



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE VALAIS BLACKNOSE SOCIETY

Held online.

14th October 2024

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Raymond Irvine (Chairman), Jamie Wood (Vice Chairman), Polly Glyde, Kate Little, Phil Garrod, Steve Dace, Mel Christie, Emma Collinson, Jackie O'Shea, Jenny Campbell, Tom Blackwood, Steph Ryder, Amy Graham.

53 Society members also attended the meeting.

AGM Minute no. 2024/

1. Apologies for Absence: Carla Bunter

Welcome from the Chairman: The Chairman welcomed all the attendees and introduced the members of the Council.

2. Minutes of the AGM held on 18th September 2023: Subject to an amendment to question (ii) in AGM Minute 2023/7 to now read: Was the registration of progeny from imported stock uniform across the whole UK? the minutes were approved. Proposed by Mel Christie and seconded by Jamie Wood

3. Matters Arising: At the beginning of this year, we welcomed seven new council members.

4. The Treasurer's Report on the accounts for the financial year 2023: The Treasurer's report had been circulated with the agenda. The Society concluded the year with an increase in its cash and tangible and intangible assets, resulting in a valuation of £61,165. This positive outcome was mainly attributed to a decrease in registrations being offset by an increase in subscriptions. Additionally, the valuation of merchandise being held during the period had increased.

Throughout the past year, we allocated more funds towards grading events and successfully published The Valais Times, further enhancing our Society's educational objectives and outreach efforts.

Kate extended a special thank you to Armstrong Watsons for their dedication and support in assisting with publishing the accounts and to Tom Hopper for his invaluable work and contributions to the Society during 2023.

It was resolved to agree the 2023 financial accounts. Proposed by Kate Little and seconded by Emma Collinson.

5. The Chairman's Annual Report: This had been circulated with the agenda. In summary: It is with great honour and privilege that I present the latest report as the chair of the Society council.

Our council convenes regularly on Zoom every four to five weeks, with members joining from various regions across the UK, ensuring diverse and comprehensive representation.

Throughout 2024, we successfully organized four Grading events in Monmouth, Lanark, Carlisle, and Northern Ireland, with plans to include Skipton in next year's schedule. Notably, eighteen sheep achieved Maximum Points, showcasing the remarkable achievements and successes of our members in various competitions and shows. We have had an exciting showing and grading year, and all looks promising for the future. Congratulations for you all for your achievements, wins and rosettes.

The Blacknose Beauties event stood out as a highlight, thanks to the team's efforts in organizing a successful event that gathered praise from participants and spectators alike. Well, done again to Tom & Joan Blackwood in winning Supreme Champion with Kinneff Jacobson. The auction was an immense success, the ringside was packed, and the atmosphere radiated with buzz. It was superb to witness the breed record being broken three times. First with Peter Self and his Lacock Karter for 20,000gns, followed by Heather Adams with Deepdale Luca at 22,000gns then Tom Blackwood with Ayrshire Ingrid at 30,000 gns. Also included in the high prices was another from the Deepdale

flock, with Deepdale Lookout making 19,000gns. Twenty-two females sold at an average of £3,467 and nine rams averaging £7,921.

Additionally, our collaboration with Casely DNA tags has proven to be successful, offering an improved process for our members. I encourage those who have not already to utilize these tags based on my personal experience.

I am pleased to announce the addition of new judges to our panel, as well as congratulate Gerallt Jones, Heather Adams, and Julian Walters on their certification as UK VBS certified graders. Their commitment and dedication are truly commendable.

6. Change to the Constitution regarding Directors: A report was circulated with the agenda to explain that the Council proposed to amend Article 4 of the Constitution and Articles of Association so that the number of Directors for the Society's Ltd company be reduced from four to two. These will be Mr Tom Blackwood and Dr Mel Christie.

It was resolved to agree the following proposition from the Chairman: The relevant part of Article 4 of the Constitution and Articles of the Association be amended to read: Two members of the Council (as selected by the Council) will act as Directors of the Society's Ltd Company.

35 members unanimously voted for this.

7. Any other Business: The following questions were submitted in advance and were answered as follows:

Q1: After listening to the Swiss graders say wash 3 days before grading why do breeders feel compelled to have them brilliant white for every show? How important is it to be brilliant white for showing? We only have a small flock, we washed at the beginning of June, before the GYS and then before BB. I spot washed their back ends when needed before shows. We did well show....so maybe not that important as I explained to judges I didn't want felted fleeces before BB and at BB all my sheep graded maximum on their fleeces.

A1: Frequency of washing sheep can impact the quality of their coats. While it is common for someone to wash their sheep regularly, it is crucial to focus on preserving the wool before a show. Simply using water to freshen up the sheep can be more beneficial than loads of products. Really white is not a mandatory requirement; what truly matters is the condition of the wool itself. There are ongoing efforts to provide educational resources on how to prepare sheep for shows and grading.

Q2: Do you do an evaluation of the result? I think it would be interesting to see which of categories did well, and which did not. Was there a pattern or were certain areas well graded or poor? Like low marks on appearance and higher marks on fleece etc.

A2: It is a really good idea and as a council we are currently working on a creating an overall summary using the basic information from the gradings, highlighting certain areas that graded well and less well.

Q3: Firstly, I would like to say how useful the comments are on the grading cards. If we are attending BBs in August, would it be possible for us to see our cards prior to leaving, or within a few days as many top decisions are made as soon as we get home. The scores are not always the best determinant, it's the comments that are more specific or valuable.

A3: The provision of the score cards on the day at Blacknose Beauties has been mentioned before but this is not possible we are afraid as it would cause confusion and additional work in ensuring copies are made. We will however try to ensure that we get the cards out faster and more effectively following future events.

The following questions were submitted during the meeting and will be answered in writing following AGM.

Q4: A lot of people who are not computer literate have asked the questioner to voice they are not happy that there will not be grading in Northern Ireland next year and these people are asking if they could receive a bit more information and be educated further on the subject of grading?

A4: The Society is disappointed to not be running a grading event in Northern Ireland in 2025. This situation is a result of two complaints received following the NI Grading event in 2024: one complaint from the Northern Ireland Club and the second complaint from the UK Graders of that event. Both complaints were taken extremely seriously by the Society and investigated in detail. A Decision Notice was issued on 15th August 2024 which upheld the Graders complaint but did not uphold the Club complaint. As a result of the Upheld decision the Club was advised that a formal disciplinary letter would be issued including guidance on how to run future events, and that UK Graders would not support a grading event in 2025. The Club was also offered an Alternative action in which they were advised that if they withdrew their complaint and made a full written apology to the Graders then the disciplinary action would be suspended, and Graders

would be provided for the 2025 Grading event. Unfortunately, the Club did not provide an unequivocal full written apology and therefore there will be no Grading in 2025. It is not possible for the Club to contract Swiss Graders directly as all eligible UK Grading must be done within the UK Society's Rules & Regulations.

Q5: You are missing a huge area of the UK with all the grading events being either in the north or the west. Why can't we have a grading at Melton Mowbray or somewhere further east or south?

A5: Our breed is still a very young within the UK with a small but growing membership. Historically, the Society introduced one grading event annually in 2016 'Blacknose Beauties', held in Carlisle using Swiss graders. As the breed's popularity grew, the Society introduced the Judges pathway and was then able to train up both judges and eventually UK approved Graders endorsed by the Society. Due to the success of this pathway, in 2023 the Society introduced new grading events at different locations across the UK. In 2023 we had three events at Carlisle, Skipton and Worcester. In 2024 we added Lanark and moved Worcester to Monmouth to try to be accessible to those in Wales and further south. 2025 dates are about to be released. We are planning four events next year: Lanark, Skipton, Carlisle, and Monmouth. The Council try their best to locate the events fairly taking into account where breeders are concentrated. In order to be successful, we have to pitch the events carefully to ensure accessibility to as many breeders as possible whilst not being too extreme so as to exclude others. The grading program is of course fluid and ever evolving and hopefully we will be able to introduce new events as their success improves and more and more breeders get involved.

Q6: As mentioned, people are wanting to find out more about grading and there are a number of new breeders which are willing to learn but need more opportunity to do so. The lack of learning opportunities is a concern for a lot of people. They want to progress and want to know what is available going forward and what is the future for the Valais?

A6: Education is always on our agenda and the best way to promote these areas is via the very successful regional clubs. Last year The Northern Society held a very informative evening at Skipton Market and the Scottish Club held a Wash/show prep Day. Just recently this year the central club ran a Foot information day. It would be really helpful to have some suggestions from the membership re areas of interest which would help the regional clubs plan some future events.

Q7: Regarding ram scrotum size, are the society implementing a breed standard?

A7: With the breed being very young in the UK and with no previous data to go on The Society does not have access to breed specific data. However, we plan to produce information document for members on this matter in the near future.

Q8: When will the grading event dates be released, just so everyone can get the fleeces ready?

A8: We are planning to release them imminently. We are just awaiting confirmation from one location.

Q9: Northern Ireland has received a letter regarding grading not taking place next year. If they personally paid for a Swiss grader to come over, will they still have applicable grades for the Grassroots system?

A9: The Society is disappointed to not be running a grading event in Northern Ireland in 2025. This situation is a result of two complaints received following the NI Grading event in 2024: one complaint from the Northern Ireland Club and the second complaint from the UK Graders of that event. Both complaints were taken extremely seriously by the Society and investigated in detail. A Decision Notice was issued on 15th August 2024 which upheld the Graders complaint but did not uphold the Club complaint. As a result of the Upheld decision the Club was advised that a formal disciplinary letter would be issued including guidance on how to run future events, and that UK Graders would not support a grading event in 2025. The Club was also offered an Alternative action in which they were advised that if they withdrew their complaint and made a full written apology to the Graders then the disciplinary action would be suspended, and Graders would be provided for the 2025 Grading event. Unfortunately, the Club did not provide an unequivocal full written apology and therefore there will be no Grading in 2025. It is not possible for the Club to contract Swiss Graders directly as all eligible UK Grading has to be done within the UK Society's Rules & Regulations.

Q10: The Chairman asked Carol & Sean to put their question in writing because we could not hear them. Nothing has been received yet.

Q11: Can dates for shows and grading events come out in a timely fashion and not be changed please??

A11: We are planning to release them imminently. We are just awaiting confirmation from one location.

Q12: Could all grading cards have comments on them please? The reason to get sheep graded is to understand and learn about your flock, no comment is useless.

A12: Effective from BB 2024, we have implemented a new practice of providing detailed explanations for each point on the cards. Additionally, we will be providing feedback on positive aspects as well. This revised approach will be applied to all future grading events.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

Meeting ended at 20.15pm