

Minutes of the Board of Directors of the Jacob Sheep Society Ltd
held at 11.00am on Thursday 9th November 2023
at the Carlton Club, London

In attendance:

John Emberton (JLE; Chairman), Janet East (JPE; Vice Chair), Jean Simmons (JS; President), Lesley Pope (LP; Treasurer), Clive Richardson (Field Officer), Joseph Hughes (JH; representing Ireland RCM), Alison Ross (AR; representing Wales RCM), Peter Gorringer (PG; Southern RCM), Kay Carpenter (KC; Central RCM), Tom Green (TG; Eastern RCM), Barbara Webster (BW; representing Scotland RCM via Zoom), Terry Barker (joined at 1.30pm) and Nicola Fletcher (NF; Assistant Secretary).

1. Welcome:

The Chairman welcomed all those attending the meeting.

2. Apologies:

Apologies were received from Melanie Harper (Scotland RCM), Matthew Kehoe (Ireland RCM), Siwan Harries (Wales RCM) and from Richard Fenwick (South West RCM).

3. Agree Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 2nd March 2023:

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting and agreed by all present.

4. Matters arising:

KC raised the point that RCMs are not being notified by Grassroots of members leaving the Society. JS and KC said that the NSA cancelled the Breed Society Forum along with Next Generation Breed Forum, which Kay and Jean Simmons were going to attend along with two young members.

5. Correspondence:

No correspondence was received.

6. Merchandise Update: JLE gave an update on merchandise. LP suggested that new members should be offered a current flock book and the book '50 years of the JSS' upon joining, which could be sent with their new members pack. Stocks of these are held by Grassroots. There are only three journal binders left, and it was agreed that JLE will order another 50.

7. Social Media Report: KC gave an update on social media accounts and the admins on each one. Melanie Harper will add BW and KC as admins to the Scotland Facebook page. KC highlighted that it would be a good idea to have a social media policy. Regarding moderators, it was agreed that each page needs to have its own moderator - this would be someone who is active on each page. It was agreed that the social media policy should be sent to every member, and agreed by each member. KC agreed to implement this. Overall, it was agreed that social media is an excellent way to promote the Society. JH highlighted the importance of timeliness and repetition when promoting events on social media. KC will send CR a short section on the Social media pages for the Journal. KC has contacted a professional photographer to enquire about photographing the Official Sales. A discussion about the benefits and costs of this followed. It was agreed that this could be offered to individual members who might wish to pay for this service, for example to profile their flock or to photograph show or sale winners. It was also agreed that it would be a good idea for the JSS to pay for photos of the Champions at major shows around the regions for future use for promotional purposes. KC to investigate suitable photographers that may be attending the major shows, in consultation with RCMs.

Calendars: KC reported that these are selling very well. The costs have been covered by sponsors who paid to have their photo included in the calendar. The cost per calendar is £7 with £2 for postage. KC proposed adopting the same approach for the 2024 and 2025 calendars.

Promotional Leaflets: CR circulated a draft leaflet that was put together by Lucy Fletcher. Lucy is happy to produce a leaflet for each Region if she is sent suitable photos of sheep from each Region. JPE suggested that the leaflet could be standardised and contain an insert tailored to each Region, and highlighted the importance of engaging members who are not interested in showing. AR highlighted that often non-showing people are very active on breed promotion. KC asked if the Society could purchase holders for the leaflets - it was agreed that this is a good idea. A discussion followed about whether to have leaflets that are tailored to a particular year. It was agreed that this is a good idea. NF to ask Lucy Fletcher to liaise with each RCM to create the leaflets, overseen by the Field Officer. It was agreed that the leaflets will be approved by the Field Officer and will then go to print. Each RCM to estimate the number of leaflets needed for the year, and LP will approve costs and numbers prior to printing.

8. Field Officer's report:

New judges - Provisional panel: Owain Jenkins, Mike Munro, Adam Christie (has not shadowed a judge yet but will do on 17th November. Approved subject to shadowing), Joseph Hughes. All in agreement.

CR highlighted that the requirement for provisional judges to shadow a main panel judge before being approved could be made optional. Following discussion, it was agreed that shadowing a judge should be optional.

JH asked about the rule that a member needs to have had a flock of sheep for ten years before applying to become a provisional judge, and highlighted a case where a person has been breeding sheep for ten years but his father is the member. CR and JS highlighted that the wording of the rules is 'active involvement in the management of a flock of Jacobs' so this person would be eligible to apply to join the provisional panel, as long as they are a member at the time of application.

Sale inspection guidance: It has been suggested that four horned rams with fused top and side horns should be passed but blue tape put on the horn to highlight the fault. Following discussion with a number of experienced four horned breeders, CR reported that the majority were of the opinion that this would not be a good step forward for the breed. Barbara Webster asked about lambs whose horns are spaced, but they then grow together as adults. It was agreed that this is a different situation, and in this case blue tape would be placed on the horns of an older ram. Following discussion, the Board agreed that lambs with fused horns would not be passed at Official Sales, but at the discretion of experienced inspectors older sheep may be passed.

CR then raised the issue of split cod, and whether it is acceptable. TG and NF described the condition and agreed to investigate the genetic basis of this condition. Following discussion, TG and NF agreed that they will write an article for the Journal.

CR highlighted that it is the vendors' sole responsibility to check that the ear tag matches the lot number of animals sold at Official Sales.

Tay Sachs: 34 sheep were tested in the last batch. While the number of tested animals is decreasing, the number of bred clear animals is increasing. LP said that it costs £8.30 per test (including VAT) to the Society. It was agreed to maintain testing for another 12 months. PG highlighted that following the test results, new pedigree certificates are not posted out by Grassroots, but must be printed by the member. CR explained that this was for cost reasons.

9. Chairman's Report: Ireland Subsidiary company: JLE will send MK the paperwork he has. JH said that MK has spoken to a Solicitor and some of the other Irish breed societies, and is formulating a plan for the setup

of the subsidiary company. He hopes to have an update in the next weeks. This currently affects the ability of Irish members to export sheep to the United Kingdom.

10. Vice Chairman's Report: A discussion was had about the future of the Journal and whether it would be better to have a Yearbook. JPE suggested that we consider incorporating members details to include up to date flock numbers into ONE journal only each year. The other 2 journals to remain as is. It was agreed that it is best to keep the current three Journals a year for the time being. JPE highlighted the need to be visible with regard to the Board's role. CR said that a section in future Journals with 'updates from the Board' would be a good idea. JPE said that it is very important that Regions are able to put their own stamp on their regions. JPE showed an example of the black Welsh Mountain Sheep Society Handbook which is produced yearly and the handbook produced by Grassroots for a selection of smaller societies. The aim is to provide very up to date information annually for the membership.

The flock book must be produced by law, one goes in the archives, one to the office and one to the British Library. Flock books could be provided electronically to members. Financial issues and communication are not perfect and we need to keep working on issues and challenges. Communication between members of the Board are important and a Zoom meeting between March and November Board meetings will be held to make sure that all Board members are up to date.

11. Treasurer's Report: Pat Bromley trophy: LP highlighted that for events to be eligible for Pat Bromley funding the event must be educational to young people. Permission must be given by the Treasurer and Field Officer. The young people must be 25 years of age and under. People can claim travel expenses or costs of hiring speakers etc. Food costs are not eligible. LP will add a description of what can be claimed to the Financial Guidelines.

Peter Rudd trophy: CR explained that this trophy was given for the best homebred shearling ewe alternatively between the Great Yorkshire Show and the Royal Highland Show along with £50 taken from a prize fund donated by Peter Rudd's sister. The money has now run out, so the trophy will continue without prize money.

Bursaries in Ireland: It was agreed that £100 bursaries for travel from Ireland to Britain and vice versa to attend judging appointments would be continued for now. A discussion was had about whether RCMs or Show secretaries should be inviting judges to shows and the challenges with getting secretaries to invite judges.

Annual AGM – it was agreed that a travel allowance will be introduced for current Board members, with a cap on the maximum amount that can be claimed.

Grassroots contract review: The Grassroots Contract has a provision for review every 2 years and this is now due. It was agreed that the contract will be circulated to the Board and a meeting to discuss it before agreeing any updates will be held. RCMs and travel expenses: it was agreed that mileage expenses should be paid for RCMs to travel to regional AGMs. KC asked how much compensation Lloyds has paid due to their errors and the incorrect advice given after the withdrawal of the Teledirect debit system. LP confirmed £125 paid so far but she will be taking the case further. KC raised a point from LP's Treasurer's report regarding Show and Sale inspector costs. Following discussion, it was agreed that it is not feasible to only select inspectors local to the Sales they inspect at, and LP and CR will liaise to ensure that travel expenses are appropriate.

12. Appointment of IT Director: The Chairman proposed that Terry Barker be appointed to the Board as IT director. Seconded by Jean Simmons. All in agreement. Terry Barker gave a presentation on Google Workspace and its features for the Board.

13. Office, Grassroots and NSA report:

NF asked whether the Website can be updated with a tab for Show Secretaries, containing the current Judges list and a Google form that Show Secretaries can complete if they wish to request that a JSS

Championship Rosette be sent out to them. This form would contain details of the Show, JSS panel judge that has been appointed and the address to which the rosette should be sent. All in agreement.

NF requested that electronic copies of the Flock Books be placed on the Google shared drive so that all Board members can access them. All in agreement.

NSA update: Previously discussed under item 4.

14. Membership Pack for new members: JPE and LP gave an update on the new membership pack which is being updated and will be sent to new members.

15. Yearbook: This had been discussed under item 10.

16. Reports from Regions – Issues requiring the Board’s attention

Wales: AGM preparations are on track. Costs of coaches between venues are high, but this is an issue for all AGMs.

Eastern: TG asked whether emails can be sent directly to Regional members by the RCMs? JS explained that Grassroots have the most up to date database of members, and they also send hard copies to members without emails so it is best for RCMs to ask Grassroots to send regional communications where possible.

Central: KC said that at the Worcester sale, large batches of sheep from one vendor will be split into smaller groups to maintain moment of animals through the sale ring. The issue of starting prices and minimum weights was discussed. CR felt these should be avoided as for example weights of January born and April born lambs will be very different.

Grassroots – KC raised the issue of members giving Grassroots permission to share their information, and whether this is in place. JPE said this is being put in place and will be completed in January.

English National show at Royal Three Counties- Two new trophies will be presented to the best English exhibitor, and the highest place exhibitor from the Three Counties.

The Regional Christmas Lunch will be held on 9th December.

Ireland: JH gave thanks on behalf of the Region to Lucy Fletcher for her work on advertising and promoting events in the Region.

Funding for pop up stands was requested. JS asked whether these will be an annual cost or will be permanent, and highlighted that one stand recently purchased contains Sale dates for next year, so can only be used for one year. JH said that the dates will be covered over by next year’s dates. JH said that the Region had an idea to create advisory videos to demonstrate routine tasks, for example foot trimming, dosing, vaccinations etc - for use on social media and for distribution to new members. It was agreed that this is a good idea.

Inspector for Southern S&S – JH asked why the same inspectors inspect each year. CR said that some sales, i.e. the Wales Region sale, have the same inspectors each year, and that is quite acceptable. JH highlighted that at the Northern Ireland Show and Sale this year, the ewe lamb class was very big but the lambs were not handled before the short leet was selected. It was agreed by CR and by all present that all lambs should have been handled before the short leet was selected.

LP said that she has had several conversations with Matthew Kehoe about financing. Matthew had highlighted incorrect information from a financial document online that LP was not aware of and she will correct.

Funding: Funding to cover costs at the National Ploughing Championships was approved. Costs of Jacob classes at Balmoral Show were not approved. Costs of sponsorship of Jacob classes were requested for Tullamore Show, and JH highlighted that Tullamore will not have extra classes in addition to adult ram, ewe, ewe lamb and ram lamb unless the Society pays the costs of these classes. LP highlighted that as a Charity, the JSS cannot sponsor show classes. Following discussion, JPE suggested that Matthew Kehoe write to

Tullamore show to ask if there are other options. JH said that he will ask Matthew to do this and liaise with JPE and LP. Funding was requested and granted for a stand at Balmoral show. Funding was requested and granted for a stand at Sheep 2023. Funding was requested and granted for a function room for the Regional AGM in 2024. Funding was requested and granted for a new Promotional Stand for the Region. Funding was requested for social media costs to promote events online. It was agreed that LP will ask Matthew Kehoe for more information about this last item.

JPE thanked Matthew Kehoe for such a comprehensive report and for all his hard work for the Irish Region so far.

Southern – PG highlighted the need to promote showing in the Southern region more. He asked about organising an Open day for which he would need help. JS suggested asking members within the region if they would be willing to help with events. JS and CR offered to help with finding judges for shows.

Scotland – Funding was requested and granted for a new Promotional Stand for the Region.

South West – RF said that the Region is struggling to get smaller shows supported, and it was agreed that this is a challenge for many Regions. However, the Region is moving forward very well. RF, in his Report, thanked JS and KC for judging the flock competition.

15. AGM Update

Preparations are going well for the 2024 AGM in Wales. The main JSS stand will be brought to the AGM. The 2025 AGM will be hosted by Scotland.

The 2026 AGM weekend will be held in the South West Region.

16. Any Other Business

JPE asked that future AOB items be forwarded to the Secretary in advance of the meeting so that the time needed to discuss these and any information that may need to be gathered can be planned in advance.

JPE said that the new RCM information pack will be ready for March. KC agreed to check it before it is finalised. It was also agreed that it would be good to have a new RCM read it.

JS proposed a vote of thanks to the Officers and RCMs for all their hard work on behalf of the Society.

17. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

Thursday 7th March 2024 at 11.00 am at the Carlton Club, London.