

International Sheepdog Society

Annual Welsh Section Meeting

5:45pm, Friday 11th 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 Wyn Edwards, Stan Harden, Merion Owen, Dewi Jenkins, Malcom Ellis.
4. Minutes of the last Annual Meeting
 - a) Approval of minutes – Proposed by David Rees, seconded by Cyril Roberts.
5. Matters Arising Therefrom
 - a) None
6. Endorsement of Vice Presidents
 - a) Senior Vice President – D Davies
 - b) Junior Vice President – D K Evans
 - c) Unanimous yes from all in attendance.
7. Endorsement of Directors
 - a) Nominated:
 - i) Dylan Davies
 - ii) Huw Francis
 - iii) Arthur Morgan
 - iv) Aled Owen
 - v) Glyn Owens
 - vi) David Rees
 - vii) Nigel Watkins
 - viii) Kevin Evans
 - ix) Cai Pritchard
 - x) Janine Rees-Denman
 - b) Unanimous yes from all in attendance.

8. National President's Report

I have got to say a huge thank you to the Llysfasi site for hosting this trial. I am hopeful the good weather continues for a final great day tomorrow. The Llysfasi staff have been amazing with helping prepare this ideal site.

Thank you to the Owen family for providing the sheep for the trial. Although they have been a little testing, they were consistent sheep. Our local Vice chairman Lolo has been working hard to organise the stewards and had the sheep flying out for each run in good order, thank you.

We have a brilliant local committee. They have all worked together so well and incredibly hard, I am very grateful for this. The local Chairman Daffd and Treasurer Grace have done incredible work.

With regards to ISDS matters, we continue to have regular meetings with trustees, and this is working well, I am sure Isabel will go into more detail on this. I am pleased to say I have also improved on zoom!

There has been quite a bit of activity with our young handlers. Angie Driscoll has been a part of setting up a young handlers' academy in the south and is working hard to get some trials set up. Part of the idea of being at Llysfasi College this year is to try to get more students and younger handlers involved.

It is sad we cannot get a full complement, but we have a good number of young handlers coming through, so I am hopeful for the future. I am very grateful to all involved with young handlers.

Finally, I just wanted to mention something to consider with regards to the National shield. This is discussed a lot, but I wanted to clarify that the National shield is for the breeder of the winning dog at the national, not the winning handler of the National.

Please think on if it's appropriate for there to be a champion trophy. There is no actual champion trophy that will have every year's winner on it. Something to think about for the future, whether we look at this anymore.

9) Society Chairman's Report

Thank you all for coming tonight. Thank you all for inviting me here and giving me such a warm welcome. When I took the post of chairman, I fully intended to do only 3 years which ended at AGM in January. The support I received from all over has encouraged me to agree to do another term and I am very grateful for the support.

This is a great venue with a great committee who have been working very hard over the last few months to put this together for us. Committees are the backbone of society when it comes to putting on these trials, so it is hugely appreciated to those volunteers for organising this.

This is a fantastic field for a national. It has everything you need, a testing course and testing sheep which creates a good challenge and that's how you pick a good team. You have a great number of young handlers, which is something we are lacking in Scotland, so I commend you for this, you have a talented bunch coming through.

Things are happening in the society now that haven't been able to for years. We are expanding fast and trying to modernise with the times. Council agreed to invest in updating our IT and many of you will have seen some benefits already. There are more to come which is long overdue. We also need to add more value to membership. Someone has even asked

me here, “what do they get for being a member”. We have various ideas in the pipeline that you will be seeing in the future.

The Society is again in a much better place than previous years due to being even more settled after a period of flux. We are guilty of overworking our CEO’s which resulted in 3 leaving in succession because of strain of the job. I am pleased that we now have Alice to assist Isabel. There is also Tamie in the office employed as the Office Manager which has helped with the efficiency and speed of completion of work. I mentioned last year there was lots of complaints about the backlog of work in the office, but I am pleased that work is now being completed in real time.

The upcoming World trial gives us all a great chance to be ambassadors for our Society. With 30 countries coming, it will strengthen our links with overseas members. Hopefully we will all warmly welcome them. John McCullough and his committee have put in a vast amounts of work to enable this event to happen and it is incredible.

Animal rights activists are causing more problems in our “world” but not directly to our Society as of yet. They made an appearance at the Royal Highland Show at the sheering event. We need to be aware we may be on their radar, maybe not our Nationals but the International and certainly the World trial may be in their sights. It is important that everyone knows they are not to take the law into their own hands with these people and must let the appropriate people handle them should they cause any issues.

I’d like to finish by reminding you that this is your society, and if there is something you want to change or have addressed you must let us know. Please don’t keep it to yourselves or discuss it online, bring it to either me, your National President, Isabel, or just email the office for it to be passed on.

Any questions?

None.

10) CEO Report

Thank you for being here for the meeting, I promise to keep it as brief as possible.

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.

- a) Ian has 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!
We have completed a few constitution updates which were mainly “housekeeping”, as there were no terms of office for Directors, Council, or the Chairman and Vice Chairman, and clause 6.2d had been accidentally removed but this is now back in.
- b) One fairly significant thing to discuss 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 the charity commission are for a 7-month period.

Now this May 31st just gone we 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 are in a great position for small charity. We have not had to go into our reserves this year, have used some reserve funds for capital for investment in IT, everyone been self-funded with organising the trials which is great so hopefully looking like a great year financially.

- c) There was a bit governance review in 2020 and lots of changes came about after that. 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.

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. 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. That final report is not ready yet.

- d) 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.

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 have been inputting scores which can be viewed 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. This is hopefully going to be fully operational by the end of September.

- e) The Health Advisory group has been established and formed by 6/7 specialists in breeding, pedigree etc. We are not releasing names as they are volunteering their time for this. Please submit anything to office to be reviewed.

- f) I am very aware I stood here last year and said that Stud books would be ready soon. Unfortunately, we have faced an enormous number of setbacks and ended up restarting 3 times. I really do think that this week we can have them submitted to print. This has been a very challenging process. 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.
- g) Going forward Alice is keen to improve our membership offering. She will be working with Robin Dean on how we can increase our young and 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.
- h) 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. This will ensure we are growing the societies objectives worldwide.
- i) Any questions?
None

11) World Trial 2023

- a) The World trial is quickly going to be on us. A huge amount of work has been completed by John McCullough and his team. Without their passion and dedication, it couldn't have been done. We are receiving an enormous amount of support from the local council, around £75-80k, the hosts Gill Hall, ABP, G&P, and many more. Lots of countries are getting excited about coming over to us so looking like a fantastic event. I have seen handlers appearing at nationals who will be competing in the World trial.
- b) Get your tickets ASAP as looking like it will be a busy event. The grandstands have already sold out, so I advise booking your entry tickets.
- c) If you are travelling to compete or take dogs with you, make sure you have the required vaccinations and worming treatments in order. It is not just ROI issue it is the whole of Ireland.
- d) Any questions?
None

12) Venues for Future Trials

- a) John Davies is chairman for the committee for next year's National in Tregaron. They have a great committee and are all getting revved up for it.
- b) Venue for 2025 International is sorted, landowners Ian and Kate Hill-Trevor in Brynkinalt have been so welcoming. We haven't as yet got a local committee set up but will have a meeting soon once this trial has ended.
- c) No venue secured for national in 2025 yet.

13) AOB

- a) John Davies raised it is not brilliant that the programmes have sold out on the second day and asked why this has happened?
CEO responded saying it is very hard to gauge how many we will need each year, and usually the office is left with loads unsold after trials, so the amount has been cut back slightly this

year due to try to avoid making a loss on producing them. This trial so far has been much busier and very well advertised, with fantastic people on the gate pushing programme sales, but I accept that we need to ensure we have enough, and this doesn't happen again.

- b) Eirian Morgan added they would just like to say that it is great to see points coming out so fast with the new system and it is great they are so promptly available now because of the new system.

Meeting completed.