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The British Alpaca Society

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the British Alpaca Society held at 11.00 am on Saturday 14 January 2006 at the Avon Suite, Warwick Complex, Stoneleigh-Park, Stoneleigh, Warwickshire

1 Chairman's welcome

The Chairman, Rob Bettinson, welcomed all members present and outlined the programme for the day.

2 Apologies for absence

There were 71 members and 10 visitors in attendance. The Chairman gave particular apologies from Maxine Watts, a member of the Board, who was unable to attend because of other commitments. Apologies were received from 126 other members.

3 Minutes of the AGM held on 16 October 2004

Mr Antony Rucker commented that it had been inappropriate for Bill Cooper, as Chief Executive, to chair the 2004 AGM. This was noted and it would be arranged for a member of the Society to chair future meetings.

Mike Coghlan proposed and Mandy Wilson seconded the approval of the minutes. This was carried with one abstention.

(A copy of the minutes is available in the members' area of the BAS website or on request from the Society Secretary*.)

4 Chairman's report

Rob Bettinson, as Chairman of the Board, summarised the Society's activities during the previous year.

He highlighted the efforts that had been made to bring the finances of the Society under control and outlined the new initiatives taken during 2005. Part of the loss, amounting to £19,000, had been due to a previous accounting error which had now been corrected. The change of year-end to 31 December was being investigated, with the AGM being held the following February. This would make the financial report more relevant to the current situation. It would also enable the sub-committees to assess the work of the previous year and prepare budgets which could be presented to the AGM following ratification by the Board in January.

The changes in administrative arrangements were outlined. All membership matters are now dealt with by Grassroots Systems Ltd. Thanks were given to Nigel Cobb for his help in sorting out the membership fees. Internal Society administration is being handled by Claire Waring, Society Secretary.

Alan Lorentzen, Adrian Hall and the others on the Marketing, Magazine and Media Committee were thanked for their work on *Alpaca* as it was transferred to Deeson Ltd. Possible co-operation with those producing the magazine for the BCA was being investigated. Anyone wishing to join this sub-committee was invited to contact the Society Secretary. Alan Lorentzen was also thanked for the acquisition of the small BAS trailer which was easier to transport to shows. He, Maxine and Peter Watts had attended the Dairy Event and Ben Harford had taken the trailer to the Badminton Horse Trials. Sincere thanks were given to all those who had organised shows, taken part in regional groups or helped to promote the Society in any way.

The website had become unwieldy and very expensive to update and this had been transferred to Deeson Ltd. It had been restructured so that it is much easier to update and is more user-friendly. BAS is paying a monthly maintenance fee which ensures that any updates are made to the site within 24 hours of notification. Carole Christian, a member from Scotland, had offered to help with IT matters and will be acting as moderator for the new BAS Forums or Chatrooms. It was

emphasised that these were designed for the exchange of information and advice and were not to be used for sales or as a political forum.

Thanks were expressed to Libby Henson, Graham Reed and Keith Scott for their work on the Registry. The online Registry would be operational from 14 January and other new initiatives included a BAS European Registry, registration of ET alpacas and DNA identification. Anomalies in the screening procedures operated by BAS and BCA had been resolved and all screening for both Societies will now be operated by Grassroots Systems Ltd under the same (BAS) rules.

Welfare matters had been handled jointly by BAS and BCA for 18 months and real progress was anticipated if the charity is established as part of the proposed federation.

Education courses had continued at the Alpaca Training Centre run by Ian Waldren and thanks were also expressed to Amanda Van Den Bosch. Val Fullerlove, Liz Barlow and Nick Harrington-Smith were all training as trainers in order to expand training in the UK. Liz Barlow was thanked for her work in this area. Unfortunately, she was stepping down and any member who could take over this area was asked to contact her to discuss the role. Unfortunately, the application for VTS funding, led by Vanessa Schofield, had been unsuccessful, but a re-submission was being planned.

Regional groups, co-ordinated by Michael Berry, were thanked for their activities during the year, particularly in organising the joint BAS/BCA regional meetings to discuss the federation proposals.

The show season had been very dynamic. The Show Committee, chaired by Maxine Watts, had taken advice from show organisers and the judges' panel in their revision of the Show Rules. No major changes are to be made for 2006 apart from the introduction of colour champions. Entries to shows in 2006 will be possible online which will greatly assist the show organisers. Paper entries will still be acceptable. A show organiser's handbook is being prepared and will be made available as soon as possible. A list of judges and those who have passed Level 1 and Level 2 will be made available on the website to assist show organisers. At the Royal Show 2006, the BAS has been allocated a site within the new Country Smallholding area. This is immediately off the main avenue of the showground and offers good facilities and opportunities for trade stands. A new National Fleece Show is to be run at the Kelso Show in conjunction with Ballantyne Cashmere. This will be judged under BAS rules and commercial aspects will be judged by Ballantyne Cashmere. Members were encouraged to support this new initiative. Val Fullerlove was thanked for judging the National Show in 2005 and show organisers were encouraged to use UK judges.

It was disappointing that no new nominations had been received for the Board as there is always a need for new blood in both the Board and the sub-committees. Any member wishing to become involved in any way was encouraged to contact the Society Secretary. In the long-term, the Society cannot continue to rely on the considerable amount of effort given freely by Board members and it was emphasised that there must be a move towards a full-time, paid Executive.

Finally, thanks were given to the Board for all their hard work during the year and particularly to Philip O'Connor who was stepping down.

Antony Rucker and Paul Cullen asked about the projected income for the year following the increase in fees. Rob Bettinson replied that a small profit was anticipated. It was noted that an increase covering inflation was proposed for 2006/2007.

In response to questions from Antony Rucker and David Barnett, Rob Bettinson stated that there were fixed costs of £8000 plus £250/issue distribution costs for *Alpaca*. The drop in income from the magazine was because advertising is now handled by Deeson Ltd rather than directly through the Society and was therefore not appearing in the Society accounts. A contract had been signed with Deeson Ltd.

Nick Harrington-Smith asked that the Show Committee reconsider making colour championships mandatory. Michael Coghlan commented that these had been awarded twice at the Royal Show and there had not been any problems. There was a discussion about problems associated with holding colour championships at long shows. The Show Committee agreed to consider the matter further.

Pat Bentley enquired about the reasons the VTS application had been unsuccessful. Vanessa Schofield reported that it had been considered that the proposal did not represent good value for money and it would be difficult for the potential beneficiaries to meet the requirements. A re-submission will be considered. Richard Beale suggested an approach to the Rare Breeds Survival Trust which offered a course for training new owners. Liz Barlow commented that efforts were being made to bring training into the UK so that courses could be held around the country. Because of the funding received by the Alpaca Training Centre, it was currently cheaper for people to travel to Devon for training rather than attending unsubsidised courses elsewhere. This funding was due to finish in July 2006 and courses in other locations will be considered. However, it was pointed out that the costs are likely to be higher. Nick Harrington-Smith suggested that applications for funding may be easier to obtain if they are made in conjunction with other breed societies.

(A copy of the Chairman's report is available in the members' area of the BAS website or on request from the Society Secretary*.)

5 Accounts for year ending 31 March 2005

Antony Rucker commented on the sharp reduction in income from screening fees. This was £111,000 in 2003/2004 and £5000 in 2004/2005. Rob Bettinson responded that this was due to a reduction in the number of animals being screened by BAS. Most animals in 2004/2005 had been screened by the BCA. It was commented that the Society must not rely on income from screening which was very variable. Nick Weber stated that there were several hundred animals screened by the BCA and Keith Scott stated that BAS had screened around 40 animals. Paul Cullen expressed appreciation that the Accounts had been available to members through the website and Rob Bettinson added that the minutes of the Board meetings are also published in the members' area so that any member can check whether matters raised are being addressed by the Board.

Adoption of the Accounts was proposed by Antony Rucker and seconded by Jon Hilton. This was carried with one abstention.

6 Election of members to the Board of Directors

The result of the ballot was as follows:

	For	Against	Abstain
Rob Bettinson	114	3	2
Alan Lorentzen	109	6	3
Freddie Small	112	4	4

All three were duly elected to the Board.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and the AGM closed at 12.45.

The AGM was followed by a demonstration of the Online Registry and Online Show Entry system by Libby Henson of Grassroots Systems Ltd and a demonstration of the new BAS Website Forums by Claire Waring, Society Secretary.

Rob Bettinson, BAS Chairman, and Nick Weber, BCA Chairman, led a discussion on the paper distributed to members at the beginning of the meeting. This outlined the current position on the proposals for a federation between the two societies to form two breed societies and a charity dealing with matters relating to all camelids.

The outstanding issues include the funding of the proposed new British Llama Society (BLS). The BLS must have the confidence that finance is available to enable it to become established as a new breed society. Currently, members of the BCA are split equally between alpaca and llama owners with a total of 660 members. *(Are these the BCA alpaca owners or total BCA owners?)* BAS currently has around 680 members. Some 200 are believed to be members of both societies. BLS estimates that its start-up costs will be around £20,000 with £6000-7000 coming from subscriptions. BAS favours staggered payments to the BLS up to a limit of £40,000 and guarantees would be put in place that this money

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would be available. The initial proposal that an up-front payment of £80,000 be made (£40,000 each from BAS and BCA) had been ruled out following legal advice as the money at BCA is asset-locked.

The funds remaining with the charity will be available for the benefit of all camelids. It is expected to cover welfare, herd management, education and medicines issues. The charity will be in a position to organise large-scale conferences which would be open to the public as part of its educational role. It is anticipated that the charity will be run by individuals from the breed societies. As a charity it will be able to attract other funds from outside of the breed societies. A percentage of breed society membership fees would be paid to the charity. The charity will be a membership organisation with monies being passed to it by the breed societies, acting as agents. The possibility of claiming gift aid on these monies was discussed.

If the federation is agreed, it was noted that it will take a while before the joint registry will come into operation as a number of anomalies have to be resolved.

It was noted that the BCA would continue to run its website until the formation of the charity. The BLS would be responsible for setting up its own website.

If the federation proceeds, membership of the former Societies would continue until renewal when members would move to the appropriate new breed society.

It was emphasised that the federation is not a foregone conclusion as it would only work if there was goodwill on all sides and everyone was in support. The overwhelming feeling of the meeting was in favour of the proposals and support for proceeding as soon as possible.

Rob Bettinson stated that a decision must be made by the end of April before the show season started. A provisional date for an EGM will be notified to members as soon as possible and this will be confirmed or cancelled following the BCA AGM on Saturday 18 March 2006.

(A copy of the current position on the federation proposals is available in the members' area of the BAS website or on request from the Society Secretary*.)

*Society Secretary
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