



## **NORTHUMBERLAND AND DURHAM LABRADOR RETRIEVER CLUB**

### **2025 DRAFT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES REPORTING ON 2024**

Held at Bowburn Community Centre, Bowburn, Co. Durham 28th May 2025, 6.30pm

#### **Those Present:**

Lynda Heron, Linda Thompson, Irene Davison, Anne Beckley, Lee Hartis, Anne-Marie Coates, K. Jenkins, I. Palmer, J. Smart, B. Davison, D. Fisher and S. Ellison.

Apologies received and accepted from: F McLean, C. Mitchell, M Findlay, L. Keen, C. Brown, M. Olds, P & S Cullis, Labrador Welfare, S Whyte & J Christon, P. Williams, T. Mullet and E. McDougal

1 Draft Minutes of previous AGM for approval and adoption.

Copies of 2024 draft minutes had been available on the Club website from June 2024 and were further circulated with the AGM mailing to all members with hard copies available at the meeting. Acceptance proposed: J Smart. Seconded: K Jenkins. **2024 Minutes were approved and adopted unanimously.**

2 Matters arising from the Minutes. None

3 Chairperson's Address: Lynda Heron (Appendix 1)

Lynda's report had been circulated to all members with the AGM mailing and copies were available tonight. Lynda wished to thank everyone for attending and gave thanks to the officers and committee members for their work during the year. Lynda regrettably highlighted the low numbers of members attending and it is hoped for better attendance in future despite this seeming a trend in a lot of clubs.

4. Treasurers Report: Anne Beckley, Treasurer/Membership Sec. (Appendix 2)

Anne's report and the accounts balance sheet had been provided to members prior to the AGM and no queries or questions were forthcoming. Anne commented on the fall in members (which we understand is a countrywide problem) but we still had new members coming on board and our accounts were in a healthy state.

5. Secretary's Report: Irene Davison, Club Secretary (Appendix 3)

Irene presented her report and thanked the committees for their valiant efforts to provide members with a full set of events in 2024. Irene repeated her wish of 2024 to retire in the future and called for any interested parties to contact Lynda or herself.

6. F.T. Secretary & Working Test Secretary's Report: Lee Hartis (Appendix 4)

Lee presented his report which detailed the successful 4 working tests and 5 days of field trials together with captaining the winning N & D Retriever Team at Chatsworth. All events went well and were well attended/subscribed. Lee was happy to report that Anna Coates would be taking over the working test secretary role in 2025. Costs of field trials were discussed and due to ever rising costs these may require entry increases in 2025.

Problems encountered since Sept 2024 with the KC on FT dates/licences for 2025 was raised for the Emblehope ground. It was deemed the lack of transparency from the KC was a major concern and this had been highlighted to the KC in May (no response had been received). Lynda advised she would try and get some answers.

7. **Show Secretary's Report: Cheryl Mitchell (Appendix 5)**

Cheryl's report was delivered to AGM by Lynda in Cheryl's absence and this is further attached for information. It had been nice to see some new faces at our recent Open Show

8. **Club Representative Annual Reports (Appendix 6 & 6a and 6b)**

a) **Breed Council/Breed Health** – Lynda Heron

Lynda presented her Council and Health reports (attached) which provided the basis of much discussion. Lynda reported that some good work had been done by the Health Committee with regard the Breed Health Standard. However, one or two changes were still being pursued with the KC. There had been some problems with DNA labs and hopefully this was being resolved soon. Relevant updates would be, as usual posted on BC website and Health Facebook page.

b) **F T Liaison Representative's Report: Samantha Whyte (Appendix 6b)**

Sam's report is attached (**8b**) with some comments therein being discussed regarding our code of ethics – see section 15

9. **Educational/Programme**

A Club bursary of £300 is available annually to provide an educational event for members and non-members. This is on a rotational basis aiming to satisfy work/show and pet interests. In 2024 unfortunately additional events were not provided apart from our annual Eye Testing Clinic, but 2025 has seen a successful Breed Appreciation Day take place and hopefully a working event in 2026.

11. **Out of pocket expenses**

General Committee had reviewed these from the previous year and proposed the levels should remain the same. However, an additional proposal (IP seconded JS) was made for a 15% increase considering amounts had not risen for approximately 10 years. This was voted upon and accepted by the majority. As always, this would be reviewed annually.

12. **Election of Officers and positions within the Club**

All nominations received had been correctly proposed and seconded and **were accepted unanimously en bloc.**

13. **Election of Committees, Breed Council, Breed Health, Breed Education and Field Trial Liaison representatives**

The Breed Education Representative role was still vacant. All listed nominations were **unanimously accepted by AGM.**

14. **Election of Auditors**

Anne proposed that we continue to secure the services of Mr C. Pidgeon who had agreed to offer his services for free to the Club. Seconded by I Davison, **this was unanimously agreed.**

15. **Rules and Regulations Review**

No further regulations were deemed necessary for review this year.

16. **Proposals by members**

No proposals, questions or queries had been received by members following circulation of the AGM mailing.

17. **Any Other Business**

Anne presented information on the breeding of dilutes and requested that we incorporate guidance into our Code of Ethics as follows:

*Members should not knowingly use their Labrador Retriever to cross-breed, with the exception of producing Assistance Dogs, nor use their dog or bitch to breed a puppy carrying the D locus/dilute gene. Such actions will be referred to committee for potential sanctions.*

However, in a section of Sam Whyte's Field Trial Liaison report, **the KC had rejected** a request that '*only labradors of breed standard colours would be permitted to run in field trials*'. It was agreed the matter would be referred to our General Committee for further discussion.

Irene advised the meeting that General Committee had unanimously voted to offer Honorary Life Membership to Lynda Heron as thanks for her years of valuable service to the Club. Lynda was very happy to accept the proposal and AGM unanimously agreed.

Thanks to everyone attending.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm

## **Chairperson's Address – AGM 2025.**

### **Northumberland and Durham Labrador Retriever Club**

### **APPENDIX 1**

The Northumberland and Durham Labrador Retriever Club has continued to thrive, and I am very proud that we have so many dedicated people who are willing to put in the hard work required to make this such a successful club. There are spaces available on our committees, so if you would like to become more involved, please speak to any of the Officers.

The Officers and Committees work tirelessly on behalf of our members, organising events each year that go above and beyond the core ones. Unfortunately, last year's extra event, which alternates on a rolling basis between show, work, and general membership, did not take place. However, I hope the £300 annual bursary—introduced at my suggestion and so well received at its inception—continues to be used to enhance the benefits of being a club member.

Irene has now completed her 13th year as Honorary Secretary, a role that also includes responsibility as website designer and manager. She continues to drive us forward with her energy and dedication, which never waver. The club is incredibly fortunate to have her—thank you so much, Irene.

Anne, now in her 10th year as Treasurer, has once again provided us with the highly accurate accounts we've come to rely on. Thank you very much, Anne. Without you both as our "A" team, we would struggle greatly.

My thanks also go to Cheryl, our Show Secretary, and to Lee, who took on the role of Acting Working Test Secretary alongside his duties as Field Trial Secretary. During the year, we welcomed several new Committee members, and we are deeply grateful to each and every one of them for stepping up to help the club. I am also delighted to report that Anna Coates has agreed to take on the role of Working Test Secretary for the 2025 season.

#### **Events**

The Club's year began in February with Eye Testing, which saw over 60 dogs in attendance. This was swiftly followed by the February Championship Show, which enjoyed a good entry and was thoroughly enjoyed by the exhibitors.

We then held four Working Tests, which were again very well supported. We are grateful to all the judges, competitors, and especially the dummy throwers, whose efforts are indispensable for making these events run smoothly. The Working Tests were followed by a successful Field Trial season.

A plea for helpers echoes across the WT and Field Trial community, and it is something competitors need to take seriously.

Our October Open Show was held at Bowburn, where the new Committee members worked brilliantly together to ensure the day was enjoyed by all.

We are fortunate to have exceptionally generous hosts for our tests, and we remain deeply thankful to them for granting us access to their wonderful grounds—without their support, it would be incredibly challenging to run as many events as we do.

In addition to our regular Tests and Trials, which were once again highly successful, we are proud to report that the N&D team took 1st prize at Chatsworth in the team competition. This is an excellent result for our team—thank you for representing us and congratulations!

### **Sponsors**

We are also grateful to our sponsors. CSJ continues to be the main sponsor for our shows, while Skinners and Sporting Saint support our tests and trials.

A huge thank you to everyone who helped organise our events—both show and work. I am certain all who participated thoroughly enjoyed them.

Full details of our events, along with photographs, are available on our website:  
[www.ndlabclub.co.uk](http://www.ndlabclub.co.uk).

*Lynda Heron*

After a tremendous Centenary Year, 2024 saw the Club back into its usual format of Eye Testing, Shows, Working Test and Field Trials - the only exception being our AGM which was dualled with a fascinating Breed Health Talk on Hip and Elbow Dysplasia.

Remembering the Club's aim is to 'break even' and not to make significant profits the accounts are still healthy. The Deposit Account holds £23,747.41, (includes £249.44 interest), and the Current Account stood at £1344.22 on 31st December 2024. I am pleased to report I was able to run the Club without depleting the Deposit Account.

This year you will see from the accounts there was a loss overall but not a significant one. However, the possible reasons behind it need to be considered when looking ahead to this year.

We are seeing an overall decrease in membership figures – last year a decrease of approximately 30. At present, March 2025, we have about 60 members who have not renewed. Granted we have new members applying but 17 does not cover the shortfall. There are also just under 50 members who owe differences of £2 and £3 due to the increase in fees despite individually contacted. The subscription fees cover most of the running costs of the Club, so this is becoming a significant matter.

Hence, our need to be mindful and as economical as far as is possible due to increased costs on Insurance, birds, venue hire, coupled with less interest on the Deposit account this year and a decrease in membership income.

I am pleased to report our present auditor, Christopher Pidgeon, has agreed to continue at no charge to the Club.

As always, should anyone have any questions regarding the accounts for 2024 I will endeavour to answer them.

Anne Beckley

Treasurer & Membership Secretary

**BALANCE SHEET AT 31 DECEMBER 2024**

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
<b>ACCUMULATED FUNDS</b>		
Balance at 1 January 2024	26221	27383
General account	(288)	(1644)
Field Trial account	(726)	(758)
Working test account	919	133
Championship show account	333	1412
Open show account	(213)	83
Breed council account	0	(254)
Eye testing account	(40)	(14)
AGM account	(66)	(120)
Breed education	(279)	0
	-----	-----
	(360)	(1162)
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Balance at 31 December 2024	<b>£25,861</b>	<b>£26,221</b>
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<b>REPRESENTED BY:</b>		
FIXED ASSETS	520	520
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Santander current account	1344	1954
Santander deposit account	23997	23747
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TOTAL ASSETS	<b>£25,861</b>	<b>£26,221</b>
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I'd like to commend my fellow officers and committee members for their valiant efforts in 2024. Despite being a small group, we have all worked hard to preserve our member events and the mechanisms of our club working well. Huge voluntary efforts go into preparing and delivering the events for all to enjoy.

I continue to organise the general Club admin., ensuring our Annual Returns and other necessary paperwork, is presented to the Kennel Club, accurately and on time. I maintain the Club's central records allowing officers to access Club paperwork as well as preserving historic Club information.

With email being our main method of contact; a large amount of my time is spent monitoring and acting on the thousands of Club emails we receive each year which are received at all times of every day!

Our Facebook page is popular and visited regularly and is where we post events and updates as well as on our website. I hope my Christmas newsletter also helps to keep you informed of what we provide members throughout the year. Separate to the prescribed duties of a Club Secretary, I also provide admin support to officers and sub-secretaries as well as keeping our website updated and user friendly. I spent a lot of time during 2024, freshening up our website as some people reported problems accessing this from mobile devices which was due to hosting updates.

An addition to the Club website was the new online entry system for working tests and field trials as well as the option of paying memberships too. The Total Club Management System (TCMS) is proving popular but there are many hours spent sorting out member (and non-member) queries. Hopefully this will get less as time goes on, but it would be helpful if people could not leave their issues until the close dates as it can be a lot for me to deal with at crucial times.

I've done my best to fulfil the roles asked of me and my thanks again to my hubby Brian for his unwavering support and help during the year. Thanks to Lynda Heron for her directional input and breed health knowledge, Linda Thompson our Vice Chair for her work on the Club's Puppy Register, Anne Beckley with whom I work well and closely, all year. Also, Lee, Cheryl and the committee members who ensure our events take place.

I'd like to close by saying a special well done to Lee after reviewing what he accomplished in 2024. He organised our 4 working tests, our 5 days of field trials, captained the WINNING N & D Team event at Chatsworth, getting TOP DOG of the competition with JED. As well as judging as 'A' panel for many other clubs' tests and trials, he then went on to qualify for the 2024 IGL Championships a record breaking 5 times and won a Diploma of Merit to round off his year.

*Irene Davison*

**PS. I will add the same post script as last year, in that I am still looking to retire from the Club Secretary/web admin roles and anyone interested in taking this on, should contact me or Lynda Heron.**

## Working Test Secretary and Field Trial Secretary's Report – Lee Hartis    **APPENDIX 4**

A second very busy year in 2024 after taking on the working tests as well as the Field Trial secretary role from 2023.

We held 4 working tests and 5 days of trials. Our working tests were very well attended and the field trials saw worthy winners and were well judged.

Our working test landowners were again, brilliant. Opening their doors to our competitors to allow them to run their dogs on grounds not available to the public.

We were very appreciative for the use of the Kennel Club's Emblehope and Burngrange estate for all our planned field trials. The estate provided excellent ground with challenging terrain. Our teams of guns for the trials were great and of course supported the trials financially.

I cannot thank our judges enough for giving up their time to enable our members to run their dogs. There is a lot to find! when we hold the number of events we do with four judges per event.

Thank you to those people that helped at our events. Willing helpers with positive attitudes makes running the days a lot easier and I thank all our committee members and non-members, who support at our tests and trials - it makes the roles a little easier.

We are very grateful to our working test and field trial sponsors in 2024. Skinners, Sporting Saint and Halsted Training Academy for their valued support.

I was pleased to be asked to represent the Club at the Chatsworth Retriever Team Event in August with Mike Nelson and Graham Slater. We were really pleased to WIN the event which is a tough set of tests and against good competition. I was also very proud of my young dog JED who was Top Scoring Dog of the whole event.

Organising the working events takes an awful lot of time, but it is my way of saying 'thank you' to the Club that has allowed me to enjoy working tests and trials for many years. Only by people volunteering for these roles can our sport continue. Thankfully in 2025 Anna Coates has stepped up to organise the working tests but I am willing to stand for Field Trial Secretary once again.

Sadly in 2024 one of our respected landowners, **Captain Pease of Streatlam Park** passed away. He was known to many competitors as he always enjoyed chatting to people on the test day. As well as sending our sincere sympathies, we donated to his chosen charity and committee member Bill Lambell attended his memorial service. We are very grateful to his daughter Karen Cotton, who has agreed to us returning for our working tests.

Also New Years Eve 2024, **Mr Cowen of Leadhill House** sadly passed after illness. He and his wife have allowed us into their home grounds for countless years and were always visible at the test days. A card and condolence flowers were sent to Mrs Cowen who contacted Irene and thanked the club for their kind thoughts. We have already had our working test there this year and Mrs Cowen was very happy to see us.

*Lee Hartis*

### Open show Sunday 6th October 2024

The entry for our open show was as follows; 59 dogs making 77 entries, for our judge Elaine young (Potterspinny) The show was sponsored by CSJ who again we thank very kindly for all their support of our shows.

The show went well without incident, or any reports of accidents. The show team worked hard to ensure the kitchen was well stocked and run very smoothly. Our exhibitors reported back that they had enjoyed the show and the lovely warm welcome they receive at Northumberland and Durham Labrador shows. There were new exhibitors which is always nice to see.

BIS SEATALLEN CHILLI

RBISCLAYCHALK NATILLIE

BP FOXRUSH HENRIETTA

RESERVE BEST PUPPY IN SHOW: LANDEBEC VENTURA BEST

VETERAN IN SHOW: SEATALLAN WALNUT

Championship show 2025 Judge Alison Scutcher (Winsleywood)

The entry for our show was 139 making 169 entries

The show was held at Haltwhistle leisure centre who we thank for their kindness and helpfulness to ensure our shows run as smoothly as possible.

We again thank CSJ for our wonderful class prizes, and main winner prizes.

BEST IN SHOW: SH CH LAPEMA MASQUERADE AT SANDYLANDS

RESERVE BEST IN SHOW: SH CH WESTERULSTON JOHN BEST

OPPOSITE SEX: SH CH WESTERULSTON JOHN BEST PUPPY IN SHOW: BINNAIG SEA SALT  
RESERVE BEST PUPPY IN SHOW:

BINNAIG SEA THE STARS OVER TULLOCHMOHR BEST BABY

PUPPY IN SHOW: LAKEMEADOW GILBERT'S GIFT BEST VETERAN

IN SHOW: SH CH CARRIEGAME MOONSHINE RESERVE BEST

VETERAN IN SHOW: PATTILANDS SHINING STAR

This was the first year we had only one judge for both sexes. The overall response from exhibitors was positive, with the extra room for dogs and cages, also not having to run from ring to ring to exhibit both dogs and bitches.

Our next open show is in October 2025 the judge is Caroline Edwards  
(Kimbajak)

Our open show will be in February 2026

Our championship show is moving back to October in 2026 this is after feedback from exhibitors of our show in February being too close to crufts.

Cheryl Mitchell

From recent Breed Council AGM.

2. Approval of minutes

3. **Accounts** were initially completed by individuals too closely associated with the Treasurer (Karl Gawthorpe). These were subsequently redone by an independent auditor and circulated. The outcome remained unchanged.

4. **Statement of Accounts**<sup>8</sup> Proposed : North West LRC, Seconded by: West of England LRC  
Decision: Approved unanimously.

5. **Ratification of Chairman**:- Margaret Brown to remain as Chair. Proposed by: Labrador Club of Scotland Decision: Approved unanimously.

6. **Ratification of Treasurer/Secretary**:- Karl Gawthorpe to remain. Proposed by: Labrador Retriever Club. Decision: Approved unanimously

7. **Secretary's Expenses for Administration**:- The Secretary declined an increase in expenses.  
Decision: Accepted unanimously.

8. **Subscription for 2024**:- Recommended: £50.00 annual subscription, £50.00 for Discover Dogs. Proposed by: Labrador Retriever Club, Seconded by: Midland Counties LRC  
Decision: Approved unanimously.

9. **Appointment of Auditors**:- Agreed that DPM Accounts will be contacted to perform the audit.

10. **Kennel Club Breed Liaison Council Representative Report** (By Shelagh Walton)

Summary includes:

- Launch of 'Find a Club' facility on KC website.
- Judges critique submission updates.
- Partnership Shows regulation trial (2-year relaxation).
- Colour Watch system updates and education initiatives.
- Critique requirements for judges extended.

*Lynda Heron*

**LABRADOR BREED COUNCIL**

**APPENDIX 6A**

### 1. Breed Health Standard and Assured Breeder Scheme

In June 2024, the KC introduced a new **Breed Health Standard**, without prior consultation. Initially, key health tests were marked as only "advisable." Thanks to committee efforts and KC board support, significant revisions were made.

#### Revised Recommendations:

##### GOOD PRACTICE

*(Minimum expected testing)*

- DNA: CNM, EIC, MCD, prcd-PRA, SD2, STGD
- BVA/KC Hip Dysplasia
- BVA/KC Elbow Dysplasia

##### BEST PRACTICE

*(Strongly advised)*

- DNA: HNPk
- BVA/KC/ISDS Eye Scheme

**It is concerning that eye testing is not included as Good Practice**, particularly given its importance in detecting **Hereditary Cataract**, which has no DNA test. We are collecting data to challenge this decision, especially as **other retriever breeds do include eye testing** at the Good Practice level.

The **closure of the Assured Breeder Scheme (ABS)** and initial confusion regarding the health standard have led to confusion and reduced test uptake. It is now more important than ever for experienced breeders to promote best practices.

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### 2. Macular Corneal Dystrophy (MCD) and Eye Test Results

We asked for **MCD** to be included as a "fail" on BVA/KC eye certificates. The request was declined, as a DNA test exists for this condition. However, **dogs affected by MCD may still pass the eye test**, which we find concerning and inconsistent with good breeding practice.

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### 3. KC Website and Breed Health Plan

We contacted the Kennel Club (KC) to request the reinstatement of the user-friendly MyKC platform. They confirmed it is on the development list for their Tech guys but did not provide a timeline.

The Labrador **Breed Health and Conservation Plan (BHCP)** is reviewed every five years. The next full review is due in **2025**. KC also plans to announce broader health initiatives in **Summer 2024**, the KC health team seem to have learnt lessons after the breed health standard fiasco with opportunities for consultation.

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#### 4. Hereditary Labrador Encephalopathy (HLE)

A new **DNA test for HLE**, a genetic neurological disorder, has been developed by the University of Cambridge. This condition, often misdiagnosed as epilepsy, causes seizures and panic-like episodes in young dogs.

Currently there is no intention to add this to the advised tests. But this test could be useful to help with diagnosis in Animals with episodes of panic attacks or seizures

**HLE is recessively inherited**, and testing will help breeders identify carriers and reduce risk in future litters.

**More info and test ordering:**

[www.cagt.co.uk/product/hereditary-labrador-encephalopathy](http://www.cagt.co.uk/product/hereditary-labrador-encephalopathy)

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#### 5. Heart Disease Concerns

Following the KC's February 2025 webinar on canine heart disease, we are exploring reports of **sudden death in young Labradors**, which may be heart-related.

We aim to establish whether this is a wider issue within the breed. If you are aware of relevant cases, please share details in **strict confidence**.

**Watch the KC webinar:**

[KC Webinar on Heart Disease](#)

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#### 6. Breed Health Co-ordinator and health sub committee role.

We continue to receive and respond to regular queries from the Labrador-owning public regarding health testing and responsible breeding. We aim to provide accurate, helpful guidance in all cases.

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## 7. DNA Testing Laboratories

With recent mergers and takeovers, **standards and customer service at some DNA testing labs have declined**. We are monitoring KC's list of recognised labs and their quality assurance procedures.

**Breeders are strongly advised to check with the KC** before ordering tests, to ensure certificates will be recognised.

Please report any lab-related issues to help us maintain accountability and support reliable health screening.

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**Thank you for your continued support and commitment to the health and wellbeing of the Labrador breed.**

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Lynda  
01665 570631  
07746894623

Dear All,

June 2024 saw the Field Trial Liaison Council (FTLC) meet again to discuss several important matters affecting the future of field trials. Following the meeting, a number of recommendations were passed to the Field Trial Committee (FTC) for consideration. I am pleased to provide you with an update on what was raised, discussed, and the outcomes from the FT Committee.

### **1. Handlers with more than one dog**

The main discussion point again this year was "Handlers with more than one dog" and the perceived unfairness of retriever draws.

After much debate, the Council voted by a small majority to recommend to the Field Trial Committee that an online survey be conducted. This survey would asked field trial competitors whether they supported allowing societies the discretion to introduce a One Dog One Handler rule while reserves stood.

#### **Outcome at Field Trial Committee:**

The Field Trial Committee **rejected the recommendation**, stating that an online survey would be retrospective, biased, and unhelpful. They felt a significant amount of research had already been done through the Retriever Field Trials Working Party. As a result, no survey will take place. The Committee did agree that further advice about changing dog ownership to gain draw advantage should be issued again via the Field Trials Newsletter.

### **2. Proposed Amendment to Regulation J6.e (Draw Preferences)**

The Westward Gundog Society proposed an amendment requiring draw preferences to be clearly shown next to each entry in a field trial draw, to increase transparency.

#### **Outcome at Field Trial Committee:**

The Field Trial Committee **supported and recommended** the amendment for approval. This will now ensure that all competitors can see how their dogs have been entered into a ballot and whether preference rules have been applied.

### **3. Proposed Amendment to Regulation K2.c.(3) (Walked-Up Certificate)**

The Yellow Labrador Club proposed that, in addition to a Water and Drive Certificate, a dog should also hold a Walked-Up Certificate before being awarded the title of Field Trial Champion.

#### **Outcome at Field Trial Committee:**

The Field Trial Committee **rejected this proposal**.

It was considered that existing trial judging already covers walked-up work, and that introducing another certificate would create unnecessary additional paperwork. There was also concern that it would disadvantage competitors in regions (such as Northern Ireland) where primarily driven trials are held.

#### **4. Dogs of Non-Standard Colour**

The Labrador Retriever Club again raised concerns about non-standard coloured Labradors entering field trials. They requested that their trial schedules state "only dogs which conformed to breed standard colours would be permitted to run."

#### **Outcome at Field Trial Committee:**

The Field Trial Committee **rejected the request**. The Kennel Club's position remains that working ability is the only criterion for field trials and that coat colour must not be a basis for exclusion. Therefore, dogs of non-standard colours will continue to be allowed to run in trials.

#### **5. Other Points from the FTL Council Meeting**

##### **• HPR Societies Holding More Than One Open Trial:**

Concerns were raised that some HPR societies were granted permission to hold two open trials against earlier policies. The Field Trial Committee was asked for clarification, but no final decision has been communicated yet.

##### **• HPR Judging Practice (Pointed Birds Only):**

No action was needed. Judges retain discretion on the day regarding shooting only pointed birds.

##### **• High Number of Spaniel Trials in November:**

It was agreed that it was lack of competitors, not necessarily the number of trials, that caused cancellations. Improved visibility of licensed trials for secretaries was suggested.

##### **• Preference Rules in All Aged Trials:**

No changes were recommended. Societies will continue to set preferences according to their own needs.

##### **• Restriction on Number of Trials per Club:**

No further action was recommended at this stage.

##### **• Flushing Deer During a Trial:**

Flushing non-quarry species like deer will be addressed through judge training and seminar updates.

#### **Conclusion**

Overall, only the proposal for greater transparency in draws (Regulation J6.e amendment) was supported. Other proposals were rejected, mainly due to concerns about fairness, practicality, and avoiding unnecessary complication of current procedures.

This concludes my report for 2024.

Kind regards,

**Samantha Whyte**

Northumberland & Durham Labrador Retriever Club Representative