



**BORDER TERRIER WELFARE
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
AGM 8 November 2020**

The year 2019/20 has been a very difficult year for everyone for so many different reasons and I will begin by expressing my sympathy and condolences to anyone reading this report who has been affected in any way by the Covid-19 Pandemic.

For those of us in Border Terrier Welfare, as in many rescue organisations, the pandemic has meant doing much the same things but often in rather different ways. Dogs have still needed to be rehomed from owners who have sought help, but the biggest impact has been an absolutely unprecedented number of people finding themselves with more time at home who have wanted to add a dog to their family. The demand for dogs has risen to such a level that the prices being asked for puppies as well as adult dogs, has doubled and in some cases trebled. This time last year £1,000 would buy a top-quality pup with a good pedigree, today we are seeing prices of up to £3,000 and sometimes more for dogs often with no recognisable pedigree and frequently without Kennel Club registration. I would point out that there are many responsible breeders who are breeding good quality puppies and asking reasonable prices, but they will generally have a waiting list. Fortunately, or unfortunately depending upon your point of view, this increase in demand is not matched by the number of dogs coming into rescues and in some instances dogs that might have come in have ended up getting sold meaning that our waiting list is also extending. Something to keep in mind; this increase in the apparent value of dogs brings with it a greater risk of them being stolen so please keep your dogs safe, make sure their Micro Chip records are up to date, and that they have a tag with current contact details.

Our BTW team have continued to rehome dogs often in very difficult circumstances whilst still managing to observe the necessary social distancing. We have had to call on owners to transport and adopters to collect dogs. Handovers and meetings have been conducted in open spaces and virtual home checks carried out by video footage. Wherever we have been able to we have made every effort to minimise the risk to our team as well as others who we have been in contact with. But risk there is and this year more than ever I want to thank all of our team, the officers and committee, our representatives, volunteers, those who have provided kennelling when needed, foster carers and everyone who has helped us in any way. My thanks to you all and well done.

Whilst on the subject of thanks I am saddened to report that Committee members Jimmi Johnston-White, Wendy Mooney, Jan Gale and area representatives Michelle Barnet and Monica Dixon have resigned from BTW. On behalf of the committee and our team we thank them for all that they have done for Border Terrier Welfare and wish them well for the future.

On a brighter note, we have four new members standing for election to the Committee at this AGM. Paula Byers will be standing as an Honorary Officer with the new title of Digital Trustee. Paula is a Border Terrier owner who has been supporting us for some time behind the scenes. Creating and maintaining our new website launched last year, Paula will continue to lend her considerable expertise, helping us make more use of cloud technology. Roger Newson, a long-time owner of Border Terriers and supporter of BTW, is taking on the revived Honorary Officer role of Co-ordinator to provide support to our very busy network of Reps. Finally, John and Vanessa Jessop, again BT owners and long-time supporters of BTW, will become members of the Committee. John and Vanessa bring with them a number of skills having been involved with fostering five BTW dogs. In addition, they are both very keen on training, particularly with reactive dogs. Vanessa has a considerable knowledge of dietary matters and allergic reactions.

With regard to health matters in the breed, there has been some concern raised regarding hereditary cataracts and the Breed Health Group (BHG) have asked for anyone whose dog has developed this condition to report it in order that they may get a clearer idea of the level of prevalence. Sadly, the Animal Health Trust based in Suffolk closed earlier this year due to financial difficulties, it is hoped that the genetic testing and research service will transfer to a new facility. Gall Bladder Mucocele (GBM) still appears to be prevalent and any owners who think that their dog may have the condition should ensure that their vet is aware and refer them to the BHG Website. Please go to the Breed Health Group Website for further information on this or any other BT health issues:

<https://borderterrierhealth.org.uk/>

Finally, events and fund raising. You will be aware that we had to cancel both our Mid-Year Event and AGM / Funday events. We have been able to hold our BT100 Weekend celebration online and our AGM is being held virtually, in an effort to stay connected to our community. Most of the Border walks had to be cancelled, so there have been no club shows for us to attend with the Welfare stall. In all the outlook has been bleak, however our supporters have found other ways to raise very welcome funds enabling us to carry on with our work. A huge thank you to everyone who has contributed in any way, your help is greatly appreciated.

Lastly don't forget to order your BTW 2021 Calendar now on sale via our website:

<http://borderterrierwelfare.co.uk/shop/>

Tony Wrenn

Chairman

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A brief update from Paula on our digital progress:

With the launch of the website last year, we have continued the review of the Border Terrier Welfare systems and processes behind the scenes and are working towards moving the data to the cloud so that BTW can be more effective at communicating across our team of Committee Members, Reps and Volunteers. It is important that the charity is compliant with GDPR and other legislation, so updates will include further improvements on this too.

While a lot of the changes are behind the scenes, you will see some of them, including the recent launch of our webstore, which allows you to purchase our 2021 Calendar and we hope to add more products to it soon. Our webstore received over 100 orders in the first day of being live, so please bear with us while we get these orders out to you. All funds from the website will be used to support the work Border Terrier Welfare, so you know your purchases are doing good.

Analysis of BTW website data supports what an incredibly challenging and busy time it has been since the start of the Coronavirus pandemic. Visits to our website are up over 200% since the start of the first lockdown and are still increasing, with our most visited pages being About Border Terriers and BTW Help.

BTW aim to inform people on the breed, so we hope people are doing their research on the About BTs page prior to getting a Border to avoid them becoming a BTW statistics of the future. The increase in traffic to our BTW Help webpage is reflected in the increase in help requests we are receiving and the huge volume of adoption requests we have received.