

**LONDON & NORTHERN HOME COUNTIES BRANCH OF THE BASSET HOUND CLUB**  
**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Held at Little Gaddesden Village Hall, Little Gaddesden, Sunday 3 April 2016

Present: John Worley (Chairman), Linda Skerritt (Hon Secretary), Brian Gould (Acting Treasurer), Barbara Carter, Rob Carter, Lis Gould, Julia Shayler, John Wilkins, Lindsey Worley, June Creevy (attended first part of meeting), Patrick Creevy, Lana Johnson, Sally Money.

The meeting started at 12.30pm.

1. Opening remarks Chairman, John Worley, welcomed everyone.
2. Apologies for absence Roger Adams, Carol Adams, Jenna Betts, Kim Culyer-Dawson, Bob Webber, Pam Webber, Pete Wilson, Deborah Wilson.
3. Minutes of last AGM E-mailed to all members 19 May 2015, posted to those not on e-mail. Copies handed out at meeting. Proposed accept Rob Carter, seconded Lindsey Worley. All in favour. Signed by Chairman.
4. Matters arising Sally Money felt the wording of sub-para 4 of the Secretary's report was a little unclear. Proposed amend Rob Carter, seconded Lindsey Worley. All in favour. Linda Skerritt agreed to change it to read "Our deepest condolences went to Neil's wife, Julia, and to Mary Brown's daughter, Claire, with the Branch donating in memory of Neil and Mary to nominated worthwhile charities".
5. Chairman's report John Worley reported that 2015 was a static year regarding membership and financial balance. He understood from the last main club committee meeting that the L&NC was not the only Branch to find Basset owners not wanting to be involved in club functions but preferring to just turn up for a walk advertised on social media, with no commitment to follow. He felt this was something to think about. Over the last twelve months the Branch had held its monthly walks. Though numbers attending had decreased slightly, the walks were still enjoyed by those attending. The Branch Fun Day was held at Julia Shayler's home in June and there was a good turnout with the weather fine and sunny. He once again gave grateful thanks to Julia for hosting the event. Earlier in 2016 members joined in an evening meal at the Bridgewater Arms in Little Gaddesden – good food, good company and he felt to be repeated. He finally thanked the officers and committee for their support and work, with special thanks to the Branch Secretary for setting up the new Branch website. He asked members to please carry on supporting Branch events and said should anyone see someone walking a Basset in their local area, to talk to them and invite them to one of our walks. This may lead to a new member!
6. Hon Secretary's report Linda Skerritt reported that, following member approval at the last AGM, the Branch donated £50 each to Medical Detection Dogs, Chilterns Dog Rescue and the Animal Health Trust. All wrote to thank members.  
During the year she rebuilt the club website as the web design program she used previously was no longer marketed, meaning no updates and no support and glitches creeping in could not be fixed. Although the new website was free to build, there was an unavoidable cost involved in transition. However, as this replaced the Branch newsletter, where there would be an outlay for paper, ink, envelopes and postage, the website was seen as a cost effective means of communicating Branch news to members.  
After 25 years in Bucks, last April LS moved back to Essex. Due to distance, her attendances now at branch walks were poor at best. She was grateful to those who led these walks, as numbers turning up each time were variable. She had become aware of a group called Surrey and Barkshire [*sic*] Bassets who met in the L&NHC area. Walkers paid £1 which went towards private basset rescue. Whilst obviously well-meaning, the committee was aware of the risks involved. The advent of these "pop-up" walks, advertised on social media, attracted many who had no inclination to join a club or pay a membership fee. LS said members might not be aware but the L&NHC was now one of only three remaining Branches of the Basset Hound Club, with the possibility of one of the other two closing down. The future for the L&NHC was therefore uncertain but the committee was very grateful to those who continued to support the Branch and the Basset Hound Club. She ended by once again thanking Brian Gould for being persuaded to continue help with the Branch's financial affairs.
7. Hon Acting Treasurer's report  
Membership: As at 31 December 2015 we had received 14 joint subscriptions and 7 single, making a total subscribing membership of 35 people, down from 39 last year. One couple moved to Wales and another who, despite reminders, never rejoined. Number of supporters also fell to 3. Two Honorary Members but the position of President remained unfilled.  
Income overall was up by £280, despite a fall in subscriptions and donations due to fewer members and supporters. This increase had arisen, in part, from having two years' Christmas raffle and drinks in the accounts as the 2014 money was not banked until 2015. The major item of income was a most unexpected windfall of £200. An acquaintance with a love of Basset Hounds but an inability to have one approached the Treasurer to offer a gift to the Branch, on condition of anonymity.  
Expenditure was up by just over £60. BG said he hoped members had seen the Branch's new, impressive, website which was due to the sterling efforts of the Honorary Secretary, and which accounted for £100 of the increase. Hall hire fees were up £10, being an increase of £5 for each of the two hirings during the year. The hall manager, not having informed officers of an increase in fees a couple of years back, was not asking for payment in arrears.  
The annual result shows that the excess of expenditure over income was down to just £4 compared to £223 in 2014.  
Assets and Liabilities As at 31 December 2015, the Branch's General Fund stood at £1,577, represented by assets of bank balances of £573 in the current account and £1,057 in the deposit account. The current account sum included liabilities (in accounting jargon) of £53 in respect of 2016 subscriptions and donations paid, and banked, in 2015.  
Linda Skerritt asked why the Branch no longer subscribes to the Basset Hound Hunt Limited Odds Draw and Brian Gould said the Albany Bassets no longer run it. Following Lana Johnson's question about membership levels, John Worley said he felt the membership number was reasonable, given the current day circumstances.  
The Acting Treasurer concluded by saying he was most grateful to officers and committee for their support over the last 12 months. Proposed accept Sally Money, seconded Pat Creevy. All in favour. A vote of thanks went to Brian Gould.
8. Election of Treasurer There being no other nominations and Brian Gould having indicated his willingness to stand, proposed Pat Creevy, seconded John Worley that Brian Gould be elected as Treasurer. All in favour.
- 9a. Election of Chairman, Secretary and Committee All had indicated their willingness to stand. Proposed Pat Creevy, seconded Lana Johnson. All in favour.

9b. Election of co-opted committee members Indications of willingness to stand had been received in writing from (1) Bob Webber & Pam Webber, proposed by signature John Worley, seconded Brian Gould; and (2) John Wilkins, proposed by signature Linda Skerritt, seconded Jenna Betts. All in favour.

10. Branch Representative: Proposed Linda Skerritt – Pat Creevy, seconded Lana Johnson. All in favour.

11. Election of Auditor for following year Proposed D Titmuss – Brian Gould, seconded John Worley. All in favour.

12. Proposal by the Officers and Committee “*That Branch membership fees be increased to £5 joint, £4 single to take effect from 2017 onwards*”. Current subscription rates of joint £3.50 and single £2.50 had been at that level for considerably more than 15 years. Linda Skerritt said cost of hall hire had increased as had other outgoings over the years. All in favour of increase.

13. Walks trophy for 2015 Awarded to Venice owned by Brian and Lis Gould.

14. Donations to charities Linda Skerritt thought it would be good for the Branch to donate to three distinct areas: 1. Research - eg Animal Health Trust, possibly directed to research into epilepsy which affects Bassets, or cancer or genetic research. 2. Rescue - maybe Wood Green Animal Shelter at Godmanchester. 3. Assistance dogs - Pets as Therapy, based in High Wycombe. She invited further suggestions.

As she felt the Branch could carry the expenditure, Julia Shayler proposed a fourth donation of £50. Seconded Lana Johnson. All in favour. Lindsey Worley suggested Blue Cross (local base in Hertfordshire), whose work includes helping owners who are unable to afford veterinary costs. In lieu of Wood Green, Lana Johnson proposed the National Animal Welfare Trust at Watford. All in favour of donations of £50 each going to 1. Animal Health Trust, directed towards research into epilepsy, 2. Pets as Therapy, High Wycombe, 3. National Animal Welfare Trust, Watford branch, 4. Blue Cross, Kimpton, Hertfordshire.

15. Branch activities for 2016 Currently arranged: 15 May – walk, Denham; 19 June – walk/picnic Millbrook. 16 October – Aquadrome, Rickmansworth. Brian Gould asked that, for the Denham walk, members be asked to meet in the car park of the Denham Country Park. Café facilities there for after the walk. Tentative dates and venues proposed for remainder of year, decision made to firm up in committee.

16. Any other business Julia Shayler reminded everyone to bring their own food for the walk at her home in June. Lana Johnson asked whether the Branch might invite those with other breeds who join the walks to donate maybe £1. John Worley said this could be considered in committee but, on balance, felt it impractical. He suggested the Branch might consider a group page on facebook to attract members and Linda Skerritt said she would look into this. He also suggested e-mailing regular reminders to members to look at the Branch website for dates of walks. Linda Skerritt undertook to do this but only when definite dates firmed up.

The meeting closed at 13.20pm.

**Linda Skerritt** Hon Secretary 3 April 2016