



## The British Alpaca Society

### **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the British Alpaca Society held at 11.00 am on Saturday 26 March 2011 at the Jersey Cattle Society, 4th Street, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire CV8 2LZ and reconvened at 6.00 pm on Saturday 7 May 2011 at the Blackdown Buildings, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire CV8 2LZ**

#### **1 Chairman's welcome**

The Chairman, Shaun Daniel, welcomed all members present and thanked them for attending. He introduced Board members Lynsey Skinner, Anthony Turner and Maria Leitner and Clare Savins, the new Breed Secretary.

#### **2 Apologies for absence**

There were 92 apologies for absence. The Society Secretary gave particular apologies from Board members Rob Bettinson, Philip O'Connor and Graham Reed and from Anthea Osborn-Jones and Robert Reeve, who were standing for election, but were unable to be present due to prior commitments.

#### **3 Quorum**

At 11.30 am, only 47 members were present and the quorum was not reached. It was agreed to proceed with discussions on the matters on the agenda but that no business could be transacted. Liz Butler commented that the absence of many present at meeting clearly indicated that there were no issues of concern and that the Board's activities were in line with the requirements of the membership.

#### **4 Minutes of the AGM held on 13 March 2010**

There were no questions regarding the minutes.

#### **5 Chairman's report**

The Chairman reported that the year had again been a busy one. The Society is growing and the Board is responding to the increased demands. Steps are being taken to try to push the Society forward and increase its professionalism. He encouraged members with new ideas to stand for election to the Board or become involved in the activities of their Regional Group. Clare Savins had been appointed in order to concentrate on the administration required to progress various topics.

Plans for the World Alpaca Conference in April 2012 were progressing well and it promised to be an exciting and informative event.

Two new trailers had been ordered to replace the one that had been written off. They will be available for this year's show season. The model chosen can be towed by a large size family car. Show organisers were encouraged to make the best use of these promotional vehicles.

Work was progressing with the contract with the Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA) with 148 animals being sampled to date. All results had been as expected. So far, the sample from only one animal had reached the full culture point of 5-8 weeks for bovine TB. The full culture for microti takes 10-15 weeks. There has been only one animal testing positive for microti and no confirmed bTB cases at present. Some of the volunteer herds had had to withdraw so more volunteers are required from areas where herds are believed to be free of bTB. Volunteers need to be aware that there is a chance that up to two of their animals may be culled. Any member wishing to volunteer animals should contact the Chairman or Grassroots Systems.

Pat Bentley urged that breeders be made more aware of why an early diagnostic test is essential. The Chairman emphasised that the VLA research would not produce a definitive test but would provide data on the effectiveness of the gamma-interferon test. The current programme is only the beginning and more research and testing will be required before a test can be made available. He reminded members of the opportunity to support further research through [www.justgiving.com](http://www.justgiving.com). This fund currently stands at around £1000. A further research programme suggested by the VLA would require funding totalling £399,000 although this could be split into sections. Caroline Trotter suggested that show entries be increased to include a donation to the fund. Michael Berry suggested that a prompt could be included in the PayPal system for donations to be added to payments.

Roger Mount stated that Defra was duty bound under European legislation to develop a test for disease in an animal species where one did not exist. He reported that the VLA is working on a PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test and would charge £6750 to test 50 animals. He was aware of another supplier prepared to undertake the test free of charge but this would be administered by the VLA. The Chairman reported that the Board had discussed PCR with the VLA and had been advised that this was not the route to develop a test for alpacas. PCR would work if there were lesions present but we needed a test for animals where lesions were not evident. Roger Mount suggested that PCR could be carried out on animals where TB had been confirmed. Maria Leitner explained that the skin test is a probability test and the bacterium may or may not react. PCR is a method of multiplying the DNA of a virus or bacterium which has infected an animal, generally with the goal of providing sufficient genetic material to establish exactly which virus or bacterium it is. Since the technique works by multiplying DNA, there is by definition 100% certainty that the virus or bacterium exists if the technique is successful. If no viral or bacterial DNA is identified, this is not, however, a guarantee that it does not exist, since it may simply be that the sample taken from the animal happened to be one which did not carry the infection.

Hilary Shenton asked if Defra was taking steps to develop a test. The Chairman replied that the Society was collaborating with Defra but he was unaware of any such development. He noted that alpacas form a very small part of the agricultural scene and were receiving disproportionately high attention from Defra, not just for TB but also for diseases such as Foot and Mouth. Maria Leitner noted that although it was devastating for individual owners, TB was not a huge problem within the whole of the alpaca sector. Roger Mount considered that the government should not be asking the Society to make such a high financial contribution to the research. Liz Butler noted that alpacas are classed as exotic animals and, as such, Defra is not obliged to pay for development of a test. However, Roger Mount understood that the government was obliged to control TB under an EU Directive. Any test must be specific for alpaca antibodies.

Penny Tozer asked about vaccination and the Chairman agreed that this was the goal. However, the Diva test had not yet been developed to differentiate between vaccinated and non-vaccinated but infected alpacas. Jonathan Russell enquired whether other alpaca societies would contribute to the research as the results would be of benefit worldwide. The Chairman reported that they were being approached.

It was confirmed that New Zealand had not developed a test for TB but had eliminated the disease by controlling the vector, in this case the possum. Anthony Turner noted that Defra had conducted several studies which showed that all studies indicated that only 3% of confirmed cases of TB in alpacas were of an imported type, whereas 97% were indigenous. The Chairman reported that a badger cull was to be undertaken in part of Wales. Alpacas had been placed in the same category as cattle in terms of compensation. However, the number of alpacas in Wales was a very small proportion of the national herd. Members would be kept as informed about developments as much as possible.

Keith Scott outlined the changes in the colour classification which had been driven by the show circuit. Currently, the Registry colours are not totally aligned with those for the show classes. Beige will be introduced onto the Registry after the end of the 2011 show season but cria can be registered as Beige from this point. Owners wishing to change an animal's colour to beige can notify the Registry and the change will take place at the end of the season. Liz Butler pointed out that shows over two or more days need to hold white, beige and light fawn classes on the same day to allow animals to be moved to a different class after inspection. Pat Bentley requested that the alpaca image on the e-mail heading be changed to a solid coloured animal. This would be investigated.

Keith Scott reported that shows had generally been well supported in 2010 and the number of shows planned for 2011 had increased. The show rules are now fairly stable with the biggest change being the introduction of Beige. Biosecurity had been very prominent in 2010 and the guidelines had been reviewed and revised. He stressed that these are guidelines and are not compulsory. The conditions for each show differ and the guidelines should be adapted to local circumstances. Simon McDonald enquired whether it was possible for show organisers to announce biosecurity arrangements for individual shows prior to entries opening. This would be difficult but if members were concerned, they should contact the show organiser. Paul Stead, as organiser of the National Show in 2011, asked that the biosecurity guidelines be put on hold until they could be discussed further, particularly regarding the issue of whether or not fans should be allowed. Entries for the National were very low and he believed that this was a major factor both for small and large breeders. He suggested that the pens could be segregated into buildings where fans were and were not allowed. The Chairman commented that the National Show is the only one run by the Society and it therefore aims to follow all the guidelines on the premise that some animals at the show will have some sort of infection, including TB. There was a discussion about whether fans should be allowed at shows for welfare reasons or not. Both views were represented. Maria Leitner clarified that pre-show testing was not a guarantee that the animals was disease-free.

Viv Cook commented that she would not be entering the National Show because it was a standalone show rather than being part of an agricultural event. Keith Scott explained circumstances had meant that the National could not be held at the Newark and Notts Show this year. Three alternative venues had been offered by the Heart of England group at Stoneleigh, SWAG at the Bath and West and the Yorkshire

Alpaca Group at Thirsk. Caroline Birch reported that a few breeders will be attending the Newark and Notts show to promote alpacas and this was welcomed. Viv Cook asked why breeders were not canvassed for their opinion regarding the show's location. Keith Scott responded that the timing of the events had not allowed for this. Di Davies had offered to hold the National Show at the Hand Equestrian Centre in Bristol but had been informed that it should be part of an agricultural event. She had then obtained permission from the Bath and West Agricultural Society to hold it as part of its show. The National was then announced as a standalone show which was confusing. Keith Scott commented that when the first offer at the Hand Equestrian Centre had been put forward, it was still the intention to hold the show at Newark. He pointed out that the National Shows Committee made recommendations which may or may not be accepted by the Board. Di Davies asked that consideration be given to the committee's recommendation that the location of the National show should move round the country.

Roger Mount suggested that shows could hire industrial blowers which moved air around the building rather than fans on individual alpaca pens. The Chairman noted that there are obviously issues with the biosecurity guidelines which would be addressed by the Board. He also asked that concerns be directed to the Board rather than being discussed among members without reference to the Board. Pat Bentley asked if the show could be held in an open-sided building but Clare Savins reported that this was now used for a Farmers' Market and was therefore subject to strict hygiene regulations. She noted that the cattle buildings were purpose built and were fitted with proctors.

## **6 Treasurer's Report, Accounts for year ended 31 December 2010**

Shaun Daniel presented his report and the Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2010. Richard Hartley was concerned at the small amount of interest on the reserve of £206,824. The Chairman reported that £75,000 had been transferred to a high-interest notice account. The Society's financial advisers had recommended that £60,000 be kept in the current account as a cash reserve for 12 months. The Society was committed to spend £50,000 on the current TB research and further work relating to the ORBIS project could take £36,000. Simon McDonald asked why the TB research commitment was not in the accounts. The Chairman replied that this had been on the advice of the accountants. Simon McDonald commented that it was accounting practice for any financial commitments to be included. This would be investigated. *[Subsequent to this part of the meeting, it was noted that the TB research project was formally approved in January 2011 and therefore not a commitment in the 2010 financial year.]*

The meeting was adjourned to a date, place and time to be determined by the Board. It was noted that proxy voting cannot be reopened and it would not be possible to change the Articles to lower the quorum before the meeting was reconvened. It was suggested that the meeting could be reconvened during the National Show and this would be discussed.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and expressed this regret that the quorum had not been met. The meeting was adjourned at 13.02.

## **Reconvened meeting on 7 May**

### **1 Chairman's Welcome**

The Chairman welcomed members and thanked them for attending. There were 67 members present and business could therefore be transacted.

### **2 Apologies for Absence**

There were 115 apologies for absence. The Society Secretary gave particular apologies from Lynsey Skinner who was standing for election but was unable to be present because of a prior commitment.

### **3 Minutes of the AGM held on 13 March 2010**

Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Shirley Bettinson, seconded by Simon McDonald and agreed unanimously.

### **4 Chairman's Report**

There were no further comments on the Chairman's report.

### **5 Treasurer's Report**

There was no further discussion on the Treasurer's report.

### **6 Accounts for Year ended 31 December 2010**

There were no further questions on the accounts.

**7 Approval of the Accounts**

Approval of the accounts to 31 December 2010 was proposed by Trevor Sturt, seconded by Victoria Barrett and carried unanimously.

**8 Election of members to the Board of Directors**

The Chairman called a poll to vote on the appointment of members to the Board. Philip O'Connor and Keith Scott were retiring from the Board. The Chairman expressed his and the Society's thanks to them for all their work for the Board and the Society and presented them with a gift of wine in appreciation.

**9 Any other Business**

The Chairman opened the meeting for comments from the members present.

Di Davies highlighted the problem of the lack of BAS judges for UK shows and considered that one problem was the cost of qualifying. She asked the Board to review the financial situation to see if assistance could be given to those who wished to train as judges and also assistance for costs associated with shows, such as handlers. The Chairman responded that the new Board would be discussing the issues.

Nick Harrington-Smith was concerned that the Society was no longer subsidising training courses, particularly for potential judges. He felt that this did not gel with the objectives of the Society and that the Board has a duty to ensure that the courses continue to be offered until the system can be revamped. The Chairman responded that the Board recognised the costs associated with judge training but it was also responsible for the overall financial position of the Society. He asked that the judges get involved in the discussions required to resolve the situation. Nick Harrington-Smith considered that the Society has an obligation to provide training for the membership.

Pat Bentley commented that there appeared to be sufficient judges for the UK shows and perhaps offering them remuneration should be considered. She felt that there were many more important or more important things that money should be spent on such as welfare issues. Judging was important but had to be considered in the context of overall requirements. The Chairman agreed that the Board must balance all the issues and establish priorities for the competing demands on the Society's financial resources.

Nigel Beckwith felt that the Society was not marketing itself well and queried why it had not been involved in the website 'iwantalpacas.com'. He felt that there was a need to promote the Society and what it does. Some breeders are suffering financially and the Society should be promoting alpacas outside of the industry. The Chairman reminded the meeting that there is a National Media and Marketing Committee and invited Mr Beckwith to join it. The National Committees had been established in order to increase the resources available for necessary activities within the Society.

Brenda Bugler agreed that the World Alpaca Conference was an effective means of promotion but considered the rates too expensive. Shirley Bettinson reported that there was a lot of interest in the conference from European breeders and it should be regarded as a marketing tool and an opportunity for UK breeders to network with those from other parts of the world. She reported that Eric Hoffmann had agreed to speak. Julie Skinner from Snowmass was now unable to attend because of the timing of the US Futurity and Shirley asked members for suggestions of alternative speakers. She felt that the facilities at Keble College were excellent and the conference fee for all accommodation, meals and lectures was actually very reasonable. She emphasised that marketing was not the Board's job but was something that all breeders should be doing. Details of the conference are being posted on [www.alpaca2012.com](http://www.alpaca2012.com)

Nigel Beckwith asked that more literature be made available urgently, especially for use by smaller breeders.

Caroline Trotter appealed for members to sponsor the Fashion Show at the World Alpaca Conference. British fashion students were being asked to design a garment in alpaca and the aim was for each to be sponsored with a donation of fleece, yarn or fabric. This sponsorship would be highlighted at the conference and was another marketing opportunity.

Paul Stead asked that the National Show in 2012 be associated with the World Alpaca Conference. He considered it would be an excellent shop window for British alpacas. This will be discussed by the Board.

Pat Bentley agreed that there was a good market for alpacas in Europe but she felt that there were also opportunities in the UK. UK breeders have a responsibility to make the fibre market work here.

Libby Henson reported that there had been 25% more transfers in 2010 than at any time previously. In 2011, 25 new breeders had already joined the Society and the position looked healthy.

Linda Goffey felt that the system for fleece processing needed to be addressed. The cost of shearing and processing was too high. Val Fullerlove emphasised that the only purpose for the alpaca in the UK is its fibre. The quality of animals is continually improving and there was a need to educate members about fibre quality. The Chairman noted that the National Fibre Committee is active in discussing aspects of fibre and processing.

Roger Mount felt that there were too many members who only had a few animals. There is a need to work together to create a market for alpaca fibre and promote it. However, this required the availability of a large quantity of high quality fibre. The ultimate aim should be a fibre herd.

Di Davies reminded members of the opportunity currently being offered by Ackroyd and Dawson which is asking for 400 kg of coloured fibre up to 30 micron. It will pay £5 per kg. She considered that this could be the beginning of a marketing opportunity. Anyone wishing to participate should contact Jean Field.

Nigel Beckwith asked why details were not on the website. Rob Bettinson commented that the website had been redesigned by a previous Board and is now operating under old technology. The Society Secretary reported that the Fibre page had got lost during this redesign but steps were being taken to add one as soon as possible.

Nigel Beckwith asked why there was no advertising on the website as this could be a source of revenue. Rob Bettinson reported that this had been the case previously but it had been removed when the site was redesigned. A revamp of the website was in progress.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending. He noted that the Society was still young but it was taking big strides at a great speed and the Board was trying to maintain this progress. He urged members to get involved with the Regional Groups and National Committees, emphasising that it is the members who make up the Society.

The meeting was adjourned for the votes to be counted.

Including proxy votes received, 170 members took part in the poll to elect members to the board. Votes were cast as follows:

	For	Against	Abstain
John Clarke	131	17	20
Anthea Osborn-Jones	125	17	23
Simon McDonald	40	91	33
Roger Mount	99	52	19
Robert Reeve	110	21	35
Lynsey Skinner	124	20	21

According to Rule 3.2(viii) the nomination of Simon McDonald to the Board was not approved.

According to Rule 3.2(viii), those elected to the Board are:

John Clarke  
Anthea Osborn-Jones  
Roger Mount  
Robert Reeve  
Lynsey Skinner

The meeting closed at 19.15.