**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE**

**VALAIS BLACKNOSE SOCIETY**

 **8th January 2024 (Virtual meeting) 7pm**

# Minutes

**Present**: Raymond Irvine (Chairman), Jamie Wood (Vice Chairman), Chris Slee, Polly Glyde, Kate Little, Adam Kirkbride, Steve Dace, and Melissa Christie.

**In attendence**: None

**Minute No. 2024/**

**1. Apologies:** Tom Hooper and Phil Garrod

**2. Confidentiality of Council Meetings:** Noted. Forms to be returned as soon as possible. Must declare if some-one is present in the room during a meeting.

**3. Minutes from Meeting on 4th December 2023:** These were agreed and signed

by the Chairman. Proposed by Raymond Irvine and seconded by Jamie Wood.

**4. Matters arising:**

1. **Swiss Grading Training –** A Letter from the Upper Valais SN Sheep Breeders’ Association (Oberwalliser Schwarznasenschafzuchtverband has been received. The Association is happy to run another course for the Society around the time of Widdermarkt. It also explained that the courses are not exclusively for the Society and do not qualify the trainees as graders in Swiss terms, which takes years of experience to achieve. They give an attendance certificate not a qualification one.

It was decided that the Society needed to create a UK Society affiliation certificate, which involves completing both the Judges Pathway and the Swiss grading training to obtain. The Chairman to work on the certificate.

The four existing A+ Panel judges will be invited to go on the training course.

A request has been received from Reni in America to train USA graders. This has been declined.

1. **Conservation Panel Working Group –** Arranged for 22nd Feb.
2. **BB24 questionnaire –** Jamie is working on this.
3. **Upgraded chips –** Mel to investigate. The current chips only have the parentage detail on whereas there could be genetic information on them. The cost of more informative chips needs to be ascertained. Could be part of the breed programme and would provide a useful data source.

**5. Caisley Eartags:** A draft Octopus all member email is ready to go. The eartags are to be an option only and not a requirement. The message should refer to there being other eartag makes which do the same thing. There was discussion about what information or logo could go on the tag apart from the legal requirement. It will be left to breeders to decide what they need.

**6. The Valais Times Magazine:** Still awaiting some articles and show results. We will need to issue invoices for the adverts (inc VAT). The documentation we have to date is with the designer. The magazine will be published after the Council elections.

**7. Data being hidden on Grassroots:** It has been drawn to the Council’s attention that some breeders/owners are hiding some of the information about their flock on the Grassroots system. Only the address should be withheld. Mel to write to Grassroots to have the hidden data reinstated.

**8. 2024 Elections:**

* **Nomination form –** It was resolved to adopt the form Kate had drawn up. Proposed by Raymond Irvine. Seconded by Polly Glyde. Nominations have to be in by 12th January 2024.
* **Octopus message to members –** Kate to prepare the message for all members and Polly to create the voting form to be linked to the message.

**9. Update on the two national events for 2024:** Grading events will take place in all four parts of the UK this year. Need to respond to the email from the new Welsh regional club to say we hope to have one in Monmouth but there will only be the usual two Society shows and sales.

Adam to create a spread sheet of the BB23 costs and income.

**10. The Return of VBNs from N. Ireland –** email from N Ireland Regional club previously forwarded. 15 sheep have been returned to England from N Ireland by Apha as not having come from scrapie monitored farms. The two year rule having not been picked up previously. No blame can be attached to the N Ireland purchasing breeders/owners who were not aware of this. This will clearly have an impact on who can export to N Ireland in the future as the scrapie qualification has to have been in place for some time before exports can take place thereby significantly reducing the ability of N Irish breeders/owners to obtain British vbns.

**11. VAT return for August – October 2023:** This has been submitted, but it went in late due to the Paypal part of our accounting system having not separated out the VAT element and all the invoices for the period had to be re-done.

**12. Libby’s email re use of ET in the breeding programme:** The existing breed programme submitted and approved by Defra by the former southern vbn society needs to be reviewed in the light of possible legal changes. Mel to review.

**13. NSA Magazine advert:** It was felt that the advert was not producing any form of benefit and would not be taken out this year.

**14. Agricultural Shows in 2024 – judge nominations update:** We are keeping up to date with requests for show judges.

**15. Recording of flushing of ewes on Grassroots:** The N Ireland reginal club has asked if this can be introduced. It was decided that looking at the number of lambs a ewe had produced in a year would achieve the same thing.

**16. Finance:** The Bank account balance at 4/1/24 is £46,071. It- has been steadily increasing as memberships are paid.

The treasurer has enquired about Service user number with Lloyds but it would not appear straightforward and in reality is more applicable to larger organisations - one application was difficult to download and a second one was 26  pages long requiring all sorts of data/ information we would struggle to collect. If the society wants to proceed down direct debit route it will have to be via a third party provider which may be simpler even if it costs a bit more.

**17. Online shop:** The shop was very busy over Christmas**.** The VAT and postage costs are currently shown within the price for the merchandise and this needs to be separated out for the accounting system (see above) and as postage costs go up. Overseas postage costs have to be separately calculated.

**18. Any Other Business.** None

**19. Date of Next Meeting:** 5th February 2024. [It was subsequently decided not to hold a Council meeting during the elections so the next meeting will take place on 26th February 2024 at 7pm.]