

International Sheepdog Society

Annual English Section Meeting

4:45pm, Thursday 17th August 2023

1. Welcome from National President
 - a) Meeting opened: National President welcomed and thanked everyone for attending.
2. Minutes silence
 - a) Minutes silence held for those we have lost in the last year.
3. Apologies for Absence
 - a) Apologies received from Ricky and Meg Hutchinson.
4. Minutes of the last Annual Meeting
 - a) Approval of minutes – please amend R S Smith to R H Smith. *Approved by show of hands.
5. Matters Arising Therefrom
 - a) None
6. Endorsement of Vice Presidents
 - a) Senior Vice President – R P Dean
 - b) Junior Vice President – R H Smith
7. Endorsement of Directors
 - a) Nominated:
 - i) Elaine Hill
 - ii) Matt Watson
 - iii) Peter Telfer
 - iv) Bevis Jordan
 - v) Mike Northwood
 - vi) Ed Hawkins
 - vii) Jed Watson
 - viii) Mark Elliott
 - ix) Ben Smith
 - x) Andy Grant

8. National President's Report

I am going to keep this short and sweet. My first thanks go to fellow presidents Robin & Richard for their time and support over last 12 months. Thank you to those on council also, for us Michael Longton, Matt Watson, and David Kennard, I am very grateful to all. Thank you to Ian Fleming for agreeing to serve another term as our chairman. I believe he has a calming influence and good for the society. Thomas Longton for his work as vice chair. Special thanks to Isabel, tremendous amount of work she has put into driving the society forward in the short time she has been with us, amazing what has happened so far and I will let Isabel explain those to you later, welcome Alice who joined earlier in the year, and seems to be enjoying her role so far and I hope you all make her feel welcome, and a big thank you to the girls in the office at Bedford. I am extremely grateful to Graham Pears and family at Flash House Farm. Nothing has been too much trouble for Graham, and we are appreciative

of his efforts with this English National. The sheep look great, and we have a fabulous trial ahead. Local chairman Alex Wilkinson and local committee have worked hard and secured a great amount of sponsorship as well as put on lots of fund raising trials.

Thomas and Ian have agreed to split attending nationals this year, now Thomas is here to talk as our Vice Chairman.

9. Society Chairman's Report

I would like to welcome you all here and endorse what Joe said. It is clear an unbelievable amount of work has been done to put this National on at a fantastic site. You don't realise how much work goes into putting these events on unless you have done it yourself, and this really looks like a fantastic National. Any problems or complaints, please come and see me. Welcome again to Alice, who has taken a lot of weight off Isabel this year who I think was beginning to become a little stressed last year. Isabel has made a real difference so far and got the office up to speed, Isabel really has done a fantastic job. Enjoy the trial and let's get a good team together to go to Ireland.

10. CEO Report

Thank you, Thomas, and thank you to everyone for attending the meeting. This is the most well attended meeting this year so far and it is great you all turn out to hear society news.

- a) In terms of keeping everyone updated with the Society I have been continuing with the Directors reports and the "From the office" section of ISN, I hope this is keeping you up to date and letting you know what you wish to hear about. If you are not currently receiving the magazine, I urge you to please subscribe as it is the best form of communication to our members.
- b) Joe and Thomas have briefly introduced Alice; she has been working directly with me and has been a huge help already. Alice is attending all trials with me this year and learning a lot! She comes from a farming background and has more recently got her own border collie pup so watch out the office might be being represented in a couple of years' time!
- c) We had a very well attended and productive meeting in January in Lancaster. Many here will have heard reports from that, and there were a few constitution updates to be done. These were mainly "housekeeping", as there were no terms of office for Directors, Council, or the Chairman and Vice Chairman. Clause 6.2d had been accidentally removed but this is now back in the Constitution. Those key dates are in ISN for when nominations need to be in. ISN is a great way to keep up to date with these things being communicated.
- d) One thing that was mentioned by other nations at these meetings is the annual accounts. At the 2022 AGM in January, I was unable to produce full set of accounts for ratification. This was impossible due to the account's year end on the 31st October and the Christmas break being so close to the AGM. Directors took a vote to change the financial year end to 31st May. Accounts that are currently published and online with charity commission are for a 7-month period.
- e) Now this May 31st we have completed full year, so before I set off for the trials here, I had a meeting with accountants, and they have begun the audit process and they will be produced and shared before the 2023 AGM in January 2024. Management accounts will be shared with directors. This is not a like for like comparison and moving forward you'll be able to see a clear view of how we are performing.

We made a small surplus in terms of our "bread and butter" income with registrations work amounting to £7651.00. We have had an income of £365,759.00, and our reserves sit at just over £700,000.

We are in a great position for small charity. We have not had to go into our reserves this year, which is why council decided to invest some of those reserve funds in IT. All the trials seem to have been able to be self-funded, which is great so hopefully looking like a great year financially.

- f) Last year I announced we would be updating IT system. Directors have seen new version MyISDS and CRIS system we use in the office. We have created a new entry, scheduling, and scoring system. Most of you have used it and after a few registration hiccups and password issues, it went really well. We only received around 40 paper entries which is fantastic.

This system does a neutral draw with no human interference via a random ballot. It can also be adjusted to rule changes should any come up from the January AGMs. We will be inputting scores when we start tomorrow morning, which can then be viewed by public live online. This will hopefully create a more seamless and quick viewing experience during trials. This system is also able to create a record of performance for each handler and dog.

Hopefully going forward, it will be adopted by other trials so your points from them will automatically be there, ready for National entry.

- g) There was a bit governance review in 2020 and lots of changes came about after that. Fiona McMillan was hugely involved in the review, and it was decided by council at the January AGM it will keep being topped up. We will be using Exact Consultants again and they will be interviewing the trustees to get a proper understanding of what we are lacking within governance. This is happening as we speak, and trustees will be receiving training throughout August to help them be guardians of the Society. This will also be available to Directors.

Part of this review is an employment review. We registered over 1500 more puppies last year, so a total of around 9600 puppies. This was just registrations, so not including the work that gets done on transfers and member registrations and queries etc. As everything is growing, we are in a position where we need more staff as if we have any kind of interruption to do with staffing, whether that is staff unwell, on holiday, or leaving, there will be a backlog.

- h) Many of you are aware that Mandy left us and has been replaced by a part time more experienced person, as well as an office junior. We are trying to look at maximising the staffing appropriately so that if we face any disruption we can cover and handle it and the office work can continue uninterrupted.

We are also looking at what gaps there are within the Society, one of which is that there is no marketing or business development plan at all. That is a big part about what Alice will be doing. Going forward Alice is also keen to improve our membership offering. She will be working with Robin Dean on how we can increase our young & new handler registration and working closely with the NSA and Young Farmers groups across the UK. Alice's passion lies with the next generation after lecturing in Agriculture at Hartpury College, so this is something she will be looking at it over the coming year to 18 months.

- i) There was a motion passed several years ago that there should be a more active Health Committee. This year a Health Advisory group has been established and formed by 6/7 volunteer specialists in breeding, pedigree etc to do with our breed, and anything anyone presents they would like to know more about. We are not releasing names as they are volunteering their time for this. Please submit anything to office to be reviewed.

To clarify, the Health Advisory Group is made up of the volunteers, the Health Committee is made up of the Presidents, Vice Chairman, and Chairman.

- j) I am very aware I stood here last year and vowed that Stud books would be ready soon. Unfortunately, we have faced an enormous number of setbacks. This has been a very challenging process and we have had to start over three times now. Carol has worked tirelessly with Teun Van

Dool on these. I have taken over with regards to results and we should be producing the 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022 shortly. Thank you to anyone who pre-ordered for their patience on this. I am in discussion with Teun about 2023, and crossing everything that his health remains stable so he can assist us with this. We are also speaking with our software guys to ensure we can continue to produce these in the future.

We simply could not have done all this without Teun volunteering his time to do the Stud Books, and Council have decided to commemorate this by awarding the Teun Van Dool Pedigree Breeders Cup at the 2023 World Trial this year for the breeder of the World Trial Champion.

- k) We have also had an increasing amount of interest from associates in foreign nations, so this is also something that will have more work completed on. We need to ensure they align with us in order to bring them on board as new members.

Any questions?

- i) Ray Edwards asked how the health committee is progressing and expressed concerns about EOD and the need for more rigorous testing.

Joe Relph responded saying that they understand concerns and explained that now the committee is formed they will be meeting soon to discuss the issue raised.

Thomas Longton added that they personally felt Early Onset Deafness is a tricky one to analyse due to it being tested via markers, not like in a DNA test for things like CEA and explained motions were brought forward for TNS a few years ago but believed that they got lost in Covid years. Advised that bringing a motion forward about getting all dogs tested may be the best way forward for now.

- ii) Ray Edwards expressed they felt it was important that the Society is addressing EOD in some way and said they feel a database showing dogs test results being available to breeders would help them make informed decisions as they are aware of people breeding from dogs that shouldn't be used.

Thomas Longton reiterated that this needs to be passed at the AGM via a motion by Directors.

- iii) Ray Edwards asked why a letter that was written to the Stud Book Committee is yet to receive a reply.

CEO replied saying that having had a conversation with Thomas about this and EOD and because there is no definitive test, it would need to be clear how members can interpret the markers. That is what the HAG (Health Advisory Group) are discussing, and how do we do it in a way that stays manageable.

Michael Longton added that if the ISDS decides to early what is and isn't allowed via these markers, we could be missing out on the best of breeding due to not 100% accurate markers. Said that until there is a definitive test it is difficult to ensure we are making accurate assumptions.

Brenda Helliwell agreed with Ray Edwards previous mention that there are quite a lot of dogs who are breeding who carry EOD.

James Dumbleton added that the Society doesn't breed the dogs, the members do. The onus is on breeders to check dogs we breed from. Finished by saying the stud book committee has been made aware, now let them get on with it and that the people on the top table are not responsible for how we breed our dogs.

iv) Tim Longton informed the group they put the original motion forward with the idea of the tests being analysed to see what is and isn't important with regards to the Border Collie breed, to then be developed on and researched further. The HAG is there to provide advice and knowledge to us as breeders.

v) James Howard said they think breeders need to look at the way they breed and said that a majority of conditions are arising because the gene pool is shrinking and that they think an option is to look at ways to increase the gene pool rather than decrease it.

Ray Edwards suggested lowering the price of Registration on Merit so the gene pool can be widened.

vi) Trudy Fielding said that it is very well providing tests and databases, but the Society would be relying on people to take part and volunteer their information to be published, as it is down to the integrity of the individual, and to us to ensure we breed responsibly.

vii) Will Hurley asked is it possible for the report provided to the HAG Committee to be published to everyone, so we can all be aware of findings, as what we have right now is not reliable, so we need to allow more time to research.

CEO responded saying yes, that is the plan. The group is new so they have been in discussion about how their roles can help and how to be useful and share information.

Joe Relph thanked Ray for bringing this forward and reiterated that it is being worked on.

11) World Trial 2023

- a) The England Team jackets have been kindly sponsored by Ross Watson.
- b) Everything is coming together really well. John McCullough and his committee have been working tirelessly over the last 16 months.
- c) Gill Hall and local council providing a huge amount of support as well as other fantastic sponsors. Local accommodation is booked out so act quickly if you are planning on going out.
- d) We will be livestreaming also via an independent package.
- e) Please also remember that your members badge does not grant you access so purchase your tickets in advance.
- f) Ensure you have completed your necessary vaccine requirements, the certificates are required and apply to Northern Ireland and needs being done within 5 days of travel, 21 days for rabies vaccines. Please make sure is done in good time.
- g) We are inviting expressions of interest for World Trial in 2026.
- h) Any questions?
None.

9) Venues for Future Trials

- a) 2024 National will be on Dartmoor at Moorlands Farm, Princetown, Devon. This will be over the 8th – 11th August 2024.
- b) We have a definite National for 2025 and potentially 2026.
- c) International site is looking a little trickier but being worked on.

10) AOB

- a) Ray Edwards asked CEO why when entering online there not a space to put breeding down of the dog being entered.

CEO responded saying you do not need to enter that information. It is pulled automatically from the database. Added they are aware that currently it is pulling through the current owner of the dog/bitch the entered dog was breed from, not the owner at the time of breeding, however this is easily resolved and being sorted as we speak.

- b) Alex Wilkinson said that through running this National, they used our own ticketing system, but they think that having a central ticketing system through the ISDS would help greatly with planning in terms of attendance, sponsors etc, and means funds are received quicker to help with planning.

CEO responded saying they agree and that they would like to have meetings with committees post Nationals to discuss what can be done to make organising trials easier for committees.

- c) Derek Scrimgeour asked how do we prove our dogs are inoculated before we run our dogs this week?

Joe Relph said please bring to me ahead of your run.

- d) Stuart Wilkinson asked if rather than local committees paying for everything, would it make more sense for all funds to go into ISDS account, so the society can pay bills and get the VAT back?

Isabel Branch responded saying that they agree it is getting very difficult to set up regional bank accounts but that they also discovered that some grant funding requires it to be paid and spent locally.

- e) Matt Watson thanked Joe for everything he has been doing as President.

Meeting completed 17:43