

Minutes of Annual General Committee Meeting

at Bowburn Community Centre, Co Durham DH6 5AT

On Tuesday 24th April 2012 at 7.00pm

Those Present

K Leith- Ross, J Keating (Secretary), R Keers, B Davison, G Layfield (FT Secretary), C Maddison, L Heron (Chair), K Roberts, J Dickson, F Maclean, A Beckley, G Hood, K Jenkins (Show Secretary), J McDonald, A Gorman, P Scott, W Wilson (Treasurer), F Smith, J Lees, P Burton, W Lambell, L Hartis, M Gibson, D Farst, D Armstrong.

1. Apologies

N Barlow, J Charlton, W Southwell, J Lewis, A Scutcher, K Cook, H Bradley, L Thompson, JM Johnson, J Cavana

2. Minutes of previous A.G.M. for approval and adoption - KLR & AB

3. Matters arising from the Minutes – None

4. Chairperson's Address – Lynda Heron

Good Evening. Thank you all for making time to attend and contribute to the running of this - your Club.

It has been a difficult year for your newly elected officers. Thank you, Gary for staying around and giving the new team a chance. Last years AGM was a huge shock, to offer resignations on the night was, neither good for the club nor good practice. However, the people present made a success out of what could have been a disaster for the Club.

For my part I have tried my best to support the new officers in their new roles and hope for all our sakes that this next year is less demanding.

The AGM was held in May, meaning your new committee were elected five months into the year – so in effect my report covers less than 8 months – although it seems longer!

My personal thanks go to our new general secretary Judith who has worked tirelessly for the benefit of the Club putting in place new systems and procedures that should take the club forward and hopefully it will mean she has a lot less work in future. Her knowledge and tenacity as well as weeks and weeks of work to get the website up and working have resulted in a valuable resource for everyone. She has worked on the database with Fiona who has lots of knowledge in this area, thank you Fiona, and we now have a nearly complete database of membership but please let us know if you hear of any anomalies in this so we can continue updating

A great deal of work went into preparing the AGM mailing – not least the rules and regs which hadn't been updated for 10 years (when I last tackled them!). I would like to thank Jill who put in a lot of work behind the scenes sorting reading and double checking these rules which have been agreed at General committee but now need ratification by the membership. Rules and Regulations will in future appear as a standing item on the AGM Agenda there is usually something from the KC to update and it is better to do it in bite size chunks than tackle the whole thing head on.

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Our new Treasurer, Wendy, has had a tough first year. I will leave further explanation of the problems she encountered to her – but would like to offer my personal thanks for all the work she has put in. The way the figures are presented in future will be more transparent but until the new system becomes established it may seem a little confusing. I took the decision to implement his recommendations as soon as we had them and have drawn up paperwork and forms, which may still need further development but they begin to put in a framework for best practice. I would like to add that Mr Glaholm, a Chartered Accountant, is involved in running a dog club himself and therefore fully understands the issues involved. The decision to not send this letter to everyone was made to protect the integrity and good intentions of the previous officers who were vulnerable because they did not have the recording systems in place. We live in a time when accountability for use of monies whether public or charitable must follow an audit trail (a step by step record by which accounting data can be traced to its source) Some people will inevitably find managing this change difficult but we will try our best to make this any easy transition for everyone involved. I wanted to protect the good name of the Club and hope we can all agree that the systems that have now been put in place are for the benefit of the people handling the funds as well as the Club itself.

Having grappled with how to handle this issue, I concluded, particularly in the light of comments in the last week regarding a concern that peoples' integrity was being questioned that you, the people who care the most about this Club, should have sight of the auditor's letter.

When a professional makes recommendations and gives such good advice it would be fool hardy to ignore it. We now need to stop looking back and saying "That's the way we've always done it" move forward and agree the new systems are for the benefit of us all. Should this meeting decide I made the wrong call I am prepared to look into how best to deal with this further at a general committee meeting.

What I will categorically say, is that the Auditor's comments have been taken on board by the new Officers who are not prepared to put their heads on the line with inadequate systems.

The Officers need and expect the support of all who handle club funds, to do so in an orderly way by following the protocols now in place.

If the Club guidelines and procedures are not adhered to, then the many people who need and are expected to deal with Club funds do so at great personal risk.

Moving On

My thanks go to Gary our Ft Sec and Alf who acts as Working Test Secretary aided by Kenn Roberts. They have put on the usual trails and tests and although the test entries were down on previous years this is in line with other clubs.

As ever we are enormously grateful to our Field Trail and Working Test hosts who so generously allow us access to their wonderful ground.

Thanks also to of our sponsors Skinners who generously support all our working tests and trails and this support is truly appreciated by the members and the winners, our club never takes its sponsors for granted.

I also offer thanks to our sponsors on the show side, Royal Canin, who have given so generously this year with two Championship Shows and our regular Open Show.

Kira did a sterling job as temporary show secretary for the joint show - thank you - you pulled it out of the hat. Kay Jenkins who took over from Kira after the joint show also did a fab job and the October 2012 show may go down in history - who needs mulled wine when you can have Sangria!

Next year sees our 90th birthday celebrations, and the committees will be looking at suitable celebrations.

Going Forward.

I hope the club can continue its education programme – more of that later!

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With my special interest in the Health of the Breed, I think it behoves us all to look at the bigger picture – if we don't we may find our hobby and how we breed is taken out of our hands.

I personally would like to see a couple of informal brain storming sessions and would draw the members attention to the deliberations of the Council for dog breeding and the new RSPCA puppy contract. The KC Mate Select was launched in the last year and is fantastic tool for breeders.

I look forward with confidence and satisfaction, knowing we have a strong team, who all have my respect and admiration and who work tirelessly for our club. What I would like to ask is if anyone has any complaints, comments or helpful tips, that they bring these to our attention through the appropriate channels – it was disappointing to hear that a previous officer had been heard to say the new team couldn't run a piss-up in a brewery. I am happy to say as far as I can tell should they ever be asked to do so the brewery better have plenty of stock!

*Finally, I would like to wish you all a good year with your dogs, enjoy them. **Lynda Heron***

5. Secretary's Report – Judith Keating

In any new role there is always a steep learning curve during the first few months and my role as Honorary Secretary has proved to be no exception. Many aspects of the job had been shrouded in mystery and I have certainly devoted much more time to this role than I had originally anticipated. Nevertheless I have found the results of my hard work to be very rewarding and I have enjoyed the challenge.

I took on the role of Honorary Secretary simply because no one else was prepared to do it. I had previously served as a committee member for three years and I knew that my main objective would be to improve the lines of communication both within the committees and in particular to the membership as a whole.

My priority was the Club website. The site itself was visible for all to see - it simply did not work. My objective was to get it up and running in time for the Joint Labrador Club Show which was less than six weeks after the AGM. This Show is a high profile event and it presented a perfect opportunity to raise the profile of the Club. With a great deal of work the website was up in time and we promoted the event using our newly established web presence, our Facebook page and also by press release to Dog World and Our Dogs. The result was, the number of entries for the show was far greater than anyone had expected. I will leave the rest of the show reporting to Kay but suffice to say we have had a very successful and record Show year on all fronts, with lots of positive feedback about our new ideas from exhibitors and judges alike.

The introduction of the website has brought many practical benefits including information about club activities, with entry forms where appropriate. Plus the rapid posting of results for Working Test, FT and Shows. But most importantly an online Club presence has been established and has been much appreciated by many people both in this country and abroad. However the website does still need a lot more investment of time, on an ongoing and regular basis, to realise its full potential for the Club and its members. I hope to devote the time required to develop this much more into the future

Following the previous AGM I started to evaluate the club files and it quickly became apparent that I had to bring some structure and order to the Club's record keeping. There was much sorting out to be done. For example, I was extremely concerned to discover that the Club had inadequate insurance provision with no cover for 'events' or 'use of firearms'. The Club now has insurance that covers us for all the required activities.

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This improving and co-ordinating throughout the year had encompassed many other areas, in particular establishing a chronological set of Meeting Minutes from previous years. Most, though not all of these have now been located and filed appropriately.

A long overdue update of the Rules and Regulations has been undertaken. My personal thanks must go to Jill Dickson who was instrumental in information gathering and assessment for this task.

It is imperative that we properly record all the Club assets and in particular the cups and trophies which have been so generously donated to the Club over the years. The last valuation was in 1998. To this end, we plan to gather together ALL the cups/trophies and hold them until an audit and full valuation has taken place later this year. This will enable them to become available again for 2013 which is a special year as it is our 90th anniversary.

This brings me to the membership where we are indebted to Fiona MacLean whose database skills and knowledge have enabled us to take the various lists, in use by the committee members over recent years, combine them, de duplicate them and thus enable us to start with a database from which to establish our current active membership list.

The method of collecting membership and other payments has historically been haphazard. Only fully paid members for this year received an AGM notice and all those who had not paid, were sent a 'membership prompt' letter. This 'prompt' proved to be a most useful exercise, where numerous people discovered they had not paid this year, and in some instances had not paid for many years, or had paid but the funds had not reached the secretary. Since receiving this letter another 59 people have paid their membership and payments are still coming in. The best advice I can give members is to pay by Bank Standing Order or by cheque sent directly to the Membership Secretary. Cash is very difficult to handle and indeed to track if it does go astray. For 2011 we recorded a membership of 309. This year so far, we have a fully paid membership of 404 to date.

I have tried, at every stage, to gather email addresses for members as undoubtedly this is the future of fast, efficient and no cost communication with our membership. Those of you who have an email phobia, I can assure you that for the foreseeable future postal mailing will still be a significant factor, but the cost of postage continues to rise and no doubt will do so into the future and therefore we will do our utmost to encourage as many people as possible to opt for email. This year we have gathered an additional 130 membership email addresses and for many people this is indeed their preferred method of communication.

We must say goodbye to the committee members who have now resigned and we thank them for all their hard work and commitment to the Club.

- *John Lees who has resigned from the position as Vice Chair but will remain on the FT committee*
- *Keith Bains who has resigned from both the General and the FT committees*
- *Brenda Walton who has retired from the Show and General committee*
- *George Ternent who has resigned from the Show committee*

In conclusion, it has been a very busy and at times challenging year and with the help of several members of the committees we have as a Club successfully hosted, not one but two Championship Shows, our usual Open Show, a Judges Training Day, an Eye Testing Clinic, Four Trials and Five working Tests. I would like to thank the members of the various committees who have worked hard to make these events the success they were and without whom there would be no events and therefore no Club.

*I wish you all a very successful 2012. **Judith Keating***

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6. Treasurer's Report and Presentation of Annual Accounts – Wendy Wilson

It has been a very busy and can I say 'interesting' year fraught with difficulty due to a realisation that there was a complete lack of systems in place especially those to record payments made to the Society. It was quickly apparent there was haphazard and incoherent recording of these payments.

Communication problems with Santander caused problems in July as copies of forms to change authorised signatories to the new officers were posted and faxed on numerous occasions but they did not record their receipt. Santander eventually closed the account for all outgoing transactions for four weeks. This caused a problem with our inability to draw money to reimburse expenditure. This problem has now been solved but the possibility of this causing a problem with future changeovers should be borne in mind.

An insurmountable amount of time has been spent on tracing payments, a sometimes impossible task, and consequently this has resulted in incomplete accounting thus, inevitably, causing incomplete accounts having to be presented to the Auditor.

I intended to read the Auditor's letter to you but because of the serious concerns voiced by him, I feel it better to hand copies out so you can assimilate them individually

The Auditor has had great reservation in signing off these accounts and, you will see from this report that he has agreed to sign them but with certain conditions.

If elected I will continue to work with Lynda, the Officers and Committee to develop systems to ensure that monies entrusted to the Society are properly and correctly recorded.

We have a responsibility to ensure that all monies held by the Society are correctly recorded and also to ensure, to the best of our ability, that persons entrusted with these monies are using these systems, which have been developed for their benefit, so they do not find themselves in a position that may make them vulnerable to investigation.

An audit trail must be demonstrated to show that all monies are accountable.

The Auditor has agreed, if you so wish, to continue to be responsible for auditing the Society accounts for 2012 as long as the conditions he has imposed are adhered to.

Unfortunately this will mean more work for all of us involved in the organisation of the Club and we will commit to work with anyone who may find managing this and other changes difficult

Notwithstanding the Club has had a successful year in terms of events it has held.

We have run two very successful Championship Shows with extra free hospitality and a gift of a commemorative spoon for each entrant at our Joint LRC Show.

Investment in these Championship Shows has, I think, contributed to the extremely complimentary feedback from all areas of the show world and contributed to the excellent growth in membership of the Society

Because of the profit made at the Joint Show we made a decision to invest some of this profit in education. It was decided that this would be well served by arranging a Training Day for Judges at the Club's expense.

Other events, Field Trials, Working Tests, Open Show and Eye Testing Day made a loss, as would be expected in most of these cases, but these events are an integral part of providing events for the benefit of our members and should continue

Overall I am please to say we made a profit for 2011 of £1264.41 and the joint accounts have a very healthy balance of £21,064.27

In conclusion I would reiterate that the Auditor has stressed the importance that the Committee as a whole takes action to address the points in his letter so that the integrity of future Accounts is not jeopardised and therefore, I feel, we will protect the integrity of this long standing and respected Club. Wendy Wilson

A Gorman was very upset by the wording in the Auditor's letter and felt that the negative content was pointing directly towards him and his partner Jenny. The Officers attempted to reassure him that this was not in any way correct and that the Auditor was not directing his comments to either A Gorman or his partner Jenny. In fact the Auditor had sighted their accounting practices as exemplary.

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7. Field Trial Secretary's Report – Gary Layfield

Not supplied

8. Show Secretary's Report – Kay Jenkins

Welcome to all and thank you for coming. For those of you who don't know me I am Kay Jenkins and I was co-opted into the position as show secretary after the June 2011 Championship show which was the Clubs first time of hosting the Joint Labrador Club Show. This show was very successful and was greatly appreciated by the vast majority of exhibitors. Comments such as "it had a garden party feel to it" and "very friendly and welcoming" is an indicator of its success. I wish to express my thanks to Kira and the rest of the committee for all of their hard work in pulling this off in such a short time.

*The October show surprisingly brought really warm weather and the committee acted quickly to move the show outdoors and this proved to be a great success appreciated by everyone. The show saw a rise in entries of almost 10% to 245 which is the largest entry since 2006 and this appears to vindicate the decision to accept online entries via Fosse Data: This at a time of falling entries. It was very satisfying that both myself and other committee members had emails and phone calls following this show expressing positive views about the day and how warm and friendly it had been. On the day of both shows it was wonderful to have the help of husbands, children and friends of committee members – whose help and support we couldn't have managed without. **Kay Jenkins***

9. Club Representative Annual Reports for 2011

a. Breed Council – Kenn Roberts

Requested but No Report Presented

b. Breed Health – Lynda Heron

Report on LBCHSC meeting: Dogs life project – Background this is a KC funded study by Edinburgh University into Labrador health. Not quite 2,500 dogs had been recruited to the Dogs Life survey. Compared to 40,000 per annum registered The view was expressed that at around 40,000 per annum this figure only represented about 4% of annual registrations of the breed so was not really a representative sample. The point was made that breeders would like to have been involved as this would have vastly increased the sample. We would also have liked a specific leaflet to given out to new owners with their registration documents numbers much lower than had been hoped for but unsurprising.

As 75% of KC reg Labs have at least one parent scored and 50% have both. Higher registration fees for the puppies of Labradors where the parents had not been hips scored was discussed it was thought KC unlikely to agree.

Extreme generalised muscular stiffness study currently going on at Cambridge University. The small number of dogs that have been seen so far have all been male and it appears that all the dogs were related.

AHT are looking for blood samples from Labradors with **Mast Cell Tumours**

The RSPCA puppy contract has just been published and I feel breeders need to look more at the political climate and put our own house in order before these things are taken out of our control. Advisory Council on Dog Breeding and Welfare Website worth checking out. LH and Ann Taylor have carried out a survey of responsible breeders to see how close their practices were to the draft standard. Some of the criteria were considered unrealistic or unnecessary and that there

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appeared to be a move against keeping dogs in Kennels at all particularly in relation to the provision of additional heating that was not felt necessary for our breed as long as they were dry and out of drafts and the weather.

Full minutes of all breed HSC minutes are always published on Breed Council Website

c. FT Liaison Rep – Samantha Whyte

Hello to everyone at the Northumberland & Durham Labrador Retriever Club AGM. I'm writing this report with the assumption that no one knows anything so will try and cover all aspects.

Number 1 - Background information. For those who don't know me I'm Samantha Whyte and I have been the club's Field Trial Liaison Council representative since 2010. My point of contact in the club is Gary Layfield.

I am also the Field Trial Liaison Council representative for the Lincolnshire Gundog Society and I was their Field Trial secretary before moving to London from East Yorkshire. (I will be returning home to the north soon believe me, the bright lights are not all they seem). Currently for my sins I'm the acting Field Trial Secretary for the Kent Surrey Sussex Labrador Retriever Club and also the behinds the scenes assistant, i.e. paperwork, for my other half James Christon who is their Working Test secretary. Just for good measure I'm the 'Have a Go' events co coordinator again at the CLA Game Fair at Belvoir Castle this summer. When not doing the above I'm either judging, helping or sometimes running a dog!! I'm exhausted just writing this laughing out loud.

Number 2 - Down to business, the Field Trial Liaison Council. Each representative is elected for a 3 year period and must represent a least 2 clubs. We meet once a year, usually June, where we vote on proposals and discuss discussions items relating to the J regulations and other general topics concerning gundogs and the running of clubs/societies. Any proposals passed are then put forward to the Field Trials sub committee. The Kennel Club sends to me & your Field Trial secretary various paperwork, at different times throughout the year.

Number 3 - What I do for you. Every year I ask if you have any proposals or discussion items you would like me to put forward. I am not shy at speaking in front of an audience so I'm happy to voice your concerns.

Once proposal items are on the agenda I highlight which proposals are relevant to you and ask which way you would prefer me to vote. After the meeting I let you know which proposals were passed and any advice the council feels we should highlight. I also let you know if this advice will feature in the Field Trial newsletter.

Finally if any committee member would like me to carbon copy them into the email correspondence with Gary Layfield please email me samanthawhyte9@gmail.com alternatively you can call me on either 020 8579 4343 or 07411262058. Please note that even though I live down south at the moment I regularly return home to Yorkshire so can with a little notice attend a meeting should you want me to. This concludes my report. Samantha Whyte

10. Educational Programme

In the light of the previous spend on developing Show judges it was agreed to offer a Club activity for pet owners.

11. Honoraria

The Honoraria was discussed with a view to an automatic increase each year of 5%. KLR proposed no change – AIF

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12. Annual Subscriptions

Proposal to stay the same for another year by KLR & AG – AIF

13. Election of Officers of the Club as listed -

Chairperson:	Mrs L Heron	Willing to stand again
Vice Chairperson:	Mr N Barlow (Co-opted 21/02/2012)	Willing to stand again
Hon. Secretary:	Mrs J Keating	Willing to stand again
Hon. Treasurer:	Mrs W Wilson	Willing to stand again
Field Trial Secretary:	Mr G Layfield	Willing to stand again
Show Secretary:	Mrs K Jenkins (Co-opted 19/07/11)	Willing to stand again

Proposal to re-elect all en bloc - AIF

14. Election of Committees, Breed Council, Breed Health and Field Trial Representatives

Breed Health & Ft Representative to stay the same and Lynda Heron to take over as Breed Council Representative.

15. Election of Auditors

Proposal of Paul Glaholm AB & DA. Proposal of £50 payment by KR

16. Ratification of revised Rules & Regulations passed by General Committee 24th Feb 2012

Proposal to adopt ALL suggested changes by KLR & JD – AIF

17. Proposals by members received no later than Tues 10th April 2012 – none

18. AOB (Relevant and at the discretion of the Chair)

J McDonald wished to thank Alf Gorman for his contribution to the Club.

Meeting closed at 9.03pm WW/KJ