

Letter from the Chairman

With 2014 drawing to an end and the festive season upon us, we are looking back at a very successful year for the club both in terms of shows and training, and also some impressive team results. The club is doing very well at the moment, with the sub committees all now fully formed and working well to run the shows that we all enjoy, and 2015 is looking extremely promising indeed.

We held the AGM in October and it was made clear by those present that there was a demand for juniors to be included within the club. The only way this is possible is by holding a vote at an extraordinary meeting, and by changing the club's constitution; however, when reading through the current constitution it was more than apparent that it is out of date, impractical and unworkable at present. The aim of this committee is to change the constitution for the better, leaving it more practical and applicable to the current member's requirements, regardless of any vote on a junior section.

I have been asked to write about how the inclusion of a junior section will affect the current membership and what implications it may have. As I write this I am aware of all sides of the argument, as I have had feedback from a cross-section of the members. Since I became involved with the club five years ago I have noticed a change within it; as with all things the mix of members has changed, and members now have different aspirations from the club. We as committee members try to meet these requirements as best we can, whilst maintaining a financially viable club.

When I decided to join the committee I realised how much work was done by so few in order for the club to maintain a status quo, let alone run more and new shows. I also noticed that the biggest problem that arises time and time again is the ability to get people to help at the shows. This meant that so much more demand was put upon committee members, and when considering that the committee is formed from volunteers, the high turnover of members was not surprising. At present, a good proportion of members and their families do help which we are extremely grateful for, but because we run so many events this is why we continue to need so many helpers.

So what does all of this have to do with a junior section?

The inclusion of a junior section and the requirements we have added to the constitution means that parents have to join too. The more members the club has, the greater the number of helpers there are to draw upon. With more helpers, not only does this reduce the demand on current members, but it also gives us a greater capacity to improve current shows and training, and to run new ones. By allowing juniors to join, we can also aim to ensure the longevity of the club as by having members joining at a younger age, they are more likely to stay permanently; at present, most of the other clubs offer junior membership and we are losing potential members, helpers & sponsors to them.

How will this affect current membership?

To be honest I cannot see that it will affect members in a negative way; conversely, when considering the situation from not only as a parent, but also a chairman's perspective, I see it as a positive move for all members and the club as a whole. For almost two years now, all shows and training have been 'open'; this means that any non-members, whether junior or not, have been able to attend. The aim of this was to improve attendance at shows and training events to keep costs to a minimum for all. So the argument about competing with juniors is no longer applicable, and if juniors were to be included we would actually be able to give them a separate section in competitions; at present, we cannot do this as this would incur a cost to the club which, as juniors cannot be members, would not be paid back to the club and would create a financial loss. Furthermore, at present, for group lessons all training groups are arranged by ability, but with the inclusion of juniors we may be able to separate juniors & seniors much easier if this is requested.

The proposal to alter the section about junior membership, which was already there, is just one part of the change to the constitution. As a committee, we have made several changes so please read carefully through the new draft; we believe that this is a club for its members, and do our best to run it in such a way. There will be an Extraordinary Club meeting on the 15th January at the White Heart Inn, Llandeilo where the proposed changes to the constitution can be discussed and voted on, followed by a separate discussion and vote on formally adopting a junior section. Attached to this newsletter is a postal voting form which will allow those not able to attend to vote; please note that they must be sent ONLY to the Club Secretary no later than 5 days before the date of the meeting, signed with membership number included. All votes for each section will be added up and the majority will decide if that section passes or not.

I hope to see lots of you there in January, and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and a successful New Year.

Best Wishes

Jonathan Pett

Chairman