

**MINUTES OF THE LABRADOR BREED COUNCIL MEETING
HELD VIA ZOOM ON 20TH April 2022**

PRESENT

Chair Mrs Margaret Brown
Sec/Treasurer Mr Karl Gawthorpe

Mrs Erica Jayes	Cotswold &Wyvern LRC
Mrs Claire Allen	East Anglian LRC
Ms Caroline Campbell	Labrador Club of Scotland
Miss Tracey Douglas	Labrador Club of N. Ireland
Mrs Lynda Heron	Northumberland and Durham
Mr Ian Jones	North West LRC
Mr Ian Dawson & Ms Anne Johnson	Three Ridings LRC
Mrs Julia Lewis and Mrs Marion Hopkinson	Midland Counties LRC
Mr David Coode	Labrador Retriever Club
Mrs Fiona Braddon and Mr Paul Collins	Yellow Labrador Club
Mrs Alison Scutcher	KSS LRC
Mrs David Chapman	Labrador Club of Wales
Mrs Lucy Kent	West of England LRC

1. Apologies for absence: None
2. Approval of Minutes: Proposed by Three Ridings LRC and seconded by Midland Counties LRC, all in favour
3. Matters Arising: None
4. Statement of Accounts:
Labrador Club proposed passing the accounts
North West LRC seconded, all in favour
5. To Ratify Chairman: Margaret Brown to remain, proposed by Labrador Club of Scotland, seconded by Midland Counties LRC, all in favour
6. Ratify the Treasurer/Secretary. Karl to remain, Proposed Labrador Club of Scotland and seconded by Northumberland & Durham LRC, all in favour
7. Secretary's Expenses for Administration: It was proposed by Northumberland & Durham LRC that they stay the same and seconded by West of England LRC, all in favour
8. To agree on subscription for 2022: After a discussion took place regarding how much the breed council needs to have in the bank, N&D LRC said that if you ring-fence the money for the Health, Database and Discover dogs, that will only leave the breed council with around £2000.00 in the bank, David Coode stated that he would not want to see the Breed Council with less money going into the bank as we might have to think of the next steps regarding the dilute and the Kennel Club. Midland Counties LRC Proposed £50 for subs & £50 for Discover Dog, this was seconded by Yellow Labrador Club, all in favour

9. Appointment of Auditors: Karl explained that sadly Mr King had been unwell and sadly passed away, so he had to find a new auditor for last year's accounts, this was S Price & Co Ltd Accounts, they had not charged the club for auditing the accounts. Northumberland & Durham LRC Propose S Price & Co Ltd, seconded by North West LRC, all in favour, N&D LRC did also suggest sending a box of biscuits to them seeing as they did not charge for doing the accounts, this was also agreed in full.
10. Report from The Kennel Club Breed Liaison Council Representative:
My apologies for not being present at this meeting. Unfortunately, I did not know until last week that it was happening when I attended a committee meeting of the YLC where the Agenda was discussed.

There was only one meeting last year in May. The November meeting was cancelled due to insufficient proposals for the Agenda.

At the May meeting, the change of policy by the Kennel Club to no longer show the health test results on the registration certificates was explained. The intention was to present health information in a more complete, up-to-date and dynamic way that would be beneficial to both the puppy buyer and the breeder. When The Kennel Club originally started to collect health data, there were limited ways in which this information could be reported and the registration certificates and Breed Record Supplement were the best solution at the time. However, information would only be correct at the time of printing. Online data for an individual dog, including estimated breeding values, could now be updated in real time either with new test results or results of any new tests that could change or become available at a later date and for this reason the decision had been made not to continue to include the results on registration documents. Concern was raised that it was not currently possible to print off a dog's health results in a clear and concise document which could be provided to puppy buyers. We were told that The Kennel Club was aware of this issue and that relevant changes would be made, when possible, which would allow health results to be presented in a single printable document. I will raise this at the next KCBLC meeting in May and find out where the KC is with this.

At its meeting held on 4 November 2020, the KCBLC recommended a proposal, under the terms of which non-standard colours would appear at the bottom of the drop-down list of options when registering litters. I can confirm that this has now been actioned.

The three part proposal outlined in my last report from the Yellow Labrador Club regarding the KC/BVA hip and elbow schemes was discussed extensively and the results are as follows:-

Regarding the request that the Kennel Club re-assess the KC/BVA hip and elbow schemes to bring the costs and turnaround times more in line with the overseas schemes, we were informed that The Kennel Club was aware of the issues highlighted. The BVA had already provided assurances that it was currently reviewing the hip and elbow schemes in order to improve turnaround times and had committed to improving the overall customer experience via the use of a digital process. The KCBLC was pleased to note that this was the case, but reiterated the necessity to ensure that the process was sufficiently robust. It requested that an update on progress be provided at its next meeting. I will request an update at the May meeting if it is not forthcoming.

It was requested that the Kennel Club keep a record of all hip and elbow results whether they are carried out under the BVA scheme or under an equivalent scheme abroad., and that these records should be able to be accessed via the KC website along with the BVA results. We were informed that results obtained via the use of overseas schemes were currently noted on a dog's record, but could not be published as they were not directly comparable to results from the KC/BVA scheme. The KCBLC was in full support of the publication of all hip and elbow scores, albeit with caveats as necessary. Following a vote, by a majority, the proposal was recommended for approval.

Regarding the request that a study should be carried out to establish the comparability of each overseas scheme to the KC/BVA scheme, we were informed that some comparison work was already being undertaken, and it hoped that the results would be available in due course. I will try and ascertain what progress has been made on this at the May meeting.

It was highlighted that the Council had previously made a suggestion that all breed clubs should have a standing item on agendas for their meetings to consider the submission of suitable matters for discussion by the Council.

Should you have any queries please email me and I will do my best to answer them.

I should like to thank you for nominating me to be the Labrador Breed Representative and also to inform you that I have been voted as a delegate which means that I will be able to attend the meetings and put forward your views in person.

Shelagh Walton
17th April 2022

Three Ridings LRC thanked Shelagh for an excellent report.

Midland Counties LRC, thought it was an excellent report also, but it does seem that Shelagh is trying very hard with The Breed Council's proposals but sadly none seem to be getting through, so wonder if it gives us any benefits.

Three Ridings LRC believes that it does keep us in the loop, and we are well represented by Shelagh, all agreed

11. Report from The Health Sub Committee: Hip and Elbow comparison study

During the year the committee have been very involved in trying to determine if there are any significant differences between the ANKC and BVA/KC Hip and Elbow scoring schemes and if not to aim to have scores from both schemes recorded on a dog's record on the KC health results web site. To this end, we have been gathering copies of reports for dogs of any breed that have been scored through both schemes (Group one) or who have reports from the ANKC scheme and X Ray images (electronic) that can be independently scored as part of the comparison (Group two)

Several requests were sent via social media and by word of mouth and in February 2022 we had gathered a total of 30 dogs in group one and another 24 dogs in group two but had not yet received agreement from an independent scrutineer to look score the X Ray images.

All the data was collated into a word document and then all the dogs in group one were entered into an Excel spreadsheet to enable the analysis. An analysis of the means, medians, and modes of each group was carried out with the "eyeball test" showing a slight difference between the two. However, we needed to know whether or not this difference was statistically significant. We were able to use the services of a population geneticist Dr David King to carry out two different t-tests on the data. This concluded that it was not possible to state that there was a significant difference between the two schemes and that we should try to gather a greater number of dogs. This data was presented to the KC Health department in time for a meeting being held on 3rd February where we understood the issue was to be discussed. We also worked quite closely with Lesley Field, English Springer Spaniel BHC, during this time. The KC originally promised to feedback to us at the end of March 22 then the beginning of April 22 and then the end of April 22. This is for an issue that had now been going on for nearly two years we thought this was very slow, particularly as the idea of a comparison had been made by Bill Lambert (KC Health Services Manager) during the pandemic and the KC health office under Hannah James has also been involved with gathering data. Lynda Heron also sensibly set up a separate email address so that data was consistently shared with the health committee to avoid any loss of data.

Step two was to try to arrange for the X Ray images for the dogs in group two to be scored and added to the evidence base and therefore increase the number of dogs to compare. It was originally proposed by Bill Lambert that the BVA scrutineers would help with this but I am not sure this will be the case. We are now investigating utilising the ANKC scorers to "blind" score images of dogs that already have BVA scores as well as collecting data for more double scored dogs and to this end another communication has been circulated via social media to enable this.

I have also made verbal contact with both Hannah James's department at the KC and Bill Lambert to organise a telephone meeting to further progress this and for a detailed update on where they are with the continuing BVA service issues.

We are still very keen to receive Hip and/or Elbow scoring reports from anyone with ANY BREED that has had their dogs scored under both the BVA and ANKC schemes as this can add to our research by increasing the number of dogs in the data set. Likewise, if a dog has ANKC scores and X Ray images these can also be used. Please provide copies of the reports and images if only one scheme has been used for the attention of Joy Venturi Rose and Lynda Heron to labradorhealth@gmail.com.

This is very important because if we lose ANKC data from the KC online health reporting the Estimated Breeding Values cannot be accurate and health reporting will be taking a big step backwards to the detriment of the health of our breed/s

Macular Corneal Degeneration and Stargardt Disease

The Labrador Breed Health Plan identified that two eye conditions Macular Corneal Dystrophy MCD and Stargardt Disease STGD were conditions that should be monitored in the breed. We gathered data from various sources indicating a rise of dogs affected and applied to the Kennel Club to have DNA test results of these 2 conditions listed on their web site. This has now taken place.

Multifocal Retinal Dysplasia MRD (retinal folds)

As a committee, we were concerned when this condition was suddenly raised to Schedule A on the eye certificate scheme with no prior discussion. We requested data from the KC on how many dogs had been reported with the condition. There is as yet no evidence that MFRD is inherited and no evidence that it can lead to an increase in Total Retinal Dysplasia within the breed (as evidenced by the number of recorded cases on the open register for this condition that operated previously and the recorded cases of TRD) or that it causes sight problems. There is another type of Retinal Dysplasia called generalised retinal dysplasia GRD but this is not identified on report forms and it appears that the differentiating between this and MFRD is not definitive.

Correspondence via the KC Health committee to the eye panellists' group resulted in the

following:

"I have now heard back from the panellist, and they have given some further explanation as to why we cannot definitively say that dogs will not go on to develop any visual impairment, due to the different forms of MRD. The geographic form presents differently and has been seen to become more obvious over time, with on occasions, associated visual defects. Therefore, whilst in more cases, dogs will not go on to develop the disease, and we have put this in here more than once, we cannot rule out the minute possibility of dogs developing the disease.

I completely appreciate that there is little in the way of published evidence to prove this, but I have to go by the specialist's expertise and their understanding of the situation at this time. Now that we have a better way to trace dogs over time we will be able to gather the data needed to prove that dogs will or will not go on to develop The disease, and can amend this at a later stage."

"It needs to be taken into consideration that there is a spectrum of presentations under the umbrella term of MRD and that each of these subsets of disease will have a range of clinical presentations, this could range from no clinical problems to a single focal lesion, up to extensive dysplastic lesions, secondary problems such as retinal detachment, and vision difficulties; and that this also differs within breeds. Similarly, it is known that there are many causes of retinal dysplasia outside of inheritance, including irradiation, toxicity, infections etc., adding another layer of complexity in diagnosing and differentiating between subsets of disease. As such it is a difficult disorder to categorise, and hence why the EPWP has decided not to split the different forms of MRD upon certification. Add to that that the published literature on inheritance is confounding and seemingly complex, the new way in which these are being reported will allow for better association between affected dogs and tracing of how this progresses (or doesn't) throughout a pedigree.

It should also be noted that TRD is a separate condition and has a different heritability to MRD, and should not be seen as concurrent to MRD.

To clarify, there is no proposal to begin recording different forms of MRD, and no information that the geographic form is increasing in incidence within the Labrador population. However, as noted above, due to the changes of the way in which these are recorded it will improve our understanding of disease development and inheritance across all breeds known to present forms of MRD. Because there is a spectrum of diseases and different clinical presentation, I cannot just refer to the most common form of THE disease. It also needs to be taken into

account that this piece is not specific to Labradors and for all breeds and was developed primarily to support the changes behind recording on the open register.

If you have any further questions I would ask that these are bullet pointed and I will take this to the chief panellist for response.”

Further information is that:

In the past 15 years for the Labrador we have had 3 TRD, 1 RD and 1 RD and HC – these results do not fall under the open register.

The MRD results pre-2020 are shown on the open register and would encompass all forms of MRD (i.e. geographic) for the reasons detailed in the previous section:

<https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media/3430/mrd-open-register-labradors.pdf>. Post 2020 we have had 5 reports of MRD.

The Health committee do feel aggrieved that the moving of MRD to Schedule A was not properly discussed with us and that the evidence from a literature search undertaken by the committee appeared to be disregarded by the eye panellist group and the movement to schedule A was regarded as a fait ACCOMPLI This does not bode well for partnership working between all stakeholders. The move is potentially detrimental to monitoring these conditions within our breed because having a fail for MRD entered on a dog’s record may discourage breeders from presenting 6/7 week old puppies for examination for retinal folds as this will be a permanent “knock” against a sire or dam’s record and many breeders may dispense with this examination as they will wait for the eyes to “go normal” which normally occurs before dogs are presented for an eye examination at 1-year-old plus.

Ectopic Ureter

Laura Owen of Cambridge University has provisionally agreed that the Labrador Retriever can be INCLUDED within the ultrasound screening system as used by The Golden Retriever and the Entlebuchers. This would cost around £200 Sedation is not normally necessary for the Golden Retriever but is usually for the Entlebuchers. Hopefully, it will not be needed for the Labrador.

There is an update on the project here

<https://ausnsrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Laura-Owen-Presentation.pdf>

I contacted Laura via email on 3rd February 2022 in order to organise a meeting with the health committee but have not heard back. I have therefore emailed her again on 15th April 2022. If I do not hear back, I will telephone the university to try and ascertain why there has been no communication.

Joy Venturi Rose

Chairman Labrador Breed Council Health sub-committee

Karl asked how many more dogs are needed to get to the requirements for the study, Lynda said that they were nearly there but thinks needs around another 20 dogs, more if they could get them.

There is also quality control done over in Australia, but they are not aware of any quality control here with the BVA.

Lynda thinks that there are some issues between the Kennel Club and the BVA, so this will need to be watched closely to see how this works out.

12. Report from The Dilute Sub Committee

Marion said that there is not much to report, we had the meeting with the Working Party of the Kennel Club, and we all came away feeling quite good about things, but everything now seems to be going downhill again. She believes that the Kennel Club have no genuine interest at all in stopping the registration of any dog that comes into the country or is born in this country that is not a pure Labrador. We are getting information daily that people are still buying these dogs, and the reports are that they have Bad Temperaments, and are not trainable. This is going to seriously damage the reputation of the Labrador Retriever worldwide and stop this lovely breed from being the number one family pet, she believes that the Kennel Club is totally responsible for this, Cotswold and Wyevern LRC agree totally.

Margaret asked how other clubs feel about this, and Northumberland and Durham said that just as frustrated when trying to deal with the Kennel Club over any matters.

David Coode said that he had sent out a memo to the dilute subcommittee just before lunch and he would, if possible, read it out, Margaret agreed to this.

Dear All,

At the meeting the Dilute sub-committee had with the KC, Kathryn Mansfield expressed concern that the Kennel Club could be sued by the breeders of the crossbreeds, non-standard colours, perhaps she has never considered that the breeders of purebred Labradors would sue the Kennel Club over their abject failure to protect the breed.

I would propose the following:

The Breed Council write to the Kennel Club setting out clearly our requirements, this should include but not be limited to the following,

- 1 Moving the non-standard colours to another register,
- 2 Registering them under another name, not as Labrador Retrievers,
- 3 Require all imported dogs to be checked for colour confirmation against the export pedigree,
- 4 DNA testing of all imported dogs for the dilute gene, this would include bitches in whelp and imported semen

If the KC are unable to accept these proposals, then I believe we should make it plain that we will seek recourse through legal means.

As regards the DNA testing, I agree that we need to get the Breed Clubs to push this but do not have control of the database, perhaps Fiona can update on this.

Fiona informed the meeting that there are roughly 150 dogs on the register that have been tested clear, of course, we are canvassing for more to be tested, once the results are back with the certificate then the database is updated.

Marion said that like everything, every now and again things seem to go flat, so we need to start pushing the testing for the dilute again, Marion is happy to get the kits if the clubs would be happy to push at the shows and hand out the kits.

Karl said that he believes that when people are looking at the database of the dilute clears and they can see that some of the people that are pushing the testing either have no dogs or bitches on the list or only have dogs on the list, they are thinking well if the people that are pushing the dilute testing are not having their dogs/bitches done then why should I.

Marion said that is a very valid point.

Karl then said that he believes that there is still time for a proposal to go to the Kennel Club for the Kennel Clubs AGM.

David said that he believes that anything sent to the KC for the AGM is a waste of time, because he is under the impression that they only deal with administrative issues at the AGM, and it would need to go to the AGM later in the year.

The SGM is normally in November, but he is not sure if it is going ahead. Lucy Kent said yes, the SGM is in November.

Alison said the idea of putting a proposal forward to the AGM, is that this is for the members to vote on, the Kennel Club might fob you off saying it's a waste of time, but if you don't try you will never know, and if the membership supports the proposal, then constitutionally the Kennel Club will have to deal with it. So, it needs to be put forward correctly.

Marion agreed with Alison. There are a lot of breeds that are having the same issue with the Kennel Club and colours and she believes that there are KC members in those breeds that would also support it. She also believes that there might be more support for this than we might imagine.

Alison said that the proposal does need to be factually written and not emotionally written, if it is written factually and presented correctly and the membership of the KC vote for it then it will force the Kennel Clubs' hand.

Also, the red book lists all the members of the KC in it and there is a strong group of ladies who are members of the KC that lunch together, so it would be worth thinking about canvassing the membership but also the ladies that lunch group, you have already had Jane Lilly writing in the dog press about the situation, and I believe that there are also Labrador people that are in the ladies that lunch group.

Marion said that these are all very sensible and valid views.

David Coode said that if we send something to the Kennel Club then it might make them want to talk to us, Alison said it might but don't be bullied into removing the proposal, just because they are wanting to talk.

As she had not been present at the last meeting, Alison asked if it had been minuted that Sussie would be willing to put the proposal forward to the Kennel Club. this had been minuted and agreed.

Marion stated that we would need to get the wording correct, Alison said and not war and peace, make it factual and precise, because if it becomes too long then people will be bored of reading it.

Alison reminded us that any proposal needs to be with Shirley Gregg at the KC no later than the 6th of May 2022, so we don't have long.

It was agreed that David along with the dilute subcommittee and Sussie would draft the proposal and then Alison would read over it before it was submitted.

Margaret said that while we were on this subject that at the last dilute subcommittee meeting she said that she would speak to the Health subcommittee regarding getting the Dilute test included in the packages that the DNA companies do, Margaret asked Lynda if Kira had mentioned anything about this, Lynda said not to her knowledge, So Margaret asked if she could leave with this with Lynda and to come back with the information.

13. Northumberland & Durham LRC would like to propose: The Kennel Club Ltd and The British Veterinary Association are requested to develop a scheme/method which would allow the recording of poor hips and elbows in youngsters that are either euthanised or operated on prior to 12 months.

Rationale: An increasing focus is now given to the EBV of dogs for breeding purposes. However, some pups that have poor hip and elbow scores can be euthanised or operated on at a young age and their hip and elbow scores are not recorded thereby not giving a true EBV of the parents. It would be beneficial for all breeders to know the true picture and where possible, these sad cases should be recorded and EBVs adjusted to reflect these animals.

After a discussion regarding if it would work and how it would work, it was agreed that Lynda would contact the BVA and have a discussion with them to see if they could work together to develop a system where this could be done, all agreed.

14. Labrador Club of Scotland would like to propose: That health testing is put back on registration documents.

Caroline said that the committee of LCoS felt strong that the health testing should be placed back on the registration certificates, Margaret said that at the working Party meeting that we attended they informed us that they would not be putting health tests back on the registrations, but the dilute and health subcommittees are asking for this also, so it is still ongoing as we speak.

15. Midland Counties LRC would like to propose: That Breed Council asks the KC to make dilute testing mandatory alongside PRA and that the results are published.

Karl stated that he had asked the question regarding this, and we have had a reply back from James Skinner, Unfortunately, it looks like it's not going to happen. However, we will just continue to keep asking them regarding the issue.

16. Judges who awarded Challenge Certificates for the first time in 2021 to be considered for inclusion on the A1 lists, these are to be voted on:

Breed Specialist's		Yes	No	Abstain
Mrs A Hoban	Bath	9	2	1
Mrs C Mills	Leeds	11	0	1
Mrs M D'Arcy	Leeds	8	3	1
Mrs L Thompson	Three Ridings LRC	11	0	1
Mr R Phillips	N & D LRC	9	2	1
Non-Breed Specialist's		Yes	No	Abstain
Mrs J Eyeington	Blackpool	10	1	1
Mr J Horswell	SKC	8	1	3

17. Judges to be voted on for consideration for inclusion on to the A3 lists, these to be voted on:

Breed Specialist's		Yes	No	Abstain
Miss Fiona MacLean – was removed due to missing certificates				
Mrs Wendy Southwell - was removed due to the CV not being correct				
Non-Breed Specialist's		Yes	No	Abstain
Mr David Howarth		12	0	0

Karl said that he had been informed by one of the clubs that it was agreed that if any CV was received that was incomplete that it would be rejected by the Secretary, Karl would just like this to be clarified so it can be minuted again, this was agreed.

Karl also asked if he could write the judges on the B and C lists and ask them for an updated CV with all the relevant certificates that are needed by the KC as well as the other information and give them a deadline to reply or their names would be taken off the lists. This needs to be done to ensure that they are still eligible to judge and not waste societies time contacting people that are not eligible to judge. Alison said that if we have breed judges that do not understand what is needed then we should be nurturing these judges and helping them understand the new system because we are looking like we will just end up with non-breed specialists and that would be detrimental to the breed. Marion thinks that is a good idea and the clubs should be willing to help and support the up-and-coming judges.

So, it was agreed to send the letter but to make it a more helping letter than just you will be removed from the list type of letter, all agreed.

18. Roll of Honour list:

So, sadly we would need to remove Mrs J Coulson and Mrs M Hepper.

The following people were put forward for inclusion on the list.

KSS LRC proposed the following people

Alan Thornton

Joan Hayes

Geoff Allen

Yellow LRC proposed the following person

Bill Meldrum

Labrador Club proposed the following people

Robin Wise

John Jackson
Midland
Sue Hill

19. A.O.B

KSS asked if 65 dogs present and judged at a club open show was still achievable given the current climate and, we could be stopping breed judges from progressing with their judging career if most of the clubs are not achieving these 65 dogs present and judge figure. After a discussion, it was agreed for the Secretaries to send Alison the 3 years before covid numbers of Class, Dogs/Bitches and Entries and then 3 years starting from 2021.

The Labrador Club asked if the new Breed Council constitution could be added to the website, and David also said that this will be his last breed council meeting, and he will continue with the dilute subcommittee.

North West LRC asked if Zoom meetings will continue for at least until next year, Margaret said that this would be something that Karl could find out, but we are aware that some people would like a Face to Face meeting, Alison said that Zoom should not be used as an easy way out and Face to Face meetings are beneficial if there are items that need a good discussion.

Karl brought up the Breed Council website do we feel that we need to give it a revamp, if I could have the logins I could update the judging lists, instead of leaving it all to Fiona. Lynda brought up that yes it does need to be revamped and made user friendly to be able to display properly on mobile devices.

Margaret asked do we put the minutes of the meeting on the website as she is sometimes asked what takes place at BC meetings. What do they actually do! Karl advised that minutes are placed on the website once they have been approved.

Following on from Alison's comment about nurturing judges, Margaret suggested that as breed clubs, there was an opportunity to encourage the growth and development of up-and-coming judges. Informal days where there was no pressure on an individual to take part in tests or fill in KC forms. She knew that Midland Counties do quite a lot and Marion said that they have run a few Educational days where there are four to five Championship show judges and each judge as a part of the Labrador to talk about, then the candidates have the opportunity to go over around 25 – 30 dogs and bitches and to ask questions, and this has been well supported.

Alison thinks that we need to educate and help new judges, regarding judging, accepting appointments, doing critiques etc. Alison is a secretary of shows and also helps other secretaries and she gets frustrated when a contracted judge wants to pull out because they want to go and show their dog at a different show, or that they have got a litter due, well sadly once you are contracted then unless it is a really serious health issue, then people need to be aware they have to fulfil their contracts.

Meeting closed at 3.30 pm

