



## The German Shepherd Dog League of Great Britain

### **OUR FUTURE PLANS**

A complete review of our strategy, aims and objectives, primarily based on the future health and welfare of our breed, is now taking place. This follows Annual General Meeting, where a wide range of views were expressed concerning the way forward. The general consensus was that the futile discussions with the Kennel Club over the previous year or so, had brought into sharper focus those views of the members that had only been voiced previously at club level. our stimulating It was precisely these views which had contributed to the formulation of the Planned Improvement Programme (PIP), which had been presented to the Kennel Club during the unproductive GSD Partnership meetings.

The fundamental principle of incremental mandatory health tests had proved unacceptable to the Kennel Club. When the discussions with the Kennel Club ended, it became obvious that another approach had to be developed and introduced for the future health and welfare of our breed here in the UK.

With the GSD League being a WUSV member Club, the Council was clearly aware that most, if not all of the points within the PIP, had been developed from the rules and regulations of the SV in Germany, where the breeding, exhibiting and the working sports of our breed are taken very seriously, and mandatory health tests, identification (including DNA parentage tests), working qualifications, and breed surveys are an integral part.

The GSD League had genuinely hoped that significant progress towards incremental mandatory health tests could have been developed with the Kennel Club, and had focused all their efforts in this direction over the years. The most significant progress was made when the British Sieger Event, based on WUSV rules and regulations, was introduced 5 years ago and held annually since then. The British Sieger Event included identification and health screening requirements, as well as appropriate working qualifications for entry into the Working classes. The British Sieger Event provided a major boost of interest and participation in our GSD Breed Survey Scheme, which is part of the entry requirements.

When discussions with the KC failed to achieve any meaningful progress, our attention, quite logically, turned to GSD Events based on WUSV rules and

regulations, as a proven template for progressing improvements to the health and welfare of our breed.

The introduction of "GSDL/WUSV Regional GSD Events" was one of the main topics raised at the AGM, where exhibitors questioned the Council on how they saw the future. There were slight differences of opinion when different Council members answered such a hot potato as to where the future lay but the fundamentals were the same. The GSD League, as a member of the WUSV for approximately 40 years, has seen the progression of the WUSV philosophy of continual mandatory health checks supported by major research into hereditary diseases, their breeding and working qualifications and their detailed attention to the German Shepherd Dog as a whole. Such prolonged and active advancement of our breed's health and welfare by the SV/WUSV can only be seen as a major advantage over any other organising body. The breed surveys of German Shepherds of breeding age which cover both physical and mental standards demonstrate the German Shepherd as a complete dog that is fit for purpose and must be a route the Club takes when putting on events under the WUSV banner.

Times have changed, and the GSDL must now change with them, by confirming and demonstrating our commitment to both the Kennel Club and the WUSV.

We sincerely hope that meaningful dialogue and progress can be made with the Kennel Club, and to this end we will continue to play our part, both as a National GSD Club and alongside all other GSD breed Clubs.

In respect of the WUSV, with the GSDL being a WUSV member, we are in the unique position of being able to organise GSDL/WUSV GSD Events and fall into line with the SV/WUSV Breed Standard (which is also the FCI breed standard) for all GSDL/WUSV Events.

We need to make it very clear, the GSD League, as a Kennel Club licensed breed Club, fully recognises its responsibility to the Kennel Club. All Shows and Events organised under a Kennel Club license will strictly adhere to the Kennel Club's rules & regulations, and Judges at breed shows will be expected to judge under the Kennel Club GSD breed standard.

The GSDL recognises the need to identify all aspects of conformation in our breed, some of which have strayed to an unacceptable degree away from the WUSV/SV Breed standard here in Great Britain. Such deviation from the standard will require the particular attention of our Judges at all GSDL/WUSV Events and Kennel Club Shows.

The GSDL will also prioritise the following aspects of the German Shepherd Dog conformation for particular attention, to take immediate effect at all our GSDL/WUSV Events and Kennel Club Shows.

**Unsoundness of hindquarters/looseness in hocks:** - Judges are requested to pay particular attention to this fault in all dogs aged 12 months and over. Depending on the degree of the problem displayed by an exhibit, it should be penalised accordingly.

**Oversize:-** Judges are requested to pay particular attention to this fault and measure & record the measurement of every exhibit aged 12 months and over in GSDL/WUSV Events and Kennel Club Shows. The desire to reduce the current incidence of oversize may take several years, however a start must be made, therefore with immediate effect any GSD more than 2cms over our breed standard maximum size should be penalised by the Judge.

It is recognised by the GSDL that the above two faults in our breed are receiving particular attention from the SV and consequently by all SV Judges. The GSDL are aware that these two faults also need to be addressed here in Great Britain and we intend to monitor the opinions of the SV and our Judges in respect of any breed fault which may appear at an unacceptable level of frequency at our GSDL/WUSV Events and Kennel Club Shows. The GSDL will take necessary steps to correct any apparent developing departure from our GSD breed standard, particularly if the health and welfare of our GSD breed is considered at risk.

The GSDL will continually monitor information relating to the health and welfare of our GSD breed, paying particular attention to new health screening tests as and when they become available. We fully intend to liaise both with the Kennel Club and the WUSV on such matters.

The GSDL will be equally concerned about apparent visible defects as well as the less apparent invisible defects in our GSD breed. Unsoundness in the hindquarters as well as Hip Dysplasia are two clear examples of what we mean by this statement.

To assist in promoting this policy of maintaining the health and wellbeing of our dogs, a Judges Seminar will be planned in the near future by the GSDL.

The GSDL Council are actively considering the development of a system that would provide an opportunity for exhibits at GSDL/WUSV "GSD Events" to gain the title of GSDL/WUSV "British Champion". We are making considerable progress on this important matter, and we also recognise this will have considerable attraction for GSD exhibitors, and for GSD Clubs who will host GSDL/WUSV Regional GSD Events. We are obviously aware that if we decide to go down that route it will take a considerable amount of planning and discussion with all involved.

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On behalf of the members and Council