

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 9 April 2017

Present: John Worley (Chairman), Linda Skerritt (Hon Secretary), Brian Gould (Hon Treasurer), Carol Adams, Roger Adams, Barbara Carter, Rob Carter, June Creevy, Patrick Creevy, Lis Gould, Lana Johnson, Sally Money, Julia Shayler, John Wilkins.

The meeting started at 12.40pm.

1. Opening remarks Chairman, John Worley, welcomed everyone.
2. Apologies for absence Jenna Betts, Ann Stallard, Paul Stallard, Pete Wilson, Deborah Wilson.
3. Minutes of last AGM Posted on Branch website April 2016 with hard copies going to those not on computer. Copies handed out at meeting. Proposed accept Rob Carter, seconded John Wilkins. All in favour. Signed by Chairman.

4. Matters arising Other than one corrected typo, none.

5. Chairman's report John Worley remarked on another year passing by and what a year it had been. The Branch had held monthly walks and the traditional June picnic courtesy of Julia Shayler. Most were reasonably attended. Looking to the future, he said he was not sure what to do to increase Branch membership. It seemed that, what the Branch had spoken about previously, non-members getting together from on-line arrangements, had taken off. As a Branch of the Basset Hound Club, the L&NHC had no option other than to carry on as before though he felt the main club could play a part in getting these people to become involved with the Club and Branches. Despite this, Branch finances remain stable, although Treasurer Brian Gould had experienced problems with moving accounts from one bank to another.

Linda Skerritt read out the remainder of the Chairman's report. John paid tribute to his wife, Lindsey, who died the week before Christmas. He said Bassetts were her life and they had both been members of the main club and Branch for nearly 43 years. For many years, Lindsey organised the Branch newsletter, she helped with secretarial work and had been a Committee member for longer than he could remember. She had always been there to help. He finished by saying he believed everyone owed it to her and other Committee members gone before her to try and improve the Branch. He gave thanks to all the Committee for their help and organising during the year.

6. Hon Secretary's report Following on from the Chairman's tribute to his wife, Linda Skerritt asked everyone to join her in giving heartfelt condolences to John on the loss of Lindsey at the end of last year. She said Lindsey was one of the mainstays of the L&NHC Committee and would be sorely missed. Branch rules, which formed part of the BHC Rules allowed for "*management by Officers and a Committee which shall consist of Chairman, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer and a Committee of a minimum of six to a maximum of twelve other Branch Members*". Lindsey's demise left the Branch with fewer Committee members. With no nominations for joining, the L&NHC Committee was just about viable.

Looking at the Branch's situation as a whole, LS said last year she reported that only three Branches of the BHC remained, with the possibility of one closing. This had sadly happened and the L&NHC was now one of only two, the other being the Midland Branch, which being central seemed to continue to thrive. She said, if we were honest, we could not say the same. Our membership was low, 39 in 2014, 35 in 2015 and 38 at the end of 2016. Naturally membership levels fluctuate during the year but, with payment due to both the BHC and our Branch by end of January, in early February this year we had only 22 members. With no showing members so no Basset classes to sponsor at local shows, no fun days as enjoyed many years ago, our Branch was now solely one for meeting up for walks and the occasional meal. Times were changing and, with social media, people no longer wanted the annual outlay of subscriptions as they were no longer reliant on belonging to a club to arrange informal dog-walks. She invited membership views on this, saying the Committee remained optimistic but she sensed a lack of interest in formal membership and this naturally affected the future of the Branch.

Following member approval at the last AGM, she reported that the Branch donated £50 each to four charities: the Animal Health Trust, Newmarket; Pets as Therapy, High Wycombe; National Animal Welfare Trust, Watford branch and Blue Cross, Kimpton, Hertfordshire. All charities sent thanks which she had added on the Branch website.

LS said that, in 2012, she let Branch members know that the KC had identified breeds which, in their view, were more prone to suffer from certain health problems due mainly to conformational issues. Despite strong protests, unfortunately, the Basset was included on this "high profile" list. However, thanks to the hard work of the Basset Hound Health Group, last year the KC reclassified the Basset, with effect from 1 January 2017. It was still being monitored but not as strenuously as before.

Finally and importantly, the Give a Dog a Genome programme was launched at the Animal Health Trust in January 2016 with the aim of sequencing the entire genome (all the DNA required to 'make a dog') of 75 different breeds. With its known glaucoma problem, the Basset was added to the project in July 2016 and was one of the first DNA samples sent for sequencing. Glaucoma was a painful condition and, if not treated, led to blindness and possible removal of eyes. There was a simple AHT swab test available for all Basset owners to detect whether their Basset was likely to develop Primary Open Angle Glaucoma and she encouraged everyone to take the opportunity to ensure their Basset's eyesight was protected into old age.

7. Hon Treasurer's report

Membership and Supporters: Brian Gould reported that, as at 31 December 2016, and following research by Linda Skerritt – for which he gave many thanks – it transpired that some members had not paid their annual subscriptions to the BHC, and *vice versa*. Thus, at year end, we had 10 joint subscriptions, 8 single, making a total subscribing membership of 28; and our supporters stood at 5 (2 joint and 1 single). A grand total of 33, plus two honorary members. The Branch remained without a President, having not replaced Mary Browne.

Income Branch income was down by £354. This arose from 3 main items:

1. No raffles were held in the year. In 2015 we held one raffle and also paid in from the previous year = **£130**.
2. We had no Christmas lunch due to an apparent lack of interest = **£34**
3. We had £15 of gifts compared with £200 in 2015 = **£185**. A total of £349.

Expenditure Meanwhile, our expenditure was down by **£196**, primarily because this year did not have the £167 cost of the new Branch website, as in 2015.

The annual result showed that, despite lack of income, the excess of expenditure over income was down to £162 compared to £4 in 2015 and £223 in 2014.

Assets and Liabilities As at 31 December 2016, the Branch's General Fund stood at £1,415, represented by bank balances of £365 in our current account and £1,058 in our deposit account, a total of £1,423, against which we had liabilities of £8 in respect of 2017 subscriptions paid in advance.

The Treasurer concluded by saying, at the end of 2016 we commenced the process of changing banks after problems with Barclays and so for 2017 and the foreseeable future we were and would be banking with TSB.

After a short discussion and clarification on donations made to charities, proposed accept Patrick Creevy, seconded Sally Money. All in favour.

8. Election of Officers All had indicated their willingness to stand.

Brian Gould took the Chair temporarily for the vote for Chairman. Proposed John Worley – Brian Gould, seconded Patrick Creevy. All in favour.

Secretary – Proposed Linda Skerritt – John Worley, seconded Patrick Creevy. All in favour.

Treasurer - Proposed Brian Gould - Rob Carter, seconded John Worley. All in favour.

9. Election of Committee All, except Mr & Mrs Webber, had indicated their willingness to stand. The position regarding Mr & Mrs Webber was tenuous. They were absent from this 2017 AGM, with no apologies received. Neither did they attend last year's AGM, nor any of the three Committee meetings during 2016. LS explained that BHC Branch Rules 5(i) cover this situation and, for this reason, their names were omitted from the election of Committee process. Those proposed for re-election: Rob Carter, Barbara Carter, Lis Gould, Julia Shayler, John Wilkins.

Proposed Sally Money, seconded Patrick Creevy. All in favour. Roger Adams volunteered to be co-opted and, with all in favour, he was invited to stay for the Committee meeting after the AGM, to be co-opted formally.

10. Branch Representative: As Linda Skerritt said distance invariably debarred her from attending BHC meetings in Warwickshire, John Worley asked whether Sally Money, who was a BHC Committee member, might usefully take over the role of L&NHC Branch representative. Discussion took place but, as LS pointed out, she herself kept abreast of BHC matters, took points of interest to the Branch or fed concerns back to the BHC as necessary. Whilst she could represent the Branch's views where necessary, it was felt Mrs Money would create an superfluous stage in the process and, in the event, there had been no nomination for her. Proposed Linda Skerritt – Lana Johnson, seconded Julia Shayler. All in favour.

11. Election of Auditor for following year Subject to him being willing to continue, proposed D Titmuss – John Worley, seconded Patrick Creevy. All in favour.

12. Walks trophy for 2016 Awarded to John Wilkins' Blossom and Brian and Lis Gould's Bubble.

14. Donations to charities With no other suggestions, LS proposed:

a. Veterans with Dogs - Assistance Dogs helping with disability specific tasks for British ex-servicemen and women with service-related injuries, mental health conditions and other invisible injuries <https://www.totalgiving.co.uk/donate/veterans-with-dogs>;

b. Hearing Dogs for Deaf People The Grange, Wycombe Road, Saunderton, Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire, HP27 9NS. <https://www.hearingdogs.org.uk/donate/>

c. AHT – Give a Dog a Genome_- Specifically for Basset DNA sequencing or research into Glaucoma in Bassets, <https://www.aht.org.uk/cms-display/donate.html>

d. Blue Cross <https://donate.bluecross.org.uk/donate/single-amount-donation-details.aspx>

Discussion took place and it was decided that, until a full transfer of the current account monies had been made to TSB, the Branch should revert to only 3 donations being made, with Blue Cross being omitted. Proposed Veterans with Dogs, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People and AHT (Basset research) - Lana Johnson, seconded Julia Shayler. All in favour.

15. Any other business None.

The meeting closed at 1.30pm.

Linda Skerritt
Hon Secretary 10 April 2017