

## SGRS DRAFT MINUTES - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2021

The Southern Golden Retriever Society held its Annual General Meeting under postal arrangements on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2021.

### President's Opening Address from Sue Pounds-Longhurst

I hope since my address in June last year you have been able to remain safe and well with your lovely Golden Retrievers. Who'd have thought twelve months on we would still be trying to ascertain what "normal life" was going to be and when the Society would be able to hold their next event.

Despite being unable to hold events there has been plenty for the Executive Committee, Sub-Committees and especially the Officers to do, trying to reschedule shows and dealing with the usual day-to-day affairs. Take the Joint Breeds Championship Show which the Society was due to host in October 2020. This alone has had to be rearranged three times and is now due to take place on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> July. Let's hope third time lucky.

There have been a few highlights during the year due to the enterprising and creative ideas used to raise much needed funds for charitable causes. Also, with the use of Zoom the Society was the first in the breed to run an on-line educational seminar for judges which was extremely well received. Well done and congratulations to all who have given their time to the Society in what must be its most difficult year.

On a personal note, I would like to thank you for making me an honorary life member of a Society I hold so dear

The following Members returned postal votes.

1]	Mrs C Allsop	Mr & Mrs Elsey	Mr & Mrs Marchant	Mr & Mrs Stanley
	Mr & Mrs Ashley	Mrs D Ewings	Mrs V Marshall	Mrs A Stephenson
	Mrs A Benefield	Mr & Mrs Farnham	Mr & Mrs McGookin	Mr & Mrs Strudwick
	Mr & Mrs Benfield	Mr & Mrs Fitchett	Mr & Mrs Mills	Mr & Mrs Taylor
	Mrs M Bilton	Mr & Mrs Gait	Mrs H Morss	Mrs L Trenaman
	Mrs I Bird	M Gaughran	Mrs S Norris	Mr & Mrs Tricker
	Mrs A Black	Mrs B Gooch	Mr & Mrs O'Gorman	Mr & Mrs Tubb
	Mr S Brace	Mr & Mrs Hattey	Mr & Mrs Pett	Mrs J Tuckfield
	Mrs B Brown	Mrs S Hayward	Mr & Mrs Pounds-Longhurst	M Vick
	Mrs B Budden	Mr & Mrs Hazelton	Mr & Mrs Rayment	Mrs E Ward
	Mrs C Carter	Miss V Hogg	D Robinson	Mr N Webb
	Mr & Mrs Chapman	Mrs M Jankelow	Mrs D Rose	Ms K William
	Mrs F Clarkson	Mrs T Kinchella	Mrs J Rush	Mr & Mrs Wilton
	J Dalziel	Mr & Mrs Male	Mrs S Stables	Mr D Wimsett

### 2] **Approval of the 2020 AGM Minutes**

There were no amendments raised and approval of the minutes from the March 2019 AGM were approved; FOR 73; ABSTENTIONS 2.

### 3] **Matters Arising from the 2019 AGM Minutes**      There were no matters arising.

### 4] **Chairman's Report from Mrs Ashley**

"Ladies and Gentlemen, I am pleased to present my Annual Report and review of 2020 with some information relating to 2021.

To all our Members who have lost friends or relatives during the Pandemic the Southern Golden Retriever Committee give their deepest sympathy.

To the luckier Members we hope that just having our wonderful golden retrievers has helped through these difficult times.

As you all know we have been unable to run any events since March 2020 and have already had to make major changes for 2021 and hope to run a few events.

Fundraising for our Charities has continued; David Wimsett organized members and friends to form their own remote groups for a 'virtual' sponsored walk for Medical Detection Dogs raising a fantastic £4,822.00. Jenny Elsey made up some wonderful Hampers for raffles which raised over £1800 which was split between SGR rescue and MDD. My thanks must also go to Valerie Hogg our treasurer who handled all the online transactions to support the fundraising.

On Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2021 the Southern Golden Retriever Society ran our first online Breed Appreciation Day for Judges with Multiple Choice Exam and I'm please to say EVERYONE passed (over 40 candidates). Well done to all and thanks must go to Hilary Male for all her hard work setting this up.

The Joint Golden Retriever Championship show which we were due to host last year is now planned to be held on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021with Judges Mrs. Jenny Johnson and Mrs. Viv Jones.

Our Society Championship Show which was cancelled in March 2021will now be held in partnership with Richmond CH Show at Loseley Park, Guildford.

There will be our Open and Novice working test for Golden Retrievers on 8<sup>th</sup> August at Chartwell, we may have to restrict numbers and preference will be given to Members.

The Funday which we had to cancel totally in 2020 has been rescheduled from May this year and will now be held at Horton Kirby on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> August.

Flatcoat Club had to cancel the Joint Novice dog Novice Handler Working test at Penshurst Place in 2020 but have invited the goldens to join the Flatcoats on Sunday 6th June.

Hopefully Jon Debnam will be organizing two teams to represent the Society in 2021 in the interclub working tests.

Once again Thanks go to Pat Brown, Hilary Male and Barbara Mills who have managed to run eye testing sessions with Mr. Mason in Kent and Sussex.

We need more Members to come onto sub committees. Your Society usually runs too many events for the Executive Committee members to be able to attend every event

Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you and other members for your support and submit my annual report for your acceptance."

## **5] Treasurer's Report by Ms Hogg**

### **Annual Accounts**

Ladies & Gentlemen, I am pleased to present to you the Society's accounts for the year ended 31 December 2020. For those of you who looked at the draft accounts on the website, the final version as reviewed by the independent accountant is unchanged except for their usual rounding adjustments in a couple of places.

As might be expected the final accounts for last year look a little different from those of previous years with total income for 2020 at £17,593, approximately half of the 2019 figure of £33,745. However due to the sterling efforts of the Society's fundraisers we have ended the year with a surplus of £4,506, all be it down significantly on the £10,354 surplus in 2019. Setting aside the fundraising activities and looking just at our General Fund activities, the accounts show a deficit of £2,874 although this has largely resulted from an unfortunate timing issue. Each year the Display Team pay training fees and collect expense payments for many of their performances which, after covering the costs of insurance, equipment etc, they put towards their accommodation costs for their appearance at Crufts or occasionally elsewhere. All other travel and accommodation costs etc are paid for by the individual team members. To illustrate the position of recent years, in 2019 income raised by the Display Team amounted to £6,927, expenditure was £4,813 and the surplus of £2,114 was reflected in the Society's general funds. At the beginning of March 2020 Display Team funds were used for one night's accommodation at Crufts at a cost of £3,410.

Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the shutters then came down on activities and no further Display Team performances took place and therefore no performance expenses were collected during 2020. So, although covered by reserves built up in previous years, Display Team activities for 2020 ended up showing a deficit of £2,874 which feeds through to the deficit on General Funds in the year end accounts. Excluding fundraising, the only other Society events and activities which took place during 2020 were the Championship Show (which produced a surplus of £44 and Wrotham Training (up until mid-March) which produced a surplus of £183. If the Display Team position was excluded from the General Fund outturn for 2020 the deficit of £2,874 would be a break-even position.

Within the income on General Fund activities, membership subscriptions of £5,164 is down £192 on 2019 and reflects 750 members in 2020. Management and Administration expenses are down from £7,916 in 2019 to £5,568 in 2020 due to the reduction in activities. The only heading which shows an increase is the annual newsletter which expanded to eight sides rather than the usual four.

So overall, as mentioned earlier, we ended the year with a deficit of £2,874 on the General Fund but there remains a healthy balance carried forward of £29,822.

The Charity Fund heading reflects the amount raised for charity, a grand total of £7,039 (on top of which a further £609 was paid directly to MDD) which is only slightly lower than the £7,662 raised in 2019. Of this sum a total of £5,117 was earmarked specifically for Medical Detection Dogs (MDD) including £4,469 (plus £402 paid direct) from the Virtual Sponsored Walk in October organised by David Wimsett. It was agreed by the Executive Committee in November 2019 that the remaining charity donations should be shared between Rescue and MDD, with the percentages to be decided at the end of 2020 depending on need. The total to be divided was £1,921 mainly from various raffles held during the year, and it was agreed by Committee that £274 of the Christmas Raffle proceeds should be allocated to MDD to take the total raised for MDD in 2020 to £6,000 (including £609 paid direct). The remaining £1,647 is to be paid to Southern Golden Retriever Rescue in recognition of the absence of the usual contribution from the Fun Day and the likely increase in their expenditure once the pandemic is over.

The position on the Health Fund reflects the contribution from the 100 Club, which has reduced from £328 in 2019 to £256 due to fewer participants, together with separate donations from members (some from their 100 Club winnings) of £40. This gives a balance of £11,023 available on the Health Fund. The Education Fund has increased by £45 in 2020 to give a balance available of £319 to be used for expenditure involved with progressing the Judges Competency Framework.

The Balance Sheet shows the Society's assets and liabilities as at 31 December 2020 and a healthy overall financial position. The only addition to Fixed Assets during 2020 was a new printer for the Secretary. Debtors and Prepayments amount to £1,407 and is largely amounts paid in advance for Kennel Club event licences, first aid courses (both human and dog), web-hosting fees, supported entry open show payments deferred from 2020 and event venue deposits for 2021. Sundry Creditors includes £56 for membership subscriptions received after 1 October and carried forward to 2021 plus the accrual of £439 for postage due to be paid in January 2021.

This completes my report on the Society's accounts for the year ended 31st December 2020 and I would be more than happy to answer any questions. Otherwise, **ladies and gentlemen, I should like to ask for your approval of the Annual Accounts for 2020.**

A query was raised with the Treasurer by email on the financial status of the Display Team who confirmed that the Display Team was completely self-sufficient and receives no subsidy from the Society's general funds.

#### **Approval of Auditor**

The Society's regulations require its annual accounts to be subject to an independent examination by a qualified accountant. To date we have used a firm of chartered accountants but in view of the ever-increasing fees charged by firms (the charge was £600 for 2020) I have looked to find a cheaper option.

**I would therefore like to propose using Mr Jack Foster FCA of Chessington, Surrey for the independent examination of the Society's 2021 accounts at a cost of £200.**

## **Annual Review of Subscriptions**

With respect to the annual subscription rates, we believe that with continued careful control of expenditure we can manage without raising subscription rates for 2022. I am therefore proposing no change to the current rates (last increased at the 2009 AGM) of £8 for a single membership and £12 for joint membership.

Acceptance of the Final Accounts, Auditors and Subscriptions was approved: FOR 74; ABSTENTIONS 1.

### **6] SOUTHERN GOLDEN RETRIEVER RESCUE (Registered Charity No. 1098769)**

Mr Elsey, as Chairman of the SGR Rescue Trust gave his report:

#### **CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS FOR 2020 – To the SGR Society AGM (March 2021)**

I have deliberated long and hard as to the content of my address to the Society for 2020 for obvious reasons. The challenges presented by the pandemic were significant. The announcement of the first lockdown left us very little time to decide how we could continue to operate. Our first priority was the safety of all members of the Charity. In line with the restrictions imposed all travel was suspended. All communication with owners would only take place by telephone or the internet.

Like all organisations we could only look at any cases on an individual basis and learn how to operate one day at a time. It would not be for several months before guidelines were issued by the Kennel Club on Government regulations.

We amended our 'Working Practices' for the duration of the pandemic in that all enquires received by our co-ordinators had to be shared with our Trustee co-ordinator, Rachel Clark. She would determine what action could be undertaken. Rachel kept the Trustees updated on all activities and on behalf of the Trustees I extend our grateful thanks Rachel and the other co-ordinators for keeping the Charity operational during these difficult times.

When the restrictions were relaxed home visits were allowed but only in gardens and the wearing of masks mandatory. This changed when the subsequent lockdowns were imposed.

During 2020 we rehomed a total of 23 dogs, 36 in 2019. 11 dogs were rehomed prior to March and 12 during the various lockdowns and travel restrictions. Of the total, 6 were rehomed needing on going vet treatment. 2 were on our older dog scheme and 3 rehomed with a behaviour issue.

In my address last year, I advised that our Treasurer, Lynn Ferguson, wished to stand down. Due to the pandemic she agreed to continue until other arrangements could be made. We are delighted to announce that Lynn has agreed to continue in this role. Not only does Lynn run our accounts expertly she makes a valuable contribution to the day to day running of the Charity.

We are pleased to have recruited a further co-ordinator, June Simmon. She is based in Hampshire and runs the Southampton area. The west of our region has been a problem for two years as our current co-ordinators are based in the east of our region requiring considerable travel to execute a rehoming.

The consequence of the pandemic is that the role of the Charity has changed for the foreseeable future. All the members of the Society will be aware of the number of people who purchased 'Lockdown Puppies'. The price of these puppies became extortionate. Golden Retriever puppies were being sold for £2,500 or more. People became opportunistic and in many cases the lineage of the puppies is questionable. With the travel restrictions these new owners only got to see their puppy on the internet and did not do the appropriate due diligence. This means there may be many in a generation of puppies which have not received any training, socialisation, and live-in inappropriate homes. What was an adorable ball of fluff grows into a large dog and may have behavioural issues. "These inexperienced owners unable to cope look to mitigate their financial outlay rather than look to future well-being of the dog. They put the puppy back up for sale rather than contact rehoming Charities. Therefore, we do not expect to be asked to rehome many 'normal' dogs. It will only be those with severe behavioural issues or medical conditions where the owners cannot afford the vet fees. So, we expect to see fewer dogs but the ones we do will incur higher expenditure. We will monitor this trend closely.

The work of the co-ordinators has increased by owners asking for help and advice but not intending to use the Charity for rehoming, however, help and advice is still a charity objective under the area of education.

Here are some of the financial highlights of 2020. These are provisional numbers only (excluding bequests) pending the release of our audited Financial Statement later in the year.

- Income decreased from £ 19,673 to £ 17,913
- Expenditure increased from £ 17,512 to £ 18,430
- Medical Support Fund (MSF) \* increased from £ 43,088 to £ 65,000 (to be finalised)

\* This is the fund for the future veterinary expenses for all the current dogs that we underwrite.

- Maximum Available Funds £ 199,871 (to be finalised)

The charity made a deficit of £517 (excluding bequests)

On behalf of the Trustees, I would like to extend our grateful thanks to the Society for the funds allocated to the Charity from the raffles held during 2020. These funds will go into the 2021 accounts.

Two bequests were received totalling £75,740 – these will help the Charity in the post pandemic era.

We are financially well placed to face an uncertain future. The Trustees have discussed the possibility of expanding our modus operandum by offering assistance to our neighbouring Golden Retriever Rescue organisations. We continue to have a close working relationship with Battersea Dogs and Cats Home. They have a specific Breed Rescue Administrator who contacts us if they have a Golden Retriever needing a new home. We are also able to seek their help if we need support with behaviour training and kennelling.

So, in conclusion, due to dedication of our small team, the Charity has been able to continue to help the breed we all love. Thank-you. Ray Elsey

**7] Election of Officers and Committee:**

All the Officer and Committee Members were re-elected unopposed

**8] Proposals relating to the Rules:**

Changes to Rules 6.1 & 6.1.2 relating to AGM arrangements and the e-publication of the Society's Accounts were approved FOR 72; AGAINST 2, ABSTAIN 1.

Mrs Mills raised a concern by email relating to the amendment to Rule 6.1 "and in a format" relating to alternative methods of holding an AGM. She was concerned that the present and any future SGRS Committee could opt for virtual AGM's as the norm, something she would personally not want as there would be no opportunity for proper debate etc.

The Secretary assured Mrs Mills that the intention of the rule amendment was to allow for alternative AGM arrangements which were only likely to occur in very exceptional circumstances such had been experienced during COVID19 restrictions or similar environmental situations which prevented travel or mass gatherings. There was always opportunity to raise concerns direct to the Secretary of the Society, such had happened on this occasion and recorded in the AGM minutes.

**9] Annual Award of Trophies for 2020:** There were no qualifying events during 2020

**10] Any Other Business.** NONE