

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 2nd July 2024

Held via Zoom

Trustees Present:

Giles Webber
Peter Hepburn
Caroline Johnson
Peter Laurie
Yvonne Goddard
David Bowles
Steve Byrne
Linda Cantle
Adam Clowes
Mike Elliot
Charlotte Fielder
Marina Fiddler

Chair
Vice Chair (*Outgoing*)
Vice Chair (*Incoming*)
Hon. Secretary
Hon. Treasurer (*Incoming*)

Members represented at the meeting: (31)

Ashbourne Animal Welfare	Jerry Green
Battersea	JSPCA
Birmingham Dogs Home	MADRA
Blue Cross	Manx SPCA
Border Collie Trust GB	Mayflower Sanctuary
Bristol Animal Rescue Centre	Oak Tree Animals' Charity
Cats Protection	Rain Rescue
Causeway Coast Dog Rescue	Raystede Centre for Animal Welfare
Cheltenham Animal Shelter	RSPCA (national)
Dogs Trust	RSPCA Cornwall
Forever Hounds Trust	RSPCA Manchester and Salford Branch
Freshfields Animal Rescue	Senior Staffy Club
Gables Dogs & Cats Home	Stray Aid
German Shepherd Rescue Elite	Woodgreen Pet Charity
GSPCA	Woodlands Animal Sanctuary
Hope Rescue	

Apologies:

Trustees
Nicola White

Members:
The Kennel Club

Staff
Therese Carr

In attendance:

Rebecca Cooper
Clare Radlett
Ellie Roche

Executive Director
Standards and Operations Officer
Membership Services Coordinator

1. Welcome from Giles Webber, Association Chair

The Chair opened the meeting at 10.00, welcoming all attendees. The Chair advised that the meeting was being recorded.

The Chair then outlined the agenda and explained that the formal AGM is expected to finish at 11:00.

Attendees were asked to record their attendance using the 'chat' function to help accurate recording in the minutes.

31 full members were in attendance representing 19% of the membership (159 full members)

It was confirmed that a quorum (minimum 15%) was present in accordance with section 12(5)(b) of the Association's Constitution and the meeting could proceed.

2. Apologies for Absence

Secretary outlined apologies as noted above.

3. To approve the Minutes of the AGM of 06 April 2023 – paper 1

The Minutes of the 2023 AGM had been circulated ahead of the meeting. A copy of the Minutes can be found [here](#).

There being no questions, Steve Byrne (GSPCA) proposed that the minutes be approved. This was seconded by Leyla Rutter (Stray Aid) and unanimously supported.

4. To consider any Matters Arising from the Minutes of the AGM of 06 April 2023

There were no matters arising.

5. To receive a report from the Chair

The Chair acknowledged the difficulties faced by the sector and expressed gratitude to all members of ADCH, noting the collaborative feeling of togetherness from across the sector.

The Chair reported the key developments from 2023, through the work of the four standing Committees. The key highlights were:

Governance Committee

Recruitment and Employment

- Rebecca Cooper was appointed as Executive Director in August 2023 and has already made a significant positive impact alongside the central team.
- The departure of Emily Sockett, who joined ADCH as Training and Assessment Manager on a fixed-term contract in April 2023, which ended last month. Emily's contribution to the training and assessment programme and volunteer programmes was recognised. The Chair expressed best wishes to Emily in her future endeavours.
- The transition to direct employment of staff, starting in January 2024. The Chair acknowledged thanks to Battersea and Peter Laurie, Chief Executive of Battersea and ADCH Secretary, for supporting ADCH, including during the transition. Battersea had previously employed ADCH and seconded them to us.
- Active recruitment efforts for a Treasurer, with a candidate selected (to be discussed later).

Strategy

- A revised strategy for 2024 to 2030 was developed with extensive member and stakeholder engagement, finalised at the end of 2023. The Chair felt timely progress was being made towards delivering on the pillars as outlined in the strategy.

Membership Engagement Committee

Events

- Held three in-person events and twelve online events.
- ADCH Annual Conference in May 2023 saw almost 500 attendees.
- Open Meetings in February (Doncaster) and November (Cardiff), with one online meeting in July and an online AGM in April.

Member Benefits

- Secured 7 additional corporate offers for members.
- Members' Facebook Group: just under 600 active users and continues to grow.
- e-Newsletters and Special Bulletins: over 600 subscribers.
- ADCH Members' Area website access: almost 500 registered users.
- 49 member organisations submitted job vacancies to the recruitment page on the ADCH website.

The Chair emphasised the benefits of accessing the ADCH Members' Area and encouraged staff and volunteers to register for an account.

Grants

- Cost Of Living Emergency Relief Fund: Distributed £164k to 27 member organisations.
- Mars Food Fund – Round 2: Distributed £44k to 34 members (across both rounds of the Mars Food Fund, just under £100k was distributed to 72 members).

The Chair extended thanks to Mars Petcare for their support of ADCH and its members, through The Adoption Mission and the Mars Food Fund.

Gratitude was also expressed to those who donated to the Cost-of-Living Emergency Relief Fund: Dogs Trust, RSPCA, Humane Society International/UK, and the Joanna Toole Foundation.

Standards and Animal Welfare Committee (SAWC)

- 50 assessments undertaken, reflecting a 25% increase from 2022.
- New volunteer Assessors recruited, increasing the cohort from 40 to 50, with training in place for all. The Chair expressed thanks to ADCH Volunteer Assessors.

Legislative Committee

- Addressed the impact of the XL Bully ban, providing information to members, considering any jurisdictional differences.
- Responded to consultations on dog and cat codes of practice for the Isle of Man and Welsh consultation on Licensing of Animal Welfare Establishments.
- Provided regular updates on legislative changes through various communication channels.

The Chair invited Rebecca Cooper, ADCH Executive Director, to provide an update.

The Executive Director thanked all attendees for their presence at the meeting and presented her update on plans for 2024.

She began by highlighting the significance of this year as the first year of ADCH's new strategy delivery, which extends to the end of the decade. She emphasised how the first years are crucial for laying the foundation to achieve the organisation's long-term objectives.

The Executive Director outlined ADCH's commitment to supporting members in more aspects of their work. She shared updates on several key initiatives:

- **ADCH Online Pharmacy Initiative:** The Executive Director explained how ADCH is exploring a partnership with Animal Charity Pharmacy, to offer low-cost prescription veterinary medicines to members across all jurisdictions. The Executive Director noted the partnership was in the initial stages, requesting that Members complete the survey that was sent to primary contacts and in the most recent edition of The Scoop, to help tailor the service. Only one response is required per member organisation and the submission deadline is 14th July.

ADCH continues to work with various organisations to extend the range of benefits available to its members.

- **Member Events:** The Executive Director highlighted the continuous development of events, including a schedule of online events planned throughout the year, such as webinars, deep dives, fundraising forums, and lunch-and-learns.

The Executive Director confirmed the organisation's commitment to a range of events, including in-person meetings, with the November Open Meeting scheduled in the Southeast. She expressed enthusiasm about this year's annual Conference, held in May at the Telford International Centre. The event was a sell-out, with over 560 attendees, marked as the largest event to date. Preparations for the 2025 conference are already underway, and she expressed her thanks to everyone who attended and participated.

- **Regional Group Pilot:** The Executive Director reported the enthusiastic response from regional volunteers, with special thanks extended to Vicky McDerby (Woodlands Animal Sanctuary), who volunteers as part of the Member Engagement Committee, as she is supporting the volunteers joining the project. The Executive Director noted that ADCH is currently working with volunteers to become registered with ADCH and establish regional groups. She also thanked Peter Newcombe (Cheltenham Animal Shelter), who has operated a group for several years and kindly offered to support new volunteers in setting up their groups.

There was a request for additional volunteers in the Southeast Region, as one of the largest regions for membership. Interested members were advised to email enquiries@adch.org.uk to express their interest.

- **Assessments for ADCH Members:** The Executive Director acknowledged the significant efforts around assessments, highlighting a 20% increase in volunteers over the past year, which helped address the post-pandemic backlog. To date, 25 assessment visits have been completed for 21 organisations this year. The increase in volunteers has set a foundation to further enhance support in new roles to assist members in line with the strategy. The Executive Director expressed gratitude to all involved.
- **Legislative Committee:** The Legislative Committee continues to address issues arising, including XL Bully matters, drafting a response to changes in microchip rules for rescues earlier this year, and gathering and collating the Annual Return data. A summary of the Annual Return Date was shared with members in the June edition of The Scoop.
- **Internal Developments:** The Executive Director highlighted the extensive internal efforts underway to ensure the successful delivery of the strategy. The work focuses on building a strong and sustainable association, through resilience, compliance, and income diversification, to support long-term development and sustainability.

The Executive Director gave a brief update on the ADCH central team, announcing that Ellie Roche has been offered a permanent contract as Membership Services Coordinator, so the team now has four permanent members.

The Executive Director concluded by reiterating that ADCH continues to work through its strategy delivery plan, a key area of focus will be to continue building support for members and longer-term development of the pathway to support entrance to membership.

The Chair thanked the Executive Director for her update, before expressing gratitude to all ADCH volunteers, including Trustees, Committee Members, Assessors, and those who volunteer ad-hoc by sharing their skills and knowledge, at events and online.

Thanks were given to Battersea, Cats Protection, Dogs Trust, RSPCA, Birmingham Dogs Home, Blue Cross, The Kennel Club and Woodgreen Pets Charity for their direct support.

Thanks were also extended to corporate supporters Petplan, Mars Petcare, Pets Foundation, and Shakespeare Martineau. More details of all our supporters can be found in the Trustee report.

6. To receive the Trustees' Report & Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 Dec 23 – paper 2

The Trustees' Report & Annual Accounts had been circulated ahead of the meeting. A copy of the paper can be found [here](#).

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.

7. The appointment of Yvonne Goddard as Honorary Treasurer

The Secretary confirmed the appointment of Yvonne Goddard as Honorary Treasurer and noted:

- The Governance Committee conducted open recruitment, conducting 3 interviews.
- Yvonne Goddard, an experienced finance, and taxation professional with a long history in the financial sector, has been offered the position.
- Yvonne has also supported the voluntary sector for many years, most recently as Treasurer Trustee at RSPCA Isle of Wight Branch

8. To propose confirmation of the election of Caroline Johnson as Vice Chair

The Secretary thanked nominations from Amanda Lovett (NAWT) and Caroline Johnson (Oak Tree Animals' Charity).

The Secretary Formally acknowledged Caroline Johnson as receiving the most votes and is elected as Vice Chair. Congratulations were extended to Caroline. Commiserations and sincere thanks were expressed to Amanda Lovett.

The Secretary thanked Peter Hepburn for his tenure as Vice Chair. Peter will continue as a Trustee at ADCH and Chair of Standards and Welfare Committee (SAWC).

9. To receive the results of an election of two Trustees

The Secretary reported there were 9 nominations for the two Trustee positions. Nominees were thanked for their commitment to ADCH and its members.

The nominees are noted as follows:

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|---|--------------------------------------|
| • Alex Spurgeon (National Animal Welfare Trust) | • David Bowles (RSPCA) |
| • Amanda Lovett (NAWT) | • Emily Bowen (RSPCA Cornwall) |
| • Anita Tabrett (The Kennel Club) | • Emma Peake (RSPCA Woodside) |
| • Chris Bray (Newcastle Dog & Cat Shelter) | • Fi Harrison (Birmingham Dogs Home) |
| | • Glenn Mayoll (RSPCA) |

On behalf of the Board, the secretary thanked Shakespeare Martineau LLP who were appointed by the ADCH Trustees to serve as independent scrutineers for this election. They have counted and validated the votes.

The Secretary announced that the two nominees who received the most votes and are duly elected trustees are Chris Bray (Newcastle Dog & Cat Shelter) and David Bowles (RSPCA), extending congratulations to the successful nominees.

Commiserations and sincere thanks were expressed to the nominees who were not elected on this occasion.

The Secretary acknowledged and thanked Steve Byrne, who is stepping down as Trustee this year, for his dedicated service to ADCH over the past 9 years. He initially served on the management committee and subsequently as a Trustee. Steve will remain as a member of the Membership Engagement Committee.

The Chair echoed the sentiments of the Secretary.

10. Any other business

No items were raised.

The AGM concluded at 10:47, which was followed by a 15-minute screen break before proceeding to the virtual Open Meeting.

Action: DRAFT minutes for approval at the 2025 AGM, date TBC.