

Greyhound Rescue Wales

Draft Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

20th November 2022

Held at 10.00am via Zoom



Present: Debra Allen (Vice Chair), Mark Allen, Val Ball, Tim Doyle (CEO), Sabina Dunkling, Tina Dunstan, Jessica Efford, Cherise Emerson, Kirby Emerson, Annabelle Franklin, Sam Gaines (RSPCA), Claire Gardner, Magda Gryczmanska, Caroline Harvard, Essex Havard, Andy Jackson, Lindsay Jackson, Alan Jones, Kay Jones, Nicola Jones, Claire Lawson (Secretary), Sarah Marsh, Jenny Newbury, Lesley Owen, Julie Payne, Sarah Pengelly, Darren Pritchard (Treasurer), Jan Stanton, Alain Thomas (Chair), Anne Thomas, Karen Townend, Martin Townend, Roger Vick, Vivienne Vick.

Apologies: Malcolm Eames, Debbie Lucey, Amanda Townsend.

Agenda Item	
1.	Welcome
	AT welcomed everyone to GRW's Annual General Meeting 2022 and set out the protocols for the meeting. Voting would be done by secret ballot using an online platform provided by Opavote, with Tim Doyle acting as returning officer. Documents and voting codes had been emailed to members prior to the meeting.
2.	Minutes of the last AGM and EGM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minutes of the AGM held on 19th September 2021 Claire Gardner reported some slight inaccuracies in her feedback, which she was happy to correct by email after the meeting. Approval of the minutes subject to these amendments was proposed by Jan Stanton and seconded by Essex Havard. Approved. There were no objections.• Minutes of the EGM held on 22nd March 2022 Lindsay Jackson felt there had been an omission in the minutes, under 4 (b), regarding a significant statement she said was made by Alain Thomas, that GRW did not need money from GBGB. The video recording of the meeting will be checked. Approval of the minutes subject to this possible amendment was proposed by Tina Dunstan and seconded by Claire Gardner. Approved. There were no objections.
3.	Annual Report
	<p>This year's annual report is concise, with the intention that it provides information for members and for inclusion in funding bids. It is bilingual in line with good practice and GRW's intention to develop its presence in the north and west of Wales. The report also includes a new section on governance as much work has been done on this, and it reflects the importance governance has been given by the board of trustees.</p> <p>Comments and questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lindsay Jackson thanked contributors to the report, and asked why KPIs, performance criteria, and the survey of members had been omitted from the annual report this year. <p>GRW has been in transition, having recently adopted a new strategy which includes qualitative targets. The operational plan which will follow will set quantitative objectives. As part of the change process members were widely consulted. It was felt that another survey at this point was not necessary and may not be welcomed by members. In the future trustees may consider separating this from the annual report to become part of an annual review, as an internal document, not aimed at funders.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lindsay Jackson asked what period of time the annual report covers as she felt there is a sixth month gap in reporting. The annual report required for the Charities Commission runs from one financial year to the next continuously. The report for members runs from one AGM to the next AGM. There is a mismatch in these dates which trustees intend to address in the future, but were unable to change this time as the financial year had already been set. The constitution allows for the gap between AGMs to be extended and this was done in 2022 to allow for more work on the change programme to be completed. There had also been an EGM held within this period. Trustees weren't aware of any gaps in the reporting. Lindsay Jackson was asked to raise any outstanding minor concerns she has by email if desired. Val Ball asked why there is no additional information about rehomed dogs, as she had provided the information in the past following a request by members. Trustees intended the report to be concise. More information can be provided if requested. In future, two separate reports may be provided, a report for external use, and a more detailed version for members. <p>Acceptance of the annual report was proposed by Deb Allen and seconded by Tina Dunstan. Approved. There were no objections.</p> <p>Jan Stanton thanked everyone in the organisation for their dedication and energy, which is reflected in the annual report.</p>
4.	Financial Report
	<p>The financial report covers the period up to the end of February 2022. Darren Pritchard (Treasurer) thanked Brian at Rimmer and May, for preparing the accounts, and he thanked the staff who carry out financial duties at GRW. The accountants at Rimmer and May were satisfied with the answers to all their questions.</p> <p>The retail arm of GRW is now recovering from the effects of the pandemic and is currently strong. Although GRW's income was higher in 2021, grants and government support had been provided during the lockdowns. Expenditure was lower during 2021 due to closures during the pandemic, and it increased in 2022, due to higher staff costs.</p> <p>The financial position is currently stable, with a small surplus of £743 reported at the end of the year. Reserves are unchanged. Caution was advised as inflation rates are high, and recession likely. Strong financial governance will be required.</p> <p>Darren Pritchard announced his resignation as treasurer and trustee of GRW. He said it had been a pleasure to work with everyone in the organisation and he would continue to support GRW. He was thanked for his hard work on behalf of trustees and members.</p> <p>Comments and questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jess Efford asked if the viability of establishing a professional shop at Hillcrest has been considered. No formal costings have been done, but the running costs are likely to be high, and footfall is likely to be low due to Hillcrest's location, and may not cover the cost of running a shop. Jess Efford asked who will act as Treasurer going forward. Trustees will meet after the AGM to agree the officer posts. Lindsay Jackson thanked everyone involved in producing the financial report, and commented that the financial situation is stable, but expressed concern that there has only been a small surplus reported during recovery. In previous years, when Chair of GRW, she had always planned that the reserves would be built up for the development of Hillcrest, and still hopes this will be the case. <p>Acceptance of the financial report was proposed by Lindsay Jackson and seconded by Val Ball. Approved. There were no objections.</p> <p>The appointment of Rimmer and May as independent verifiers for 2022/2023 was proposed by Val Ball and seconded by Lindsay Jackson. Approved. There were no objections.</p>

5.	Speaker
	<p>Dr Sam Gaines (Head of Companion Animal Science and Policy at the RSPCA) had been invited to speak to members about the RSPCA's change in position on greyhound racing. The RSPCA is working with Dogs Trust and Blue Cross calling for a phased end to greyhound racing in the UK.</p> <p>The welfare of racing greyhounds has been a concern for some time. Rescue organisations have worked with the industry to make tangible improvements. In Wales there have been serious concerns about greyhound welfare at the Valley track, which is unregulated, and a voluntary code of practice had been developed, which also aids welfare inspections of the track by the local authority. Despite many years of joint working there are still significant welfare issues for greyhounds that have not been resolved. As a result of their continuing concerns, the RSPCA and Dogs Trust commissioned independent animal welfare specialists to produce an evidence based report on greyhound welfare. They reported that regulatory oversight is disjointed, ineffective and inconsistent across the nations of the UK. Wastage is also a very serious concern at all stages of a racing greyhound's life. Transparency is a significant issue across the industry. There is no statutory betting levy to help fund GBGB's welfare improvements, and as racing is inherently dangerous, with every dog at risk of injury or death, more financial support for GBGB's welfare plans would not change that risk. In the UK's licensed sector, between 2018 and 2021, over 2,000 greyhounds died, and 18,000 greyhounds were injured, as a result of racing. There are no figures available for deaths and injuries at unregulated tracks.</p> <p>The greyhound racing industry is in global decline and is only legal in seven countries.</p> <p>The RSPCA will work with governments across the UK, and the industry, taking action to deliver a phased end to greyhound racing, to allow time to plan for the care of the affected dogs. The RSPCA believes this is possible within five years. Their focus is now on Wales, working with GRW and Hope to achieve a ban sooner than this, particularly as the track in Wales has plans to expand to become a GBGB regulated track.</p> <p>Comments and questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sam Gaines was thanked for her excellent presentation.
6.	Change Management Programme & CEO Report
	<p>Tim Doyle updated members on the progress of the change programme to date, initially as GRW's change manager, and then as CEO, following his appointment in July 2022. The steering committee has met regularly since November 2021 to work on the change process. The agreement of the new Vision and Mission at the EGM in March 2022 determined the work to be done, as it set out what kind of organisation GRW wants to be. The new strategy for 2022-27 has been created (circulated to members with the meeting papers). GRW policies are all being reviewed and updated, systems are also under review to improve internal communications and manage and protect information held.</p> <p>Following Tim's appointment as CEO, work has continued to reassign operational responsibilities from trustees to staff, a scheme of delegation for the CEO role is being finalised, staff training is being formalised, and work done to ensure that the change becomes permanent in line with the new strategy. The website has been improved and all outward facing communications improved and standardised. Improvements in governance are being made. All this work is being done to ensure GRW can improve and continue its success into the future, ultimately helping more dogs. The change is a collaborative process, with many benefits still to come.</p> <p>In the year ahead the focus will be on the benchmarking and analysis of staff roles, creating an operational plan showing how the objectives in the strategy will be met, and looking at the training and skills of staff. There will be a focus on developing income from grants and legacies to ensure GRW can thrive.</p> <p>Comments and questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jess Efford's company has recently undertaken quality management system ISO 9001 and offered to share their documentation if it would be of help to GRW. • Tim Doyle and the change steering committee were thanked for their hard work.
7.	Break
	A short break was taken.
8.	Special Resolution on CIO
	<p>Paper circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>GRW's original constitution was adapted from another voluntary organisation but it wasn't designed for purpose. The proposal from the board is that GRW adopts a new model constitution for a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in principle. Lessons learned over the past 29 years would be incorporated into the new model constitution, which would then have to be approved by the Charities Commission, and following that members would be asked to approve the new constitution as amended at a special meeting.</p>

	<p>Comments and questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lindsay Jackson agreed that it would be a sensible move for GRW. • Andy Jackson was concerned that GRW's bank accounts may have to be changed. <p>Assurances have been received from the WCVA that this will not be necessary.</p> <p><i>The adoption of a new model constitution for a Charitable Incorporated Organisation by GRW was proposed by Deb Allen and this was seconded by Magda Gryczmanska. Approved. There were no objections.</i></p>
9.	<p>Elections to the Board</p>
	<p>One of the candidates standing for election, Malcom Eames, was unable to attend the AGM due to serious illness in his family and was therefore not available to answer questions at the AGM as required. Malcolm's candidacy could not be considered as a result.</p> <p>There were four candidates standing for four vacancies. Magda Gryczmanska, Essex Havard, Jenny Newbury and Julie Payne introduced themselves to members as candidates for election.</p> <p>There were no questions. Voting took place.</p> <p><i>All four candidates received votes and were elected to the board of trustees. There were no objections.</i></p> <p>The board can co-opt up to three additional trustees, and in the circumstances, will discuss co-opting Malcolm Eames as a trustee at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>The four candidates were thanked for standing for election.</p> <p>Val Ball, Matthew Crowle, Kirty Davies-Pryor, Carolyn Graves-Brown, Sarah Marsh, Darren Pritchard, Steve Tom and Jon Trew had resigned as trustees since the 2021 AGM and were thanked for their work.</p>
10.	<p>Closing Remarks</p>
	<p>The change programme will continue and the benefits will increase over time. Work will continue preparing the CIO constitution for Charities Commission approval, and then the inaugural general meeting of GRW will be convened under the new constitution.</p> <p>Work will continue to professionalise the organisation, aiming to retain its personal touch, demonstrating compassion to the dogs, staff and volunteers.</p> <p>Plans to develop Hillcrest will continue. Capacity has already increased in response to increased requests for kennel places from trainers and pet owners.</p> <p>GRW's 30th anniversary is on 20th October 2023. There will be celebrations planned throughout the year.</p> <p>Members were thanked for attending the AGM.</p>