduce expenditure such as reviewing the number of office staff attending trials and discussions around the shop attending at all. Went on to reiterate what Dick Roper said about things needing to change and prioritisation of what is essential to the Society. Added that a discussion was had in council yesterday about membership fees and how they have not risen as they maybe should have and are now up against 10% inflation. Highlighted that the last change in membership was a £5 increase back in 2015, and any rises since have gone straight onto providing the magazine and not to the Society. Finished by saying nothing had been decided in council but wanted Directors to be made aware of possible changes coming.

CEO finished report on finance by saying that there has been a freelance part time bookkeeper assisting Kim with the accounts and will be staying on to help up with Xero integration and also assist with how we recruit going forward for a qualified professional bookkeeper, so Kim can return to managing the retail side of the Society.

Chair thanked Isabel and Alice for the tremendous amount of work done and also thanked John McCullough and the World Trial committee for their amazing efforts, which has given the Society a year's breathing space to get the accounts in order.

## **8. 2023 World Trial – Report from John McCullough**

John McCullough said he hoped everyone who attended the World trial had a wonderful time and that he and the committee are proud of what they delivered in 16 months. John thanked Isabel, Alice, and everyone in the trial committee for support, and announced that despite having £1.50 in the bank last January, they finished with £342,000, and after expenses were paid, they made a profit of £103,000 for the Society. Reiterated that everyone involved pulled their weight, thanked the Directors who volunteered to help, and gave a special mention to Matt Watson and Antony Warmington. Reminded everyone that there is still a tv programme to come out in BBC Northern Ireland, and said that the local council, Lord Mayor, and local politicians were all delighted with the event.

## **9. Presidents Reports & Announcement of Judges**

### **a) Joe Relph – England**

- i) Singles judges are Stephen Duckworth and Mark Banham.
- ii) Doubles judges are Peter Telford and Bob Watson.
- iii) Course director is Will Hurley.

### **b) Pat Murphy - Ireland**

- i) Thanked John McCullough and Eamonn Connell and their committees for their fantastic efforts with the World trial and International.
- ii) Singles judges are Michael H Kelly and Dan Morrissey.
- iii) Doubles judges are Barra O'brien and TBC.
- iv) Course director is TBC.

### **c) Jim Ogston - Scotland**

- i) Singles judges are Stuart McCrindle and Alastair Stewart.
- ii) Doubles judges are Ian Wilkie and Scott Renwick.
- iii) Course director is John McDougall, who is also course director for the 2024 International.
- iv) International judge is Jock McMillian.
- v) Asked everyone to please be in full support of the upcoming International in Scotland.

### **d) Glyn Jones - Wales**

- i) Singles judges are Arwel Staples and Rob Lewis.
- ii) Doubles judges are Llyr Evans and Cai Pritchard.
- iii) Course director TBC.

### **e) CEO asked for permission from Directors to officially capitalize IT and Trophies.**

- i) Proposed – Dick Roper
- ii) Seconded – Stan Harding

## **10. CEO report continued**

### **a) The Office**

- i) New registrations recruit sadly not working out, but as registrations are down and office work is up to date, a mutual agreement was made for them to leave at the end of January.
- ii) Kim's role is being reviewed as she is not a qualified bookkeeper and there is a need for one to be in place so she can return to the retail side of the Society.

**b) Topics arising from Council**

- i) Trustees have undergone further training with Exact Consultants following Governance update.
- ii) Health Committee formed and meeting regularly. Thomas Longton explained their aim is to educate, not create rules and that they are made up of various individuals with the appropriate credentials to be on the committee. Names were not originally released for fear of them being inundated by members, however this can be changed as all are happy to be identified as part of the HAG.
- iii) Strategy meetings taken place looking at the ideal future if the ISDS followed by “nitty gritty” in relation to performance.
- iv) Sponsorship committee ideas.
- v) Overtime costs and as a result Isabel and Alice will be splitting attending Nationals going forward to ensure other work is not neglected.
- vi) Across water/exceptional journey allowance for Directors raised to £75.
- vii) The shop at trials – as previously discussed.
- viii) Great Yorkshire Show and Royal Highland presence.
- ix) Potential threat from animal rights campaigners.
- x) Promotion of ISN.
- xi) Social Media, Marketing and PR.
- xii) Disputes in associate Nations/Discipline of Spanish handler – judge’s decision is final.
- xiii) Lost Microchips – process around lost microchips and registration certificates, which is ongoing.
- xiv) Registering brindle dogs.
- xv) Health related queries from unplanned mating.
- xvi) Livestreaming.

**c) Stud books**

- i) 2019 – 2022 have been printed and will be with those who ordered soon.
- ii) 2023 being worked on with Teun and Intradev.
- iii) Only 30 were pre-ordered after 18 months of work. The need for physical studbooks needs assessing going forward.

**d) Trial management system**

- i) Overall was a huge success and made the 2023 trials a much different experience for CEO and office.
- ii) Some human errors were made but system proved to be a huge asset and is now there for everyone in the future.

**e) MyISDS**

- i) This is essentially there but in the new trials system.

**f) CRIS**

- i) Development underway after being put on hold for the trials management system.
- ii) Intradev are coming to the office in Bedford on Wednesday to finish testing and setting up.

**g) Ticketing**

- i) Investigating centralized ticketing options for Nationals and Internationals, to help with budgeting of trials.

**h) Website**

- i) 111.5k visits in 2023, up from 59k in 2022.
- ii) Main areas visiting were UK, Europe, Central America and Japan.
- iii) New website is almost ready to go live, awaiting stock control element for the online shop and postage to be added by weight of order.

**i) Social Media**

- i) 1355 new followers in 2023 on Facebook which saw this jump over the trials season.
- ii) Expanding into more channels imminently such as Instagram and YouTube.

**j) International Sheepdog News**

- i) Magazine subscribers dropped from 3781 in 2022 to 3459 in 2023.
- ii) Magazine only subscription without membership will be going live with the new system as old system could not cope with it without further investment.

**k) 2023 Dog statistics**

- i) 6277 ISDS members.
- ii) 2056 are overseas members.
- iii) 17 dogs registered on merit.
- iv) 6689 puppies registered in 2023, 7263 in the financial period.
- v) 1681 puppies registered from Overseas members in 2023.
- vi) Top Dog names were Roy, Ben, Moss, Jim & Bob. Top bitch names were Meg, Jess, Nell, Fly & Jill.

**l) National Trial Entries**

- i) Dropped again from 817 in 2022 to 694 in 2023.
- ii) Brace also dropped from 68 in 2022 to 48 in 2023.

**m) Livestreaming**

- i) World trial income excluded from this.
- ii) Gross revenue of £32,290.95.
- iii) Cost of £19,146.80.
- iv) Profit of £13,144.15, up from 2022 by £3507.35.
- v) Package of all 4 Nationals plus International proved most popular again, with International close behind.

**n) Trials & Promotion**

- i) Working on increasing the Society brand awareness through more uniform signage for trials and a branded tent.

**o) New Initiatives**

- i) Plans to get back involved with NSA Next Generation Workshops this year.
- ii) Scotland is currently leading the way with partnering us with their Young Farmers, further development around the rest of the country to continue.
- iii) Further development on the "Sheepdog Academy" initiative after 2 pilot days last week, thanks again to Robin Dean, Ricky and Meg Hutchinson, and James and Jane Gilman for their support in hosting. Will be continuing to develop this to determine how the ISDS can offer subsidized training and clinics to young and inexperienced handlers in line with our Society objectives.

## **11. Presentation from Cathryn Mellersh of the Health Committee**

## **12. Considerations of Motions**

### **Motions 1 – 3 passed as basic updates and “housekeeping.”**

Motion 4 – Addition to rule 6. National Section Meetings

*National Presidents and Vice Presidents*

*INSERT NEW RULE 6.10*

*6.10 If past Presidents and Directors of any particular country are of the view that the incumbent President or Senior Vice President is not fulfilling their duties to the required standard then the Directors of that country may move a vote of no confidence. If this vote is carried by a simple majority the incumbent President or Senior Vice President must resign their position forthwith.*

Proposer: E W Edwards Seconder: G A Staples

- a) Wyn Edwards explained that there is nothing in the rules allowing the Society to replace a Nations President if needed, should they become absent or unable to do so any longer, so for safeguarding of the role there needs to be a means to deal with it, being leaving with the Past Presidents and Directors of that Nation to deal with it in house.

### **Vote - Carried by majority.**

5 – Addition to Constitution

We propose that the Society forms a Past Presidents’ advice committee.

Proposed: Tim Longton Seconded: Con McGarry

- a) Tim Longton explained they spoke with Past Presidents at the International and they all felt they agreed it would be helpful to have a group of people in a committee available to write a formula for things to run smoothly on day to day basis, a there is no formal explanation for some things in the running of the Society as experienced by CEO’s past and present.
- b) Cathy Freeman said it would be a good idea but this motion lacks a clear remit and scope of the degree of decision making based on the committees advice.
- c) Tim Longton responded saying it would be none of such, only when called upon for whatever reason.
- d) Chair said that it is a slightly open ended motion.
- e) CEO suggests that for now they are available to call on when needed.
- f) Ian Brownlie said that they see the well intention of this motion, however in their experience there is always someone with more experience than you, and that they believe most people are happy to help if called upon, so suggests a motion is not needed for this.

### **Vote – motion not passed.**

### **Motions 6 – 7 passed as basic housekeeping again.**

8 – Rules for Trials

Where there is a stand/podium at a trial, in order to remain in line with health and safety, handlers must not climb any higher than the base, i.e. do not climb on the safety rails.

Proposed: Martin O'Malley Seconded: Con McGarry

- a) Some discussions around what would happen if the rule was broken.
- b) Sammy Long asked if it would be a good idea to have sign beside podium to remind handlers when on it.
- c) Stan Harding reiterated that handlers should not be on the rails, end of.

**Vote - motion passed.**

9 – Addition to Rule 6.2 (f)

6.2 COMPETITORS f.

No dog shall wear or carry anything that might in any way assist his/her performance. All laden or electric collars either remote controlled or otherwise be strictly prohibited from any trial venue. Dogs competing at all major trials, a National, International or World Trial must not wear a collar of any type when competing.

Proposed: Frank Cashen Seconded: Claire Somers-Cashen

- a) Frank Cashen explained that they witnessed a handler with their hand in their pocket whilst on the trial field and the dog suddenly jumped back when getting close to the sheep, indicating the dog got some sort of warning. Expressed concerns around animal welfare and how the Society is perceived by the wider public.
- b) Some discussion over which trials this applies, whether just major ISDS trials or open trials, mentioned that most follow the ISDS Rules for Trials as they are qualifying trials.
- c) Claire Cashen asked if it could be the Course Directors responsibility to take all collars off dogs the same way they take leads for handlers as they walk out onto the field.
- d) Some further discussion over whether it is already covered by previous rule.

**Vote - motion not passed.**

10 – Addition to Rule 3.2 (m)

3.2 NATIONAL SINGLES ENTRY AND QUALIFICATION

m. In the draw for the Irish National, the Isle of Man competitors can be excluded from the Thursday draw and only included in the draw for Friday and Saturday. If they run two dogs, one dog will be drawn to run on each of the two days. Where the competitor is also entered in the brace competition, this rule will not apply.

Proposed: Pat Murphy Seconded: Frank Cashen

**Motion passed at Irish Section meeting.**

**11 – Motion withdrawn.**

**Motions 12 – 14 passed as basic housekeeping and updates again.**

15 – To change the time limit for doubles at the International from 25 minutes to 22 minutes.

Proposed: Michael Longton Seconded: Ricky Hutchinson

- a) Michael Longton explained that generally when it's a good run you are finished in time, if you are not having a great run you spend 2 minutes running round the pen for the gain of one point, so motion is to cover welfare grounds predominantly.



- b) Some discussion around whether it is worth changing for the sake of a few minutes.
- c) Ricky Hutchinson added that dimensions of the pen need looking at as apply to very old rules, and sheep are now bigger whilst the pens have remained small.

**Vote - Motion not passed.**

16 – To change the time limit for doubles at the Nationals to 18 minutes.

Proposed: Michael Longton Seconded: Ricky Hutchinson

- a) Michael Longton said it applies same as previous motion.

**Vote - Motion not passed.**

17 – In open trials in England, there does not need to be a shedding element for it to be classed as a qualifier.

Proposed: Peter Wood Seconded: George Bonsall

**Vote - Motion not passed.**

18 – 5.2 o. STATES The Judge's decision is final providing their conduct is in accordance with the Rules for Trials.

ADD NEW 5.2 p. If any judge selected to officiate at one of the Society's major trials (National – International – World Trial) does not, in the opinion of Council, judge to the standards expected at these events, the judge identified will not be eligible to officiate at any Society Trial for a minimum of ten years.

Proposer: E W Edwards Seconded: R F M Ellis

- a) Chair says that council were not in favor of this one.
- b) Wyn Edwards explains that they believe there is a growing problem with judges being given unnecessary hassle about runs now due to the availability of the livestream and people generally being able to revisit runs and judge themselves, leading to arguing about decisions. Goes on to suggest that if a rule is there, people will consider twice before arguing, and there is a clear standard judges follow to eliminate any questions from outsiders.
- c) Chair added that it is a tricky subject, over years attempts to cure it but agreed that it needs some form of development.
- d) Frank Cashen highlights that it is harder to get people to judge Nationals and Internationals now due to people trying to intimidate or question them when they are on their break, without adding the fear of being struck off.
- e) Cathy Freeman added that people know who is experienced enough to judge at a required level, and how would you decide a standard for council to hold people to but then implement at a trial if they are not all there.

**Vote - Motion not passed.**

19 – Rule 3.3k.

Current rule is; If a dog or dogs entered in the normal way in the Brace Class becomes ill, injured, or dies, and a Veterinary Certificate is produced, a substitute dog may be run, provided it is qualified in accordance with Rules 3.3d and 3.3 g.

*Propose to amend to: If a dog entered for the doubles becomes ill, injured, or dies then a refund of the fee will be given on production of a veterinary letter confirming this. A replacement dog will not be permitted to run.*

Proposed: Michael Longton Seconded: Matt Watson

- a) Michael Longton explained now that doubles dogs have to "qualify" to run, a dog that could be a replacement dog will more than likely not have the same qualifying points as the one that is pulled out with a vet's certificate.
- b) Robin Dean says that if there are more than 9 runners fine, but if not is it necessary.

**Vote - Motion not passed.**

20 – Stud Book Rules

That the three DNA tests of IGS, TNS & SN to be a requirement alongside CEA or Ophthalmic test to register a litter.

Proposed: Mrs Janine Rees-Denman Seconded: Mr Aled Owen

- a) Janine Rees-Denman says that the facilities are now widely available to test relevant to the border collie, and that the ISDS have Laboklin bundle to purchase tests to ensure a healthy litter is registered to the ISDS.
- b) Con McGary said that they have no problem with that if the dog is not already tested, if already tested, they don't think they should have to do it again.
- c) Some discussions around the admin required to complete additional retesting of dogs.
- d) Michael Longton says that they feel strongly to reject this as education is needed, not rules, and we need to educate breeders to not use carriers with carriers.

**Vote - Motion not passed.**

### **13. Discussion of Possible Future Motions & Strategy**

#### **a) AI Agents**

- a. The current process does not seem to be relevant anymore.
- b. Some discussion around it.
- c. Agreement that as long as required paperwork is completed; agents are not needed.

#### **b) County shows**

- i) Will be continuing to work on increasing our presence at Country shows however this will be costly without local volunteers to support. Will not be proceeding this year if proves too costly considering finances.

#### **c) Membership**

- i) Currently under review as to how it create more value for members and increase Society income.

#### **d) Sponsorship**

- i) Forming a sub-committee to seek more Society sponsors and form partnerships with other organisations to increase Society income.

#### **e) Affiliating trainers**

- i) We have had an issue raised with member benefits to do with the charity commission which CEO needs to do some quiet investigation on.
- ii) Office receives a lot of requests for trainers, so we need to define what we are allowed to do/promote as a charity.
- iii) Trainers wishing to be on the list need to be approved by the ISDS, more work to be completed on parameters around this.

#### **14. AOB**

- a) Neil Gillon asked if it would be possible to move consideration of motions in the agenda to first thing after lunch.
- b) Matthew Watson asked if there any plans to increase any prices or rates at all, such as national entries.

Chair informed Directors that council agreed to put national entries up to £75 in the meeting yesterday.

- c) Tom O'Sullivan requested that the trials committee further consider what measures should be formally put in place when the weather is particularly warm, to ensure we are seen to consider the welfare of sheep and dogs at major trials.

Cathy Freeman suggested a formal policy for heat index measures.

- d) Chair formally gave Directors their resignation, and said that after 4 years in the role, and thanked everyone for their support during their term as Chairman.

**Meeting complete at 4:30pm.**