



IWHG Annual Report 2018

2018 continued to be a very busy year for the IWHG with the Regional Heart Testing Scheme, ongoing research projects, our work with the KC on the breed's Breed Health & Conservation Plan (BHCP) and the Breed Health Survey. Keeping everyone updated has been a fast moving exercise!

Heart Testing - January 2018 kicked off with the introduction of our new Booking Administrator, Anne Vaudin, and what a baptism of fire it was! The Beast-From-the-East roared into the country threatening to scupper the early sessions, but with sheer determination and help from all those attending and hosting the events and the cardiologists, Anne and Wendy (Heather) did an amazing job of keeping the sessions going. And those that couldn't make them were fitted into other sessions later in the year.

We were at great pains to tell Anne that this was not the norm for bookings and that things would settle down, which indeed they did. We're sure everyone will agree that the new system works extremely well and we'd like to thank Anne and Wendy for all the hours they put into making the sessions happen.

The Heart Testing Scheme ran 22 sessions through the UK (including 1 in Northern Ireland) and 1 session in Ireland, making a total of 23 sessions.

As always we are indebted to the cardiologists, so a huge thank you to them all for their ongoing support. We were delighted to welcome on board a new cardiologist, **Dave Fisher**, BVetMed CertSAC CertSAM MRCVS, RCVS Advanced Practitioner in Small Animal Cardiology and Small Animal Medicine. And in addition, we welcomed back **Susan L Roberts**, BVMS CertVC MRCVS RCVS, of SLR Cardiology Referrals, who was one of our original cardiologists working alongside Serena Brownlie-Sykes when the regional heart testing scheme was in its infancy.

We have enjoyed the benefit of heart testing at a reduced cost for many years, and continue to do so, but from 2019 the cost per hound will rise to £50.00 per dog for the full three-part test. This remains exceptional value and super veterans 8 years and over and rescue hounds will continue to be subsidised.

Dates and venues for 2019 will be published directly onto the Health Group website when they become available. If you have signed up for email notifications for website updates, you will be notified as the sessions become available for booking.

Funds - The accounts for the year to **31st December 2017** are published on our website and 2018 accounts will be published once they have been audited and approved. 2018 saw some fantastic results from our amazing fundraisers.

The Irish Wolfhound Community spring raffle raised the magnificent sum of £1,490, adding to the £733 already received from Mandy Addington in January from the sale of Irish Wolfhound Community merchandise, 2018 calendars and greetings cards. More recently, Mandy donated a further £1,100

from the sale of her greetings cards and 2019 calendars, a tremendous effort that raised a similar figure for the other Irish Wolfhound causes, the IW Rescue Trust and PAWS.

Thank you to **Helen Ward** for the fantastic donation earlier in the year of £600 from the sale of her beautiful **Posh Collars** – if you haven't bought one of these for your dog, then you should!

During the year we also received a very generous donation of £596 from **DeWolf Dog Training**, so thank you to everyone at DeWolf who contributed towards this.

Several hundred pounds was donated in loose change tins, so a huge thank you to everyone who donates in this way. And a thank you also to Jill Stayte for topping up our supply of loose change tins this year.

Easyfundraising, where participating online retailers give donations when you make purchases on their websites, raised the fantastic sum of £956 in 2018.

All our income is from donations that we receive, and we'd like to thank each and every one of you who contributes to the group in any way, be that by giving money or providing prizes or your time and expertise for fundraising activities - every penny counts and we sincerely appreciate all of you.

GDPR in May brought its own challenges, as it did for so many small organisations. The IWHG aims to reach as many owners as possible to inform and educate and GDPR presents just another hurdle to navigate. We make our news as readily available as we can over as many platforms as possible, but as we all know, we can't just send information out individuals, they have to opt in – that's all very well if they know where to find the info to opt in in the first place. So we rely on broadcasting our messages and encouraging owners to share through social media, the website, signing up for updates and newsletters and using the KC's resource to email registered owners. If anyone feels they are missing any updates or have any additional suggestions, please let us know.

The Team – The Spring brought some very welcome news with Caroline Sheppard and Jean Timmins rejoining the Group – a much needed injection of additional experience and energy to help spread the workload. Jean resumed lead responsibility for **Livershunt Projects** and also works closely with Miranda Brace on driving our **Pneumonia Study**.

Caroline resumed her study into **Dentition Study** and also her **Veteran Study** and importantly will also be project lead on **FCE/Puppy Paralysis**.

Sadly, Linda Forret, our very efficient and capable Secretary over the last few years, decided to step down from the Group and we would like to thank her for all her support, commitment and hard work. The role of Secretary was taken on by Maura Lyons, well known to many already as our Research Co-ordinator and she is now running both jobs in tandem.

Livershunt – We are delighted to say we have partnered with a new lab for the Breed Livershunt Testing Scheme and welcome the support of Cytopath. We are grateful to IDDEXX, which has had a long-standing association with the breed, but they are now no longer able to continue their earlier preferential rates. We are delighted and grateful that Cytopath have agreed to support the scheme and look forward to many years working with them – thank you, Jean, for organising this. The procedure remains the same as indicated on the previous testing forms, with one main exception: breeders will need to order a pre-addressed envelope from CYTOPATH well in advance of the test being done. All the information needed is on the testing forms which are on the website.

GDV/Bloat – At the end of 2018 Nottingham Veterinary School has asked the breed to become involved in a new study on Bloat (Gastric Dilatation Volvulus/GDV), which is already underway with Deerhounds and Greyhounds – it is breed specific, but also will also be reviewed against these other breed studies. This is still considered a very serious condition in IWHs so is well worth participating in

– we know you are asked to fill in a lot of surveys, but we hope that some of this will bear fruit and help all IWHs in the future. Again, details are on the website.

Pneumonia – In December we had an additional drive to generate more surveys for this ongoing study. We would like to thank everyone who responded before the end of the year. We set this deadline so that Dr Angela Bodey MRCVS, who will be doing some further work on this study in early 2019 might have additional data to work with. However, the call for more surveys is ongoing so we **continue to ask owners who have had a hound with pneumonia to complete a survey if you haven't done so already.**

BHCP - We had a meeting with the KC in October with representatives from all the Breed Bodies to discuss their first draft and to establish a joint action plan. We are now working closely with the KC to develop a second draft expected in Spring 2019, working towards a final version by early 2020.

A key part of developing the BHCP is using evidence based criteria, so we wanted to have an up to date snapshot of the Breed's Health Status as a starting point. So, in September we launched our own **IWHG Breed Health Survey**, which resulted in an excellent uptake, generating 363 responses and we are very grateful to everyone who took part. A report on the initial findings is in the Winter 2018 Newsletter and we will be reporting back on this in more detail later in 2019.

As expected heart disease and osteosarcoma are still the most commonly reported causes of death among wolfhounds, which reflects what has been reported in the Annual Health Report for many years now.

However, one of the interesting results from the Breed Survey is that the most common conditions that we take our hounds to the vet for are the same as for all other breeds, namely chronic ear infections, chronic tummy upsets/diarrhoea and skin allergies. Whilst immensely irritating and frustrating for the dog and the owner, these are not usually life threatening.

So we have decided to lead on this in our next **Breed Health Seminar on Saturday 9th November 2019** and are delighted to be going **'Skin Deep and Beyond'** with Rosario Cerundolo, a renowned specialist Veterinary Dermatologist, who will be joining us to discuss all things skin and allergies and take questions from the floor. Rosario is a very entertaining speaker and the Seminar is suitable for all Wolfhound owners – so if you've ever experienced skin or ear problems with any of your dogs, this is for you!

For more details on any of the topics covered here, or how you can help contribute to the research, please check out our website and newsletters (in the Library section) - and go to the Home page to sign up for regular updates, the latest newsletters and to contact us directly.

www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk

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