

**Questions from Gloucester PWRC**

**G1. What evidence would the WCRA/WC consider sufficient grounds to withhold and/or withdraw passports?**

There are many different grounds for withholding/withdrawal of passports, and each case has to be taken on a case by case basis.

In this particular instance one would need substantiated evidence that the litter is not bred as stated. For instance, proof that a "ringer" sire was used for that particular litter.

We have two sanctions open to us, outright withdrawal of passports or endorsement of the passports.

Until now, in every case where passports have been withheld, there has been evidence against the dog(s) concerned to justify such action. We broke that precedent following the majority wish at the 24 May meeting that we withhold passports pending further testing. The mandate given us by the 24 May meeting failed because it was not supported by substantiated evidence against the dogs when it came to appeal.

Endorsement of passports is an attractive potential solution. It is favoured by many racers who wish to cap the perceived risk to bloodlines but do not wish to deny the owners the right to race, thus it can be seen as a compromise measure. The endorsement is generally that progeny of the dog in question "may not" be eligible for passports rather than "will not".

To endorse "will not" needs evidence generally strong enough to ban outright. A similar weight of evidence is needed to act upon the "may not" endorsement and actually deny passports to such progeny. Therefore the endorsement is unenforceable without evidence.

Endorsement has only been used when there is evidence against the dogs. It is used as a less severe measure so people who obtained dogs in good faith can race them.

I have had it put to me that "everyone's been doing it for ages" (i.e. that there is indiscriminate use of non-peddie sires). I do not dismiss this assertion out of hand as pedigree is a matter of trust. The Wards, who have a history of being "scape-goated" by the K9 crowd, obviously having the necessary connections but on the other hand why should they be penalised for having friends in the traditional racing world?

**G2. What is the purpose of Seconders?**

As stated in the job title, to "second". Their primary function is to establish whether there are any concerns about the whippet that need to be resolved before registration. In routine cases, to ensure the paperwork is in order to go forward for registration. In non-routine cases they should refer to the Registrar.

**G3. When a litter/dog is in question, who is responsible for providing proof, the owner or those that have questioned the parentage?**

For passport issue the owner is responsible for providing sufficient evidence to satisfy the registration process. In a racing litter the breeder (and to a lesser extent the owner of the sire) may take the lead.

Challenges to the passporting of a whippet may come from anyone. With the obvious temptation to bring in non-peddie speed we need everyone to be vigilant. However any assertion must be backed up by substantiating evidence.

To allege and not back up with supporting evidence is to commit a tort, and bears liability under the law.

**G4. What proof does Mary Lowe have that "Alamo Flyer is the DNA profiled sire"**

From the testing already undertaken.

**G5. How was Simon Gower able to identify the dog as Alamo Flyer?**

He has written that Alamo was a patient of his from Jan 2006 when he carried out dental surgery and has in the same statement said he took swabs from the dog on 8 October 2007. We also have a photo of the dog at the vet's.

Now are we dealing with evidence or what we want to believe? I have seen this evidence rubbished on 24 May but lapped up almost adoringly at the appeal hearing a few weeks later. The value of the evidence lies somewhere in between these two extremes but on balance we must respect the vet's integrity.

Yes we all know vets have many dogs presented to them, and he was probably only able to identify him from their owner's introduction. How else can a dog introduce himself?

In this instance the photo is important and tips the balance.

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### **G6. Which dogs have been swabbed for DNA samples?**

8 Oct 2007 – Vensuter Alamo Flyer. Written statement by vet.

KC report 9.3.08 – Vensuter Alamo Flyer, Wheatroyd Constant Chimes, Wheatroyd Texacana Venture, Wheatroyd Faithful Venture. 1 Oct 08 – Wheatroyd Gambler Boy also, he was simply tested later as the affair deepened.

KC report 16.3.09 - Vensuter Alamo Flyer, Vensuter Carolina Venture, Vensuter Honolulu Venture, Vensuter Rio Venture, Vensuter Alaska Venture all confirmed.

### **G7. Were the correct measures taken to prevent cross contamination of the DNA swabs. i.e. were the dogs separated from food and other animals (including each other) for at least 2 hours as per guide lines? Were fresh gloves used between each sample being taken?**

This would need a full report(s) from the vet(s) concerned. The 2 hour separation is I guess almost impossible to enforce.

### **G8. Has the WCRA obtained the opinion of a qualified geneticist regarding proving parentage when the sire is absent?**

We are working with the AHT who have proposed elimination testing to deal with the alleged use of a non-peddle sire at the second mating.

At present further genetic work has been ruled out.

### **G9. Who was present at each mating of Graceful Chimes and who helped?**

Julia was present at the first mating but Terry and Sue report that they alone supervised the second mating.

### **G10. How long was Graceful Chimes left at The Ward's house?**

This answer varied between verbal and written statements given by Sue Ward – a couple of days is my understanding, in any event it is not disputed that the second covering was attended only by the Wards.

### **G11. Why were all the letters including those from clubs and Seconders not read by all the WCRA committee?**

My recollection is that a couple of letters were read out, some of the committee were unhappy at this abridging of proceedings. My own view is yes, the letters should have been circulated to WCRA committee members before the meeting along with other documentary evidence to enable a decision, however see next paragraph as to why they were not.

It is clear that the WCRA committee leaked like a sieve. Confidentiality is essential for a committee to function. On most meeting days our proceedings were known before we even got home, I understand not accurately reported either. No surprise then that information was withheld from committee members including evidence supporting the litter. I do not blame the previous Chairman as I would probably have done the same.

In the event, the letters that were read out were enough to bring about the decision in December to redo the DNA testing.

### **G12. Did the WCRA at its meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> December ask for/accept the offer of the litter being DNA tested and why?**

Yes. It was not unanimous. The committee was split three ways, those against the dogs, those who were satisfied they were bred as stated, and others in the middle. We went for the further testing as the rumours surrounding the initial tests had rubbished them and at the time we had the opportunity to go further. The intent of the second set of testing was to try to get testing that was scientifically robust and would be accepted by the racing community.

### **G13. Knowing the importance of this test, why was a DNA sample not taken from Alamo Venture before he died?**

Personally I wish it had been, but would a hurried ad-hoc sample have been believed given the general climate of suspicion?

Unfortunately a process needs to be followed, consent forms etc needed to be sent out by the KC and we were trying to arrange this over the Christmas period when most offices tend to be in shutdown mode.

## **CLUBS' QUESTIONS FOR 24 MAY 09 (Club Representatives Meeting)**

### **G14. When did Alamo Venture die and of what causes?**

I have not enquired and do not consider it appropriate. If the thought is that the dog was mysteriously "done away with", kindly desist.

### **G15. Why did Joyce Keable not refer back to the WCRA committee before issuing the passports after the dog had died?**

Telling the Chairman discharged her duty to the WCRA committee.

### **G16. When she told the Chairman, why did he not inform the rest of the committee?**

I would like to know – but it's now a moot point. The fact is an executive decision was made. In such cases it is then the committee's job to ratify the decision, reject it or modify it. At our next meeting in February we effectively rejected the decision, and restated our December decision to go for further testing.

With hindsight the decision to issue should not have been made. But I don't believe it made any difference to the final call on 21 March to activate the passports.

### **G17. When were the passports first issued and when were they released to the owners?**

My understanding is that all except Wheatroyd Gambler Boy's were issued on 07 January 2009, put into suspension following the 7 February committee meeting and released following the WCRA committee meeting on 21 March. Wheatroyd Gambler Boy's passport was processed after 21 March.

### **G18. When did Mary Lowe first advise Joyce Keable that she should release the passports? Was she aware the WCRA committee had decided that further testing was required and that they had not been referred back to?**

At the beginning of January; prior to release of the passports. Mary was brought into the affair much too late to prevent the current fuss and bother, to which we owe her an apology. (In rugby they call it a "hospital pass".) Her report clearly states her involvement or lack of it.

### **G19. What attempts have been made to DNA test Alamo Venture's other litters?**

I understand the breeder of litter 1 is somewhat eccentric and extreme difficulty has been experienced in trying to trace the progeny. Litter 2 we only found out about at the 25 April committee meeting. The comments at the 24 May meeting that we wouldn't get scientific robustness have been borne out by our further enquiries, but we needed to verify the fact in the hope that there were any new processes open to us.

### **G20. Was Sue Ward ever asked what other litters Alamo had sired?**

Yes. It turned out that initially she gave incomplete data, see next below.

### **G21. Why was Joyce Keable not told about the Alamo Venture x Magic Enchantress litter?**

It had slipped Sue's mind, I understand the litter was forgotten amid the number of breedings that the Wards have been involved.

### **G22. Has Mary Lowe ever laid eyes or hands upon the litter in question.**

Yes, on 24 May. She was anxious to do so.

### **G23. At what point did Mary Lowe see pictures of the dogs in question?**

When Joyce consulted her before Christmas; others once Mary was asked to investigate more fully after the WC AGM.

### **G24. Who took the photographs, who processed them and who decided which ones to send?**

Joyce took photos of Carolina Venture and two of the puppies (to the passport requirements) including the processing and a professional photographer – who has guaranteed the colour – took the photo of Graceful Chimes.

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**G25. During her (independent?) investigation, did Mary Lowe speak to anyone who did question the parentage of these dogs?**

Why the question mark. You clearly don't know Mary. Yes she has done. I was anxious that she did bearing in mind the gulf in opinion about the typicality of the litter.

One feature of this controversy is that the higher up the tree one goes, the more positive people are that the litter is genuine, so her remit would have been given by persons predisposed in favour of the litter. She did approach with an open mind.

**G26. Has Mary Lowe obtained the opinion of a qualified geneticist regarding the colours.**

Firstly one has to define "qualified". She has a "go to" colleague who unfortunately is very ill so could not be used. The approach suggested by the question is still open to us should there be a failure to agree, and should we truly believe the problem is with the sire. However it is a very long process.

**G27. What evidence has Mary Lowe that "Magic Maisie is without doubt a cream" when a brown nose can be explained by other genes? From whom did she obtain her information regarding masking cream genes? Were they sent pictures of Magic Maisie? If so which ones?**

The question gives the impression that Mary simply "looked it up" on the spur of the moment rather than use decades of accumulated knowledge. Give Mary some credit for her years of study, please.

**G28. Why is it that the WCRA sought advice about this litter from a show breeder who has very limited experience of pedigree racing whippets rather than a panel of experienced pedigree whippet racers to be assessed as to whether their conformation and colouring are what would be expected from this mating.**

Why shouldn't the WCRA (belatedly) seek assistance from its adviser? We would be criminal not to! The insinuation re show breeder is unpleasant and insulting given some racers' level of knowledge of the whippet. I refer to some of the K9ers' debate re height of whippets prior to the winter 2009 Talk-In, the ignorance of the breed standard was breathtaking.

**G29. Can the WCRA committee explain why all four dogs in the KC registered Vensuter Alamo Flyer/Wheatroyd Magic Maisie litter are much faster and heavier than both their registered sire and dam, and do not resemble either.**

Appearance is subjective. Speed wise there is plenty in the pedigree. Bear in mind the sire's side is old, unfashionable breeding and do many racing people actually know it?

On the dam's side (including the dam herself); there are many predecessors who were prolific winners, for example, WCRCh VC Gracious (a 30lb/19.5-inch bitch), WCRCh Striker, WCRCh Latchlifter and VC Powerful Paddy to name a few.

"It don't look right" has little or no evidential weight. It is by far the best alert we have to a potential crossbred but it MUST be backed up by proper evidence. The need to stay within libel/slander/defamation of character law mandates that we cannot ban on say-so alone.

**G30. When will the next Championships be held?**

Sunday 2 August 2009.

**G31. What do the WCRA intend to do if this litter are allowed to keep their passports and the clubs continue to ban them from their opens?**

In truth there's probably little we can do unless we want to force clubs to disaffiliate.

Threats to boycott clubs are a different matter. This is unsporting conduct and will ultimately be acted upon.

The issue puts sharply into focus the question "Why hold Opens?"

**Questions from East Anglia PWRC**

**EA1. Why have racers & a respected Championship Show Judge been ignored with regards to this litter.**

They have not been ignored. We fought in committee for them. Betty Beaumont's letter was instrumental in getting us to go for further DNA testing in December.

We're willing to fight a case if we have the ammunition. We have nothing except hearsay and emotion. That just gets us in trouble. Give us FACTS.

**EA2. Why have letters concerning this not been acknowledged or replied to.**

Pressure of work and the fact that committee meetings are held only two-monthly. Not every committee member is on e-mail. Having lived with the subject for over a year it wears you down.

**EA3. Why did it take the WCRA so long to ACT re the DNA TESTING when complaints were received in 2008 ( last year).**

The matter was first discussed in August at an emergency committee meeting at the 2nd Champs, unfortunately under time constraints and no application had been received at that juncture. As we were short on time due to the need to start racing that day, we resolved to wait till the passport applications were made.

The next committee meeting (20 Sept 08) a passport application HAD been made. There was vigorous debate despite guidance from the Chair that refusal would lead to appeal to the WC and we had no evidence to support a refusal, and that if a refusal was overturned on appeal the passport would stay no matter what. Accordingly, not really very happy but being realistic (so we thought) we voted to grant passports to the litter.

It is worthy of note that Joyce did not immediately issue the passport. By this time of year, a 2009 passport was more applicable so she held over till the New Year (also giving the issue further time to resolve).

The next committee meeting (13 Dec) we acted on the letters and upon the offer of the owners for further testing. Information within the committee was poor – knowing we had a “mole” restricted information all round meant that information had to be rationed out – and it is arguable that if all the evidence was available to us in September we would have acted then. It is a very difficult environment to endeavour to discuss a confidential matter knowing the active campaigners knew everything before you got back home? The long intervals between committee meetings also didn't help but we did our best.

**EA4. Is it not possible to take DNA from the LITTERS sired by Vensuter Alamo Flier that he sired before the 2 LITTERS in question.**

See Question G 19.

**EA5. Why cannot the WCRA take DNA from the OFFSPRING of MICHIGAN VENTURE as we understand they are litter brothers.**

Unfortunately it isn't scientifically robust and probably wouldn't be believed anyway.

**EA6. Why have the WCRA treated fellow racers with such contempt.**

Sorry if we've given that impression. It's been a failing struggle to maintain order let alone think of others. In recent months there has been considerable contempt shown by many other persons.

**EA7. Have the dogs (LITTER) been requested to be presented to the WCRA COMMITTEE and the WHIPPET CLUB to confirm the integrity of THE WHIPPETS and that they meet the conformation? Precedent was set with the BILLY MACKENZIE case where he appeared with his dogs in front of the WCRA COMMITTEE & MEMBERS OF THE WHIPPET CLUB., after a complaint was received by a Scottish Whippet Racing Club.**

We sorted something out along those lines on the 24th.

**EA8. Is it true that 2 dogs from the litter are above the height limit.**

I understood one was close to the limit, he was re-measured (as part of the height measuring for all the dogs in the n/e 32lb weight group) on 4 October and came in well under 21-inches.

**EA9. What proof is there that VENSUTER ALAMO FLIER has coursed. We have been unable to ascertain any records of this. WHAT CLUB DID HE COURSE FOR & WHAT STAKES DID HE ENTER OR BE PLACED IN?**

We have a statement from Sue Ward, a photo of him posing beside two trophies, and also independent eye-witness evidence from Shirley Rawlings and others. Again everything depends on what people want to believe.

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**EA10. Would the WCRA be prepared to suspend the PASSPORTS FOR THIS LITTER UNTIL FURTHER & MORE EXTENSIVE ENQUIRES ARE MADE.**

We did and it blew up in our faces. Unfortunately it has dramatically slowed progress in getting further testing done. As with all polarised debate, the party in the middle (WCRA) is the one being squeezed!

**EA11. Would the WCRA be prepared to consider not issuing PASPORTS TO PROGENY FROM THIS LITTER, as was the case for the TIPPER LITTER.**

We have considered. See answer to G1.

**EA12. Would it not be possible for the WCRA under another name be able to register with THE KENNEL CLUB as a separate organization and run their own show without the interference of THE WHIPPET CLUB.**

Yes. But I understand recognition takes quite a long time (two years for the Sussex Longdogs) and an organisation leaving under a cloud would face a more difficult task. It would place individual clubs in a very tricky position, particularly those which are more show-oriented.

Setting up independently only runs away from the problem. We knew that if we split from the Whippet Club it would change nothing, except the connections of the litter would now have someone to sue, rather than an indistinct mob of racers. So we would still have required evidence to justify a decision to ban or restrict the litter.

**EA13. Would you please advise that there is still a rule operating "The Committee shall, however, have the right without reservation to refuse the registration of any dog or bitch with out being liable to give the owner any reason what so ever, and the decision of the Committee is final and binding at all times"**

Yes, Rule 3.1. However that Rule goes on to say "the owner has the right to initiate the Whippet Club/WCRA Appeals procedure, the outcome of which shall be final and binding." This happened.

### **Questions from Independent PWRC**

**Ind1. Could the committee advise what DNA samples were taken during this inquiry, from which dogs, over what timescale and whether ALL these samples were INDEPENDENTLY witnessed?**

The second tranche of testing was witnessed by WCRA committee members; the initial batch was not as the passports had not been applied for.

**Ind2. Could you expand on the role which the KC played in the DNA proof of parentage as alluded to in Mary Lowe's Final Report?**

They are the report writers so are accountable to us for their reliability.

**Ind3. How is it that Mary Lowe can make a judgement on these dogs when she has never seen them in the flesh but only seen photos of the dam and of three of her litter as puppies? What qualifications does she hold in DNA testing or colour genetics which justify her judgement?**

She HAS seen them and it did not change her judgement. As to qualification, she provided a CV to back up her report and her experience and knowledge is second to none within our fraternity. Yes she is happy for the matter to be referred to greater authorities than her should further genetic testing be appropriate.

**Ind4. Could the committee advise as to what colour is noted on WCRCh Graceful Chimes's WCRA racing passport?**

Fawn; as per the Secunder for that passport application (Judy Booker) which has subsequently been changed to cream on advice from the investigation and in liaison with the Kennel Club.

**Ind5. Could it be explained why since the beginning of the investigation all the onus appears to have been on the WCRA to prove these dogs are not crossbreeds rather than on the owners to prove they are pedigrees? Why have previous precedents not been followed and the passports been suspended indefinitely or withdrawn until irrefutable evidence has been provided by the owners?**

"Innocent till proven guilty?" The connections of the litter have not simply sat back and challenged us to prove them wrong, they have co-operated in a most stressful situation. This has probably been the most in-depth case since the start of the WCRA and the scope of evidence is wide-ranging.

The only breach of precedent was when we withdrew the passports following the 24 May meeting. Up till then we had acted entirely correctly as mandated by the Rules.

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It should be noted that following the DNA issue in the late 1990s the Whippet Club and WCRA Rules were rewritten to be more in favour of individual owners.

In the Besaps investigation the burden of proof was upon the WCRA rather than for the owners to prove their innocence. The withholding of passports for the Powerful Paddy x Gracious litter had DNA evidence (albeit erroneous) which they could use to justify their actions. There has been recent breeding where the WCRA has withheld/endorsed passports but these also have evidence to back them up.

**Ind6. Do the committee not feel that the large amount of frustration and bad feeling which presently exists amongst the whippet racing community could have been avoided or at least greatly minimised if clubs had been kept informed of the progress of the inquiry from an early stage?**

Yes. But the question presumes the inquiry itself started promptly – it didn't. It also presumes that there was no fuss before the investigation started. We didn't stand a chance.

**Ind7. If the Whippet Club insists on supporting the issue of passports for these dogs would the WCRA committee consider reforming into an organisation along the same lines as the WCRA but without the autonomy of the Whippet Club, - thus representing the wishes of the majority of the affiliated clubs and allowing pedigree whippet racers to return to the enjoyment of their sport?**

**Would it be possible to take a vote as to which clubs would support this action?**

The vote would have been a "Yes" but it would have been ill-conceived. See EA 12.

### Questions from Stanborough PWRC

**ST1. How many matings took place and who was present at each mating i.e. 1st 2nd 3rd etc.**

Two, one witnessed by Julia, one not.

**ST2. Are there going to be any pictures of all 4 dogs for people who have NOT seen them to look at or is it possible to see the dogs?**

Viewing was on 24 May.

**ST3. After reading Mary Lowe's answer to question three that Alamo was a suspicious choice she fails to mention the age of the dog and states that he was a very successful coursing dog. Is there any evidence of his achievements i.e. championships etc?**

Whippet Coursing Club records.

**ST4. As there were only 3 litters mentioned that was sired by Alamo Venture in the beginning and now a 4th has come to light born in 2002 are the WCRA going to be seeking their DNA? If this is the case then you will need time to trace these dogs and we suggest that all 4 dogs in question have their passports suspended until this can be done.**

(1) Testing the 4th litter we are advised will not have scientific robustness. (2) We know the outcome of the passport suspension!

**ST5. If there is to be any voting on the day of the meeting how are representatives going to know what us as club members wants to vote on.**

Hopefully we did the best we could for a result representative of the whippet racing community, bearing in mind the high feeling, however it wasn't perfect.

**ST6. It was suggested at the Talk-In DNA profiling might soon be part of the kennel club dog health and that there was space on the present WCRA passport to record these results. It was agreed by the majority that DNA testing of all whippets that raced should be considered. So has anything been done about this yet?**

Yes. A voluntary pilot scheme is in place, being run by Sue Hoddinott.

**ST7. Is or has the owner of Alamo Flier been willing to fully co-operate with the WCRA on the question of how many litters he has produced and possible locations of any such dogs?**

As far as she could – see G20 & 21.

**ST8. If so, then DNA tests should be carried out on every available dog, especially any dog born previous to the last two litters. A positive result**

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would surely validate the parentage of all litters beyond any reasonable doubt.

We had hoped but summer 2009 was too late for that.

**ST9. DNA OF THE SIRE: (to be taken by an independent WCRA committee member.)**

**The fact that it was not done not only makes them guilty of not complying with the WCRA when asked. Is it not so that everyone should comply with their governing body?**

**Was this not the life line for the breeders to prove their integrity and more importantly the true parentage? If this had been done all those months ago we would not have been here now.**

**You have to as a breeder be responsible for your mistakes. Should the WCRA not be setting an example to others not to make the same mistakes? And show their authority in keeping control. If asked by the WCRA to comply with something should we not do so? If not what message are you sending out to others?**

The connections of the litter did all that they were asked to. Except leaving Graceful Chimes at the Wards' and leaving themselves open to rumour. (Remember there is no evidence against the litter.)

### Questions from Northern PWRC

**N1. Apart from the litter that produced Alamo Venture as ALMO FLIER been used for stud, and if so are there any of the litter to be found.**

If I read the question properly (I've typed it as it was), Michigan Venture. But testing from siblings isn't robust, we understand.

**N2. When these Dogs in question were pups and rumours were ripe, why did they not go out of there way and prove without doubt that ALMO FLIER was the father. Instead of waiting till the dog died. I undisputable would have**

DNA evidence was provided. The owners then offered the WCRA the option of further testing. This offer was not taken up promptly.

**N3. If 90% of the whippet racing people do not want to run with these so called pedigrees what is the point of superstar points. And what will happen to the WCRA.**

Good question but attendance at Superstar counting Opens this year provides evidence that the percentage is substantially less than 90%; the Stanborough Open, for example, recorded one of their highest entries for a number of years.

The Superstars competition is a commercial add-on.

The WCRA are committed to providing a KC recognised association for affiliated club and their members.

### Questions from Lancashire PWRC

**L1. Are the WCRA considering compulsory DNA parent testing for every future passport application and if not, what are the reasons?**

Yes. It is noteworthy that the Kennel Club (as per their website) has stated their intention to progress to a DNA profiling requirement in the future.

**L2. What would compulsory DNA parent testing cost?**

We have brought in optional profiling this year as a pilot scheme.

**L3. What are the advantages to the sport of pedigree whippet racing and to the affiliated clubs of being governed by the Whippet Club, as opposed to a separate governing body?**

External credibility. Although the Kennel Club has taken a big PR hit this past year or so, even a distant affiliation via the Whippet Club gives us a link with proper dog authority to distinguish us from "flapping" tracks. Very useful for planning applications and for personal connections should matters get rough.

Also useful when it comes to protecting us from poorly-conceived law, as we have credibility due to our establishment links. For instance, if we had not intervened, under the Animal Welfare Act every whippet racing club in the land (non-peddle included) would have been required by law to have a vet in attendance throughout the day. I think we were the only canine body to react!

The Kennel Club link was also important for obtaining insurance at a very competitive rate at a time when my own club had run uninsured for several years due to inability to find an insurer. The NPWRA has obtained this particular insurance (you can now get it on the KC

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website) but remember it was the WCRA who organised it for racing clubs in the first place. My risk assessment work was made available by the WCRA to support clubs' insurance.

The link to the Whippet Club at least keeps whippet racers in touch with the rest of the breed; severing the link will ultimately confirm the divergence in type between racing and show whippets. One wonders what proposals the NPWRA has for protecting the breed.

### **L 4. Aims & Objectives of the Whippet Club & WCRA**

These were read out at the WCRA Reps meeting 20.1.09 by the then Chairperson after a whippeteer had asked a question. "What are the terms of reference, remit or authorised area of interest of the WCRA? Section 1.1 – Mandate from the Whippet Club Rule Book.

"The aims of the Whippet Club Racing association (hereafter called the WCRA) are to co-ordinate and promote the sport of pedigree whippet racing, and to maintain the purity of the breed."

**Was this taken into account – in the present situation – and has the WCRA protected itself by sticking to the mandate?**

It certainly was taken into account. We certainly tried to stick by the mandate. If the litter is proven non-pedigree, we didn't succeed.

**L5. In the past when there have been incidents of dogs breeding – not only were there DNA swabs taken but also blood tests – have there been any blood tests taken in this incident.**

No. The further testing is to be done using three swabs rather than one to improve reliability.

### **Questions from Harvel PWRC**

**H1. Concerned at the future of pedigree whippet racing, and what is being done about it by the WCRA. We feel racing has been ruined by it.**

The future is not entirely in the WCRA's hands, in truth it never has been.

**H2. Can a properly supervised DNA test be taken in front of a WCRA official (i.e. passport second)?**

It's all a bit previous now. The DNA pilot scheme works as you suggest in your question.

**H3. Can blood tests be done?**

Again all a bit previous. We'd almost run out of testing options by 24 May.

**H4. Cannot brother/sister of dead sire be used for testing?**

Not scientifically robust.

**H5. Can WCRA start a DNA database (using properly supervised samples only) to stop future confusion in future?**

Being done; although the cynics might suggest we will still have issues!

**H6. These dogs were old enough last year to have passports. Why didn't the owners apply for them. Plus they could have run them at the last Champs, why did Sue Ward's not run?**

Neither question is relevant; passport applications were made in autumn 2008 for three dogs. Running at Champs is voluntary, at least the last time I heard!

**H7. In respect of clearing dogs for bend racing. What dogs went into the clearing trial and what h'cap did they have. I would like to know what club they all got passed at if they are as quick as everybody is saying what dog passed them to get cleared?**

This is a dog competency issue rather than a pedigree issue.

Their performances are top-grade but at present not significantly more so than the Powerful Paddy x Gracious litter, and other top-line litters of recent years. I believe that if NPWRA owners had met their challenge head-on rather than decide to play somewhere else, they would have scored a number of victories against the litter. They did not dominate at the last Champs.

**Questions from Maidstone & East Sussex**

**PWRC**

**MES1. Why don't the WCRA take the passports away of the said dogs until everyone is satisfied that these are pedigree dogs, why should the whole of the country suffer because of 4 dogs**

(See EA10 and G1 above)

**MES2. Will the WCRA issue passports to the progeny of the said dogs before the pedigree are proven.**

We'll cross that bridge when we come to it. It will be subjected to proper scrutiny.

**MES3. Club members are asking if another champs will be held as it's only a few people who have issues with the dogs, so everyone else has suffered.**

Many racing people have reservations about the litter. But don't have evidence. The problem is actually much more deep-seated and is borne by discontent within a shrinking, insular sport. "The dogs" are only the trigger.

**MES4. Could we have a lie detector test done on Sue, Terry Ward and Julia Cloke and then everyone should be happy as results are 99% right.**

**WCRA could pay for this or all the people involved could put their hand in their pocket to stop anymore bad feeling.**

Would be pricey and would they be believed? And then it'll only be until the next time, sadly.