

Minutes of the Executive Committee

3 March 2024

Held at 11.00 at The Dogs Trust, Bridgend



Present: Alain Thomas (Chair), Debra Allen (Vice chair), Tina Dunstan (Treasurer), Claire Lawson (Secretary), Becca Brown, Magda Gryczmanska, Essex Havard, Nicky Hughes, Jenny Newbury, Amanda Simisker.

In attendance: Tim Doyle

Apologies: Malcolm Eames, Claire Gardner.

Agenda Item	
1.	Welcome & Apologies
	AT welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted.
2.	Q&A with Richard Tynen, the Funding Centre
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> XX
2.	Declarations of interest
	Given that this was the first meeting for the new trustees, the group introduced themselves. No declarations of interest were noted.
3.	Accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting
a	The minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2024 were agreed as an accurate record, with one minor amendment to the date. Proposed: TDU, seconded: CL
b	The minutes of the short post-AGM meeting held on 18 February 2024 were agreed as an accurate record. Proposed: EH, seconded JN
4.	Actions Log
	2: ongoing. CL and AT are yet to meet and this won't take long to do. 3: ongoing. This can now be progressed as AS has joined the board. 4: AT and EH have met. EH has notes which he will share with the board and submit to the next meeting. 5: action complete. 6: TDU will progress this action now that the AGM has been held. 7: TDo will draft this policy. He has asked the Managers to look at our governing values to ensure the business fits with those, for example looking at where things could be delivered to site on fewer occasions. Staff have started looking at local suppliers instead of relying on Amazon for convenience, which has saved money. 8: notes have been shared. Action complete. 9: XXX 10: Matthew has confirmed that he will do this but is waiting to know what we want. MG will talk to Nicola Jones and get details. 11: action complete. 12: JN has done the value chain analysis but this has been overtaken by events. The board agreed to pause this for the time being. 13: action complete. TDo needs information from AT for this. 14: to go on the agenda for the next officers meeting. 15: action pending, overtaken by events. To be discussed later in the meeting. . 16 - action complete. The booklet is live on the intranet now, and TDo will talk about it at the next staff meeting.

	<p>17 - action complete. 18 - to be discussed later in the meeting. 19 - outstanding. Wait until the new minister is in place, however Lesley still has influence and could still be invited. 20 - Complete 21- Katie is now Line Manager for Therapy Hounds and we will be able to write this. 22 - XXX 23 - outstanding. We are not at a stage to be able to take this forward yet. 24 - TDo has structured the register now. The ones in red are outstanding, and some are in hand. 25 - XXX 26 - TDo has asked the staff to do this but doesn't think it has happened yet. He will chase. 27 - outstanding, however we have received advice from the ICO that as long as we don't identify individuals it's ok. TDo is comfortable with using social media posts for now. Action can be closed. 28 - action complete. 29 - action complete. 30 - action complete. 31 - action complete.</p> <p>ACTION: Officers need to meet regularly instead of dealing with things by email. AT will schedule officers' meetings between trustee meetings. ACTION: contact Charity Commission to progress our CIO. Officers to look into this.</p>
5.	Updates and actions from Officers' meetings
	There had been no meetings of the officers' group since the last board meeting.
6.	Reports
a)	<p>CEO's report Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are three options for the enrichment hut: repurpose existing structure, knock down existing structure and install a prefabricated barn, or refurbish the existing structure. The team is looking for costings to decide on the best course of action. The hut will be insulated, as it is very cold. Sabina will be leaving during w/c 1 April. <p>Comments / questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MG noted the huge change in Hillcrest in such a short space of time, and commended the team on their hard work to achieve this. The September meeting will be held at Hillcrest so that the board can see the changes. The board agreed to meet face to face twice a year. The rolling figure for rehoming currently stands at around 130. There are roughly 20 - 30 dogs waiting to come to Hillcrest, with a further 8 - 10 from trainers who always have dogs waiting. The true figure is around 50 - 60 dogs at any one time, taking this and other circumstances into account, so there is a huge demand for our services. Some of these dogs will be on the waiting list at other rescues as well. Regular meetings have been convened with Forever Hounds Trust (FHT) and Dogs Trust (DT) at a welfare and rehoming level, as the three organisations are the main intakes for dogs XX <p>b) Finance report and financial activities Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is the last budget vs actuals of this financial year. XX Vet bills continue to increase above the rate of inflation, however we have only exceeded the budget by 6% and this has been factored into the coming year's budget. The Competition and Markets Authority is looking into vet fees at the moment (update as at 12 March 2024 here). We have looked at ways in which we could reduce this, including grouping neuters for Cardiff Dogs Home to carry out, but this would not realise much benefit. NJ also reviews this regularly and is confident that we are paying less than the public. The cost of vet bills for foster dogs has also greatly increased as there were a lot who needed treatment. Retail management costs appeared to be high but this was becauseXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX This has now been moved to the central budget. Blackwood's expenditure was high because they had a break in, for which the excess wasn't worth claiming on insurance. There has been an overspend on tech, but this was an investment to automate processes for the coming years. The Hillcrest development has also seen an overspend, but this was necessary to complete work on the new kennel block. The 30th anniversary dinner budget was underspent. Despite the £26,000 deficit due to the reasons above, TDo noted that he is happy with how the

	<p>financial year ran, having invested where we agreed we would.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were no legacies during this financial year, so we have managed this without extra funding. <p>Questions / comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The board discussed providing adopters the option of organising for their dogs to be neutered at their own cost and agreed to make this option available judiciously, with close monitoring. There is an automated system for monitoring dogs who go out without being neutered. <p>c) Public Affairs/campaigns</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The responses from both GRW and the coalition have been submitted and will be publicly available to read. They include information from large research projects for the RSPCA and on the ground knowledge from GRW and partners. The GRW response provides greater detail about racing and what the Valleys track means for greyhounds in Wales. We would like to carry out opinion polling over the next few months to determine the demographics of our supporters and members, to ensure that we are targeting the right people for advertising and funding. <p>Comments/questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Next year's budget includes funds for paid social media advertising. For comparison, XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX only uses paid socials for fundraising and has found it to be beneficial. The board agreed to Action: send our consultation responses to members, and also include a link in Speedy News. It will be presented as a celebration of the amount of work that we do to pursue this cause. The board recorded thanks to the campaign group for an excellent piece of work, which came in at over 80 pages. Around 20,000 people signed the RSPCA open letter. The board noted that MG has been contacted by one of our members, who thinks that selling the anti-racing T-shirts was going too far. <p>d) Hillcrest working group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussed earlier in the meeting.
7.	Risk Register/Incident Log
	<p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There have been no significant changes to any of the risks. XX <p>Comments / questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> XX XX XX <p>ACTION: TDo to convey thanks to SD from he board, for her hard work during her time at Hillcrest. ACTION: DA to set up a PayPal collection for donations for a collection for SD. Gift to be decided. ACTION: XXX</p>
8.	Items for discussion
a)	<p>AGM update & any actions (All)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CIO constitution will be discussed at the next Officers Meeting. The board thought that the AGM generally went well. Responses to questions were well handled. Two people on one computer were correctly counted as part of the quorum, and this is a learning point for the future. This issue will be simplified when we simplify the membership structure. The board agreed that proxy votes count as those people being present at the meeting. It's about the number of votes that are made. TDo will work on the membership structure after the new CRM system is implemented. He will make recommendations following a market comparison exercise, and will also look at how much it might cost later on. The group agreed that the weekly updates from Rescue and Rehoming are really informative, and should be sent out to a wider audience. After SD's departure, someone else must take on the live streams that she has been producing. Only about 5 people registered for the AGM but didn't turn up.

- The next AGM could be held at the Dogs Trust, as the room appears to be big enough.
- The group agreed that Matt from Camlas performed his role very well and spoke with authority.
- The board recorded thanks to Bethan Shoemark-Spear for all the hard work she did on this. We will employ Bethan to organise the next AGM.

b Next AGM date (to align with reporting and re CIO status)

- The financial year ends in February, and the accountants need a couple of months to prepare the accounts.
- The Charity Commission needs enough time to look at the revised constitution.
- If we don't get the Charity Commission agreement back by the date we decide, delay the AGM to 2025.
- We may have to do a transfer of assets before the AGM.
- We must give members at least two weeks notice of the next AGM, but we usually give 4 - 6 weeks notice.
- We are able to postpone the AGM if we don't have everything we need in time for the meeting.
- We will need a speaker to encourage members to attend, as the quorum may not be met at another AGM so close to the last one. The board wasn't able to suggest anyone, but MG suggested Katie might know someone.
- The AGM planning group will reconvene, and will consist of the officers, TDo, BSS, and CL. CL will contact BSS to ask her to set up a meeting within the next 4 weeks.
- Date of next AGM: 30 June 2024.
- The AGM will be a hybrid meeting, possibly to be held at the Dogs Trust Bridgend. There was a concern about the amount of available parking, but Court Colman might supply extra parking if needed.

ACTION: TDo or MG to ask KM whether she can recommend someone as a speaker at the next AGM.

ACTION: CL will contact BSS to ask her to set up an AGM planning group meeting within the next four weeks.

c Trustee roles

Review (as per action from log)

Trustee role description (following XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX) (CL)

Comments

- The role description needs to outline what a reasonable time to spend on being a trustee is, and to explain exactly what is involved. If possible, we could outline the commitment in hours / days, and be clear about the weekend commitment. The board agreed to film a short video about being a trustee, and NH agreed to be 'interviewed'. EH agreed to do the Welsh version.
- Video should include:
 - It's an unpaid role.
 - What do you get out of being a trustee
 - What's different about being a GRW trustee
 - Skills needed
 - How you feel about being a volunteer.
- Video content can be reviewed after the role description is written.
- The board considered whether we are disconnected from the ground and concluded that the remit of the trustee is strategic. Trustees are a legally responsible critical friend, not on the ground.
- Some organisations run brief sessions with prospective trustees to manage expectations.
- Information should be available on the website to demonstrate what becoming a trustee involves, under 'things you can do to help GRW'.
- Being slow to put things in place reflects that the board has considered issues thoroughly and made sure it's all correct and legal.
- Staff have started to understand how everything works following the mandatory training day, and the culture is changing.
- It is important to hold exit interviews with trustees, and having an appraisal system in place would be beneficial.
- GRW should engage with younger people. Keep Wales Tidy, for example, has a youth board. BB is a cabinet member for education and does a lot of work around wellbeing, and suggested running a therapy hounds type session for GCSE / secondary school level. The education minister has a WG priority of improving attendance, and this type of work could be a way to boost the likelihood of grants being awarded to us. BB agreed to ask her school contacts whether they would consider paying for a service like this. A local authority might pay for a contract for us to visit several schools. However, this may not be viable if it were a voluntary service as it would take up a lot of time.

ACTION: NH to be filmed talking about what it means to be a trustee. EH to do the Welsh version.

ACTION: TDU to rewrite the trustee role description.
ACTION: TDU to update which trustees are responsible for which areas.

d

HSBC Application (TDo)

- HSBC has agreed to increase staff credit card limits but want to credit score GRW and two of the directors. TDU, CL and NH agreed to put themselves forward for this.
- We want to increase the limit from £10,000 to £20,000 overall.
- We won't spend any more money, but the reason for applying for the increase is that staff are hitting limits and need a higher threshold to prevent them having to find different ways of paying.

Decision to increase overall limit to £20k. Proposed - CL, seconded - AT, all in favour.

e

FY24-25 Budget (TDo)

Shops

- XXX
- XXX
- XXX
- XXX
- XXX
 - XXX
 - XXX
 - XXX
- XXX
- XXX

ACTION: XXX
ACTION: XXX

Fundraising

- XXX
- The figure for this year is similar to last year, but factors in a lot of the changes that we are making.
- XXX
- Chloe is now in post and will pursue community fundraising.
- There is now a budget for core cost grants such as vet bills.
- We are looking to increase membership and Sponsor A Dog by about £5k.
- The adoption fee is increasing to £300 per dog.

R&R

- Expenditure for the basics at Hillcrest have not changed much. We under budgeted on maintenance last year so have changed that this year.
- Salaries have changed / moved, and this will be discussed later.
- The continuing rise in vets bills was discussed earlier.
- For this year, we have factored in foster dogs' vets bills as this was high last year.
- Budget has been Increased for vets rescue.
- Budget for Last Hope has also changed from last year.

Overheads

- Salaries have gone up with the pay rise but this makes minimal difference.
- Salaries within the Fundraising department have gone up due to taking Chloe on.
- There is an advertising budget of £200 per month.
- There is a small budget for commemorative purposes.
- There is a line for special events expenditure, for where we have to pay for a stall for example.
- XXX
- There is a budget for a new CRM system. TDo noted that we may need to increase this.

Projects

- There is a budget line for keeping hounds in homes, therapy hounds and grant funded projects.
- XXX
- XXX
- The special events line includes fundraising events that other people run for us.
- TDo will share the paper XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX with the new trustees.
- We should aim for a ball similar to Hope Rescue's in the future.
- The VAT repayments line is empty and needs to be updated.
- XXX
- The legal and professional fees line includes planning permission consultants, solicitors.
- AS strongly suggested that we should increase the social media budget to increase our profile.

