



Minutes of the 51st Annual General Meeting of Friends of Animals League Held in the Tea Room at Foal Farm on Saturday 4th June 2011

Chair	Ralph Baber
Vice Chair	Julia Winn
Treasurer	Pippa Reffold
Honorary Secretary	Deborah Smith
Board of Trustees	Ralph Baber, Clare Connarty, Liz Cordingley, Teresa Kelly, Lisa Patient, Pippa Reffold, Don Rossiter, Deborah Smith, Julia Winn
Minutes taken by	Deborah Smith

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1. Review of the Minutes from the Previous Meeting

Minutes were accepted and signed by Chair

2. Matters arising from Previous Meeting

None

3. Chief Executive's Report

3.1. Rehoming

2010 was an incredibly difficult year in all areas. A large number of animals were waiting to come into Foal Farm and fewer people were looking to rehome. In 2010 221 dogs, 362 cats and 79 small animals were rehomed - an overall 7% decrease

2011 will be equally as challenging because of the bad economy. However, rehoming to date is 18% up on 2010 for dogs, 19% up for cats and 85% up for small animals

3.2. Kennels

The left side of the kennels (the old side) is being emptied and money raised to complete the repairs needed

At the same time any impact (positive or negative) of having less kennels occupied is being tested. Other professionals in the animal rescue field say the general consensus is that higher rehoming numbers can be achieved if the number of dogs is reduced to a manageable level. This means staff are able to spend more time with them and work through any issues in order to rehome them sooner than is currently achieved

Robert Alleyne is working with FOAL on a day to day basis with those dogs that have behavioural problems

A consultant who specialises in kennel rebuilds has been approached who has provided some fresh, cost effective and achievable ideas

As soon as a sustainable income to keep FOAL running on a day to day basis is achieved the focus will resume on the kennel rebuild

3.3. Access

The current single access track issue needs to be resolved before any major building works are undertaken
Good progress has been made since last year's AGM. KP has made contact with both neighbours on the left of the drive leaving Foal Farm and broken relationships are slowly being mended
The Chevening Estate has also been consulted in the hope that the track leading across the Chevening Estate onto the Main Road in Biggin Hill can be utilised. Initial proposals with Chevening Estate have gone well and preapplication advice is being sought from Bromley Council to establish if planning permission could be obtained should the Chevening Estate sign off the request

3.4. Biggin Hill Valley Shop

FOAL's first charity shop at 2 Roundway, Biggin Hill Valley was opened on 29th March
In the short time it has been open it has been extremely well supported by the local community and large numbers of donations of good quality items have been received
Current takings, on average, are £675 per week which more than covers the £525 per week needed in order to break even
It is hoped that this continues to improve as the year progresses

3.5. Long term Residents

Sadly this year many long term residents have passed on. They will always be remembered – Rest In Peace

4. Financial Statements

- 4.1. Pippa Reffold has taken on the role of Treasurer as Harold Sim has stepped down for a small period of time in order to carry out a full review in all areas of the Farm
- 4.2. From an operating point of view FOAL is not doing well financially and is currently running at a deficit. A part of the review is a complete re-assessment of all costs incurred
- 4.3. Vicky Fricker asked the Board how they intend to avoid the frittering away of funds. This question was answered by Ralph Baber who explained that all income and expenses are reported in the accounts which members are entitled to see if they so request. He pointed out that FOAL is NOT frittering away funds and that the running of the Farm is taken very seriously. He re-iterated that Harold Sim is looking at EVERY aspect of the Farm from staffing to veterinary/drug costs. VF then said that the Board owes it to the members to let them know what is going on to which RB replied that this is done but sometimes time is an issue in informing members of everything

- 4.4. John Dixon asked if the review will be open to the members to which RB replied “no” because it is confidential but an interim statement may be issued to inform members of what has been done
- 4.5. Deborah Smith then addressed the floor and pointed out that the members appoint the Board. All Directors on the Board of Trustees are volunteers and work very hard for FOAL and are bound by its Governance, The Charities Commission and Company Law. If the members are unhappy at the way things are run then they should appoint someone else. All Directors are approachable so if there are any issues/questions that the members have then they can contact them
- 4.6. RB then asked for a vote to receive the Financial Statements for the year ending 31st December 2010
34 proxys had been received – 31 in favour, 1 against and 2 abstentions. In the room there were 3 abstentions, none against and the remainder voted for, so carried by majority

5. Election of Directors to the Board

- 5.1. In accordance with Article 29 one third of the trustees have to step down. Elizabeth Cordingley, Lisa Patient and Deborah Smith therefore retired from the Board and offered themselves for re-election
- 5.1.1. Election of EC – 31 proxy votes in favour, 2 against and 1 abstention. All members present voted in favour so carried by majority
- 5.1.2. Election of LP – 33 proxy votes in favour, none against and 1 abstention. All members present voted in favour so carried by majority
- 5.1.3. Election of DS – 33 proxy votes in favour, none against and 1 abstention. All members present voted in favour so carried by majority
- 5.2. In accordance with Article 36 Pippa Reffold was appointed to the Board during the year and in accordance with that Article retired from office. In accordance with Article 32 Pippa Reffold was recommended for re-election to the Board by the Board
33 proxy votes in favour, none against and 1 abstention. All members present voted in favour so carried by majority
- 5.3. Carol Beatley asked if a précis/CV of all the Directors could be made available in order to give members an idea of their backgrounds and roles. LP agreed this was a good idea and suggested putting the details on the website

6. Election of Auditors

- 6.1. The members were asked to re-elect Susan Field as auditor and authorise the Board to fix their remuneration
- 6.2. Of the 34 proxys received 33 voted in favour, none against and 1 abstention. The members present all voted in favour so carried by majority
- 6.3. Jean Basey asked why the audit fee had increased. RB explained that it included an amount of accounting work that was done by the auditors following a finance staffing issue

7. Special Resolution to Adopt the new Articles of Association

- 7.1. All members had received a copy of the draft Articles prior to the meeting
- 7.2. RB explained the reasoning behind the changes that needed to happen as the present Articles require 10% of the members to vote which is not possible.
- 7.3. He also explained the new 2 tier membership structure of "Friends of FOAL" who are a part of FOAL but have no voting rights and will, currently, pay £12 per annum and "Members of FOAL" who will have voting rights and will, currently, pay £25 per annum
- 7.4. A member asked if the Board were confident that a quorum of 10 be achieved to which RB replied that as all Board members have to be Members this will be so
- 7.5. Carole Vernon suggested that all volunteers be asked to be Members
- 7.6. Of the 34 proxys received 32 voted in favour, 2 against and no abstentions. In the room there was 1 abstention, none against and the remainder voted for, so carried by special majority

8. Any Other Business

- 8.1. Anne Kilsby asked that the website be upgraded when the review is finished. Hannah Winn-Rossiter said this is being taken on board by the Education Committee
- 8.2. Carol Beatley asked about the plaque for Kitty Burgess. KP said it had been erected and would take her to see it after the meeting
She also said that her friends and family had commented that the charges for Country Festival Day are too high
- 8.3. Pat Mack asked that the Farm be made more self-sufficient. KP said that they are looking to have raised beds for vegetables and will plant fruit trees
- 8.4. Jacqui Cook asked what Fundraising had been done. RB said that the first 6 months FOAL had concentrated on the opening of the shop and improving the Tea Room and is now looking at improving membership and marketing
She also asked if there is a skills audit of volunteers. RB replied that this will be dealt with as part of the review
- 8.5. Jean Basey informed the Board that she had offered to pay more for a dinner service that was for sale in the shop but had been told by the volunteer that they couldn't take any more for it!!! KP said she will look into it
- 8.6. Mr Collis commented that the goods for sale in the shop are too cheap. JW replied that it is not possible to individually price everything. She added that prices will probably increase once a changing room is installed as people will be more likely to pay more once they know something fits
- 8.7. A member asked if a small charge could be made to enter the Farm. DR pointed out that this attracts VAT whereas donations do not
- 8.8. John Dixon asked that the Minutes of the meeting be made available as soon as possible
- 8.9. Vicky Fricker suggested that a "thermometer" type indicator be set up for donations
- 8.10. Carole Vernon asked that a bigger notice be put up on Tuesdays to indicate that the Farm is closed

Ralph Baber thanked everyone for attending the meeting and the Board for their hard work

Meeting closed at 1:10 p.m. and members were invited to take refreshments