



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting Held on Thursday 6th April 2023 at 10:00 via Zoom

Trustees present:

Giles Webber	Chair
Peter Hepburn	Vice Chair
Peter Laurie	Secretary
Adam Clowes	
Caroline Johnson	
David Bowles	
Kelly Grellier	
Marina Fiddler	
Mike Elliott	
Steve Byrne	

In attendance:

Clare Radlett	Standards and Operations Officer
Therese Davall	Member and Administration Manager
Ellie Roche	Administrator

Members represented at the meeting:

Ashbourne and District Animal Welfare Society
Battersea
Bath Cats and Dogs Home
Blue Cross
Border Collie Trust GB
Bulldog Rescue and Rehoming Trust
Cats Protection
Cheltenham Animal Shelter
Dogs Trust
Dogs Trust Ireland
Dumfriesshire and Cumbria Greyhound Rescue
Gables Dogs and Cats Home
German Shepherd Rescue Elite
GSD 2000 German Shepherd Rescue and Rehome
GSPCA
Holly Hedge Animal Sanctuary
Kennel Club
MADRA
Mayflower Sanctuary

National Animal Welfare Trust
Newcastle Dog and Cat Shelter
Oak Tree Animals Charity
RSPCA
RSPCA Manchester and Salford Branch
St Giles Animal Rescue
Stokenchurch Dog Rescue
Stray Aid
Woodgreen Pet Charity

1. Welcome from Giles Webber, Association Chair

The Chair opened the meeting at 10.00 and thanked everyone for attending. The Chair advised that the meeting was being recorded.

The Chair then explained formal AGM is expected to finish at 11:00, with an intermittent screen break, after which guest speakers Utility Aid, and Susie Hughes from RSPCA Manchester and Salford Branch, would be running sessions for Members.

Attendees were asked to record their attendance using the 'chat' function to help accurate recording of the minutes and the counting of votes.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from the following:

Gina Hetherington – PAWS Animal Rescue
Jacquie Neilson – Rain Rescue
Lisa Cartwright – Greyhound Gap
Nicola White – Cats Protection and ADCH Trustee
Shelley Wilks – Jerry Green
Stella Pullman – Fen Bank Greyhound Sanctuary

3. To approve the Minutes of the AGM of 12th May 2022 (Annex 1)

There being no questions, Marina Fiddler (MARDA and ADCH Trustee) proposed that the minutes be approved. This was seconded by Mike Elliot (Cats Protection and ADCH Trustee) and unanimously supported.

4. To consider any Matters Arising from the Minutes of the AGM of 12th May 2022

There were no matters arising.

5. To receive a report from the Chair

The Chair began by acknowledging the increase in work for Members, caused by the wider public becoming more aware of rescues and the cost of living crisis, and the post-Covid animal relinquishment rates. He then explained his personal experience at Birmingham Dogs Home, and discussed how he can resonate with the struggles members are going through, including the rise in euthanasia rates. The Chair felt a strong sense of determination and fortitude from Members to keep going, even though it can feel like the problems of society stop the buck at the rescue centres.

The Chair then shared his involvement in sessions with APDAWG, administered by Marc Abraham, where he spoke about the state of UK rescue. The Chair recognised lots of Members, but also made contact with many non-Members. He felt the meeting was positive, despite portraying a difficult message, explaining the positivity came from collaborating and

sharing the same message. He explained the meeting felt dynamic and it was exciting that more things could be achieved by working together.

The Chair then explained that as there is hardly any money in rescue, apart from the fundraising that centres are doing themselves. He advised Members to be honest when struggling.

The Chair then moved on to talk about recruitment, and that the ADCH has had a busy few months. He welcomed and thanked Ellie Roche, ADCH Administrator, who has been working as part of the central team for 6 months. He then welcomed Cathy Hadden, ADCH Accountant, who has been working alongside the Board and Therese Davall for the past 5 months to support ADCH finances.

The Chair discussed how the Strategy was looked at last year, which led to refining a variety of elements. He caveated this by saying that the current strategy runs out this year and we will be involving Members in deciding on the content of the next strategy.

The Chair gave a summary of Conference in October 2022, which has 400+ attendees. The Chair explained he was unable to attend but had lots of feedback that was positive on the speakers and the programme.

In 2022, there was 9 virtual events, which all had around 60-70 attendees. The Chair asked for Member feedback on virtual events and expressed that a combination of virtual and in-person events works well.

The Chair discussed a variety of other important things introduced in 2022, including the Revised Minimum Welfare Standards (which are in line with Scottish licensing), The Scoop (ADCH Newsletter), the Mars Food Fund and their Adoption Mission which has provided support to Members.

The Chair then covered activities that have already been taking place in 2023, as well as future plans, including the Cost-of-Living Grant, where £100,000 to Members so far, with the second round closing this week. He then thanked Dog's Trust, Humane Society International and the RSPCA for jointly contributing to the fund of £175,000. The remaining £75,000 will be distributed in round 2.

The Chair then explained that, in a recent meeting, Trustees agreed to take on a Training and Assessment Manager on a 12-month contract. Interviews have already taken place and an individual has been appointed pending references. Following interviews for the Executive Director role, an offer has been made and the individual is currently considering it; will give an update to Members when the answer is known. He then advised that the ADCH are still looking for a Treasurer, and asked people in the room who are suitable or might know someone who is suitable to apply.

The Chair then thanked all Members for making time for the ADCH and expressed the Trustees' gratitude. He explained that the Committee structure is working better than ever, which helps to move objectives on because of their specialist skillsets. He asked Members to step forward to be Committee Members if they are interested in volunteering.

David Bowles (RSPCA and ADCH Trustee) added in a friendly request for all Members to do their Annual Return as soon as possible.

Giles then discussed the work that needs to be done to influence support across the wider sector, with a need to reach out to those who would not qualify for ADCH membership, to influence and support them, and subsequently their animals. He then discussed the

progression of assessments, and how external assessments are being rolled out, with Birmingham Dog's Home having theirs yesterday.

Giles thanked Jordan Whiteside, who has volunteered as a social media consultant for the ADCH, and also thanked all the corporate supporters, namely Petplan, Mars, Pet Remedy, Pets at Home Foundation and Shakespeare Martineau.

The Chair expressed excitement for the upcoming Conference in Telford on the 16th and 17th of May. He explained there have already been lots of registrations but encouraged those deliberating attending to register. He explained how the hotels are all on site, which was something requested in the feedback from last year's Conference.

The Chair described that the July Open Meeting will now be virtual, instead of on the Isle of Man as previously advertised. This is on the grounds of sustainability, and current pressures on time and money. However, Manx SPCA will still be involved as planned, as Susie Hughes (RSPCA Manchester and Salford) will still go over and report from site during the virtual meeting. The November Open Meeting will be taking place at Hope Rescue in South Wales, and more updates will follow in due course.

As explained before, the current strategy has been tweaked last year from the document written in 2020, to make the delivery plan more straight forward. The Chair explained they had been successful in achieving outcomes, but the current strategy only runs until 2024. Due to unforeseen circumstances in the previous 3 years, there needs to be a review of the strategy to ensure it is clear on what ADCH represents. This includes the Members, the purpose and value of the Association, a unique way of working to achieve broader audience, benefit to lower standards to gain support from ADCH members. The Chair then discussed how a preventative piece is as important as sorting problem out when it arrives, and he will be asking Members for feedback on how to make a difference and what ADCH should represent. The Chair added he will also talk to other stakeholders. The Chair clarified the plan is by the end of year, the new strategy should be produced.

The Chair then offered a variety of ideas of how Members can be engaged with ADCH, including Conference, social media, the ADCH website, emails, and any further consultations. He added Trustees are keen to ask Members about what the real difference is we can make and how a collaborative approach could help more non-Member rescues.

6. To receive the Trustees' Report and Annual Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2022

The Annual Accounts had been circulated ahead of the meeting at Annex 2.

The accounts had been independently examined by Kreston Reeves LLP and subsequently approved by the Board of Trustees. The Trustee's Report provided a comprehensive review of the year.

There were no questions.

Peter Smith (Ashbourne & District Animal Welfare Society) proposed to review and approve the Trustee' Report and Annual Accounts for 2022. This was seconded by Ben Wilkes (Border Collie Trust GB) and unanimously supported.

7. To receive the results of the election of three Trustees

The Chair explained the process of the election, and that the votes being counted independently by Shakespeare Martineau, which he expressed great thanks for.

The Chair also explained that individual scores were not known, but it was reported that the election was remarkably close. He then expressed commendation that all candidates were skilled and could've all done excellent job to bring things to ADCH, but just missed out.

The Chair announced the successful candidates to be Mike Elliot (Cats Protection), Linda Cantle (Woodgreen) and Charlotte Fielder (Battersea Dogs and Cats Home). The Chair pointed out that Charlotte will be retiring from Battersea, but joining ADCH as wants to continue to help dogs and cats.

Giles then expressed commiseration and great thanks to Anita Tabrett (The Kennel Club), Gemma Maudie (Borders Pet Rescue), Glen Mayoll (RSPCA), Kelly Grellier (KG Consultancy) and Tara Cunningham (Causeway Coast Dog Rescue).

8. To receive a resolution that the Association adopts amendments to the Constitution

The Secretary introduced a set of proposed changes to the Constitution, as set out in detail in a paper that had been circulated to all members ahead of the meeting. He advised that the proposed amendments followed a review of the Constitution by the Board of Trustees. He noted that the Charity Commission recommended that Trustees review their charity's Constitution on a regular basis. .

Two amendments were proposed:

- To enable an elected trustee who is subsequently elected Chair or Vice Chair of the Association to begin a new term of office at this point and to be permitted to serve a full term (of approximately three years) before being required to retire, at which time they be permitted to stand for re-election to serve a second term (i.e., the 'clock is reset' on being elected to one of these two roles) to enable continuity in these important roles;
- To enable the board of trustees to co-opt back onto the board a trustee who is serving as a Chair of a committee but who is required to retire having completed two elected terms. Clauses 14(1)(d-e) should continue to apply to any such co-opted trustees, i.e., once co-opted they should retire by rotation as per elected members.

There were no questions. The meeting agreed to vote on the two amendments en bloc, with votes cast by Members raising their hand.

There were 28 votes cast in support of the resolution and no votes cast against the resolution and no abstentions. The resolution was therefore formally approved.

The AGM concluded at 10:50am, which was followed by 20-minute screen break.

11:10am - Session held by Utility Aid on 'How to manage rising energy costs'

A presentation was given by Utility Aid on what is happening in the energy markets, and how Members may be able to achieve some savings.

Copies of the presentation and recording will be available on the Member's area of the website.

12:00pm – Interactive session held by Susie Hughes (RSPCA Manchester and Salford) on 'Menopause in the workplace'

An interactive session was held by Susie Hughes on how to recognise, support and manage menopause in the workplace.

Copies of the boards created in breakout rooms, a template policy and a list of useful resources will be available on the Member's area of the website.

The meeting concluded at 12:50pm.

DRAFT minutes for approval at the 2024 AGM