



winter

Edition

IWHG



Patron: Trudie Sumner

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*Welcome* to our Winter Newsletter.

Even though Covid has been less of a worry in 2022, we still have to stay vigilant. Now that 2022 is coming to an end, many people are facing hardship as the price of everyday items keeps rising. The war in Ukraine has also given us a lot to think about; the plight of the people there including many Irish Wolfhound owners and breeders, and the impact on the UK and the rest of the world.

People are helping in so many ways, including the Irish Wolfhound Community, and we want to say a huge "well done" to Mandy Addington for taking up the challenge to act as a channel for those who would like to donate to the "Funds for Victoria" and, whilst this fundraising is ongoing, the total amount raised to date is £31,013.38, not including the recent sale of Jigsaws and Coats which is currently adding another £2,000 and more.

With the help of veterinary professionals, the IWHG ensures that our guides and advice offer the most recent information for owners in case of health problems.

We have recently discussed pneumonia with Prof Mark Dunning and Angela Body as well as how best to ensure the guidance we provide for veterinary surgeons carries enough weight to allow hounds to be treated as soon as possible.

Thank you to those of you who responded to our FB post and sent our Health Group secretary the requested information which we have forwarded to Prof Mark Dunning. Mark is arranging online meetings to discuss Pneumonia with the veterinary professionals as another way to ensure the correct protocol is followed.

Mark Dunning has provided an update on the contact he has had with veterinarians within the UK and around the world. He was pleased to report that he has had quite a few replies about the veterinary working group.

Now that the Christmas and New Year break is over he hopes to progress things further and his expectation is that he will get many more to be interested in sharing thoughts on this subject.

Please continue sending us contact information of vets who have treated pneumonia or are interested in learning more.

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If you have had a hound with pneumonia and you haven't already done so, please complete the survey and attach the treatment schedule used by your veterinary surgeon. It is critical that we continue to gather information on this condition so please complete the study.

<https://forms.gle/AZJgu3CQUly8AJW86>

Our IWHG Heart Screening sessions have been well attended during 2022, and we appreciate the support of our hosts and cardiologists. The Heart Screening fee has remained the same since 2021, and we intend to keep it the same for 2023.

On top of all this, we are following with some interest the situation unfolding in Germany where our breed is included among those that are not allowed to exhibit without certain veterinary examinations. We will keep everyone updated when we know more or indeed if this spreads to other countries. It is unclear what the ultimate outcome of the situation will be, as there appears to be challenges being made to the new laws, but we cannot sit idly by. It will be up to the international community to respond on behalf of our breed if these laws remain unreasonable.

As you are all aware the IWHG is involved with, or helps to coordinate, various research projects and we will continue to update everyone and let you know where we need your help. So please keep an eye on the Health Group Facebook page and website for the latest news.

Take a look at those listed at the end of the Newsletter and if you can, please contribute.

Thank you.

We hope you enjoy reading this Edition.

*IWHG*

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When it comes to mandatory heart screening, one question that is asked is whether the Kennel Club can make it a requirement to test before breeding - and thus force breeders to test. This sounds easy doesn't it, but it is far from it.

Any KC approved scheme would be operated by the Veterinary Cardiovascular Society, and the only breed currently with a scheme approved by both the VCS and the KC is the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel. That tells us a lot about how complicated it can be to formalise a scheme such as this. But the Kennel Club are keen on incorporating more cardiac schemes, providing there is a sound science basis behind them.

To agree a screening program under the VCS, participating cardiologists must agree on what is 'normal' and 'abnormal'. The Cavalier breed has a single heart issue to be tested for, as does the Boxer - whose scheme has been discussed and reviewed for some time, but has not yet been formalised and agreed.

There can be multiple combination issues associated with the Irish Wolfhound, so it becomes even harder to define what is 'normal' for our breed and set parameters for an official VCS scheme. Cardiologists willing to participate in the VCS breed scheme are another issue.

Breed bodies are hoping to work towards it, but realistically it may not happen for some considerable time.

Meanwhile, we are fortunate to have our in-house Heart Screening Scheme with cardiologists who have supported us for many years. In relation to any testing being mandatory before breeding it should be noted that the Code of Conduct adopted by the UK based Breed Clubs, point 20 states that all Members:-

Agree that all hounds used for breeding take part annually in a heart testing scheme approved by The Irish Wolfhound Club: the minimum requirement being examination by stethoscope, ECG and ultrasound scan. Members are reminded that the Irish Wolfhound Health Group website provides a facility to publish these results.

There is no requirement for someone who is not a member of a club to test, although anyone with an Irish Wolfhound, whether a member or not, is welcome to test their dogs through the current breed scheme.



## IRISH WOLFHOUND HEALTH GROUP REPORT & ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2021

The accounts for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 have now been approved and published on our website [EOY Accounts](#),

At the end of 2021 the balance sheet stood at £43,370 (2020: £44,747).

This comprised:

- the Project Development Fund with a balance of £15,294 (2020: £16,671)
- the Osteosarcoma Fund with a balance of £10,576 (2020: £10,576)
- the Pneumonia Fund with a balance of £2,000 (2020: £2,000)
- the Heart Testing Scanner Fund with a balance of £15,000 (2020: £15,000)
- the Administration Account with a balance of £500 (2020: £500)

During the year, a transfer of £1,125 was made from Project Development Fund to the Pneumonia Fund to top up the Pneumonia Fund to £2,000 following research expenditure of £1,125 during 2021. £136 was allocated from the Project Development Fund to the Administration Account to top up the Administration Account to £500. A further £1,650 was allocated to the Heart Testing Account to cover the cost of Super Veterans' heart testing.

Regional Heart Testing ending December 2021 realised an overall deficit of £1,218 in the year due to the increase in costs as a result of Covid-19 not being fully covered by the increase in session fees. A subsidy of £1,650 was provided from the Project Development Fund for Super Veterans heart testing, which in 2021 continued to be free of charge.

The funding priorities identified for the Project Development Fund for 2022 are as follows:

- Allowance for Super-Veteran Heart Testing subsidies 2022 - set aside £1,500

We would like to thank our fundraisers, donors and supporters for helping to generate donations of £3,927 in 2021 – a stellar achievement especially given the ongoing impact of Covid-19 during the year. Direct donations amounted to £380 with a further £578 generated by Easyfundraising donations. Mandy Addington raised the amazing sum of £2,949 from the sale of calendars and cards, spring raffle and the sale of Irish Wolfhound Community merchandise. We would also like to express our continued gratitude to all those who donate, either by monthly standing order, direct donations, Easyfundraising or supporting the fundraisers who do a fantastic job in raising such tremendous sums for the Group.

**Steven Ritchie**  
**IWHG Treasurer**  
**December 2022**

Follow these links to contribute to the IWHG

[Easyfundraising](#)

[Donations](#)

[Loose Change tins](#)



A few years back while out walking the dogs one of the boys stopped for a pee - nothing unusual about that - except this time his urine was black.



We were horrified. He wasn't showing any signs of illness, but obviously this wasn't right. It was a Sunday, so it was out of hours, and we rushed to the emergency vet. They diagnosed a severe UTI and prescribed antibiotics – so all was well, we thought.

Since the infection was cleared fairly quickly with antibiotic treatment, the urine no longer looked black but instead looked like fresh blood. Nothing showed on tests at the vet to explain this and fearing something more sinister was going on we were referred to the Willows in Solihull.

While there they carried out kidney scans, and these all came back all clear, which was a huge relief, but did not explain why he was still passing blood.



The vet suggested that maybe the tiny blood vessels that act as the filter system in the kidneys had somehow become enlarged during the infection. This allowed blood to pass through when it normally would not, causing a condition called haematuria. As luck would have it, he was aware that there were research cases in the US where a drug called Fortekor had been tested to treat this condition and the results were positive.

Fortekor is not prescribed for conditions affecting the kidneys. However, since the discussion was turning to surgical solutions if medication did not resolve the problem, we thought it would do no harm to give it a try. We were told it would likely be a treatment for life if it worked.



The bleeding stopped very quickly after starting on 40mg daily for his body weight. Although we had every intention of continuing the medication, we ran out of it four weeks in, and just before the weekend.

By the time fresh supplies arrived, four days had passed during which no medication had been given, and no blood had been observed in his urine. We decided not to continue the medication to see what would happen, and he never had a recurrence for the rest of his life.

Since the only chance that we had to see a result was an enforced break in the treatment, we don't know at what point in the preceding four weeks the treatment did the job.

In some cases, Fortekor isn't successful - and there are other treatments - but if your dog ever suffers from haematuria, it's definitely worth talking to your vet about this treatment and perhaps asking them to contact Willows Referrals for advice.





The heart testing scheme welcomed 6 cardiologists for 2022, Serena Brownlie-Sykes, Angela Bodey, Sheena Milne, Dave Fisher, Sue Roberts and Dave Dickson. We are totally indebted to our cardiologists who provide a professional service when undertaking these sessions for us and the benefit of the breed. Anne Vaudin continued to undertake the daily running of the scheme and has done an amazing job organising the session planners during the year. 2022 saw an increase in price from £50 to £75 which was needed to continue to cover costs, taking into account increased Cardiologist fees.

In total we ran 19 ½ sessions through the UK. The sessions were split between our 6 cardiologists as follows:

Cardiologist	Number of Sessions	Attendees
Angela Bodey	8	102
Serena Brownlie-Sykes	1 ½	20
Dave Fisher	5	58
Sheena Milne	3	30
Dave Dickson	1	16
Sue Roberts	1	15
Total		241

In total there were 241 attendees, some of these included second bookings for the same hound. There was a healthy attendance of Super Veterans, 13 attendees. Hounds aged over 8 years were again able to have their first test of the year subsidised by the Health Group.

One session was planned for Anglesey but unfortunately had to be rescheduled moving 15 attendees to a date in 2023.

Sadly not all the sessions were full, which does have an impact on whether the scheme can break even and cover its costs. Despite our increased fee of £75 per hound aged under 8 years of age, the scheme sadly ran at a loss for the year.

In order to continue to make the scheme sustainable and to ensure we can cover the costs, the first step would be to ensure that sessions are full, this is YOUR opportunity to take advantage of a drastically reduced fee for a 3-part heart screen. For a private consultation and 3-part screen, an individual fee can cost between £200 - £550. Our costs are dictated to us by cardiologist's charges, all of which vary, however the Health Group are keen to try and keep our charges to owners as low as is reasonably possible.

Angela Bodey continues to be the custodian of the Health Group scanner, The Health Group are very much indebted to Angela for ensuring that it is regularly serviced and ready for action.

Moving forward into 2023 The Health Group will continue to subsidise the cost of the first session per annum for all Super Veterans and the Irish Wolfhound Rescue Trust are again able to cover the cost for any Irish Wolfhounds Rescued through the Trust. Dates will be published direct to the website when confirmed. We will still be using the online booking form, which has proven a great success and makes the booking process much easier and more efficient. The link for booking and dates is :

[www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/dates-and-locations-.html](http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/dates-and-locations-.html)

A reminder that the Health Group have facilitated the publishing of heart testing results. This is voluntary but a useful tool to have access to, if you wish to add your results from any year please use the link : [www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/publication-of-results.html](http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/publication-of-results.html)

On a final note, Wendy Reeves will be taking over as the new Heart Screening Coordinator in 2023. After nearly 8 years I will be stepping down from the role. It has been a pleasure being a part of and taking an active role in promoting and expanding the Regional Scheme. It is heart-warming to see how much passion you all have for the breed and its heart health.

Thank you to you all for your continued support of the scheme, which is for the benefit of our beloved Irish Wolfhounds.

Wendy Heather,  
Irish Wolfhound Heart Screening Co-ordinator

## Welcome to new members -

Kirsten Bruce



My name is Kirsten Bruce and I have adored wolfhounds for many years. I looked after a lovely girl for a weekend many, many years ago. Of course that was it! I fell in love with the breed and always dreamt I would own a wolfhound. It wasn't until six years ago that I was in a position to make that dream a reality. I am currently owned by two gorgeous girls.

As a newcomer to the breed, I was honoured to be asked to get involved with the health group. It is my dearest wish that my girls should live a long and healthy life. I would love to be able to do something (no matter how small) to help the breed.

I do show my girls so hope to have the chance to meet some of you in the future.



Have you booked your place on our latest Webinar?



Please email  
[secretary@iwhealthgroup.co.uk](mailto:secretary@iwhealthgroup.co.uk)

**JOIN US FOR AN EVENING WITH**

**DR SUE ARMSTRONG**

MA VetMB VetMfHom CertIAVH MRCVS RSHom

Sue studied homeopathy at the Royal London Homeopathic Hospital and with the Homeopathic Professionals Teaching Group (HPTG) in Oxford. She obtained VetMfHom status in 1996. After further study with Jeremy Sherr, Rajan Sankaran and others she gained her RSHom status in 2007 and currently has a human homeopathic practice in Thirsk, North Yorkshire. Sue went through teacher training with the Homeopathic Professionals Teaching Group (HPTG) and then became a partner of HPTG and Director of Education of the British Academy of Veterinary Homeopathy (BAVH). She is past president of the British Association of Homeopathic Veterinary Surgeons (BAHVS) and The Canadian College of Animal Homeopathic Medicine (CAHM).

Discussions will focus on autoimmune disease and some of its associated conditions and a better understanding of these conditions after Covid.

**SATURDAY 28TH JANUARY 2023 @ 6.30 P.M. UK TIME**

Online Via Zoom

To Register please email  
[secretary@iwhealthgroup.co.uk](mailto:secretary@iwhealthgroup.co.uk)

**WEBINAR**



Irish Wolfhound  
Health Group

# How Can You Contribute to Health Research in Irish Wolfhounds?

Dr Maura Lyons, PhD, IWHG Research Co-ordinator

The IWHG is involved with or coordinating various different research projects in Irish Wolfhounds, many are still ongoing and need your help. This is a list of the current projects. Take a read through the following list and see if you and your hound can help contribute to research helping to maintain and improve the health status of the breed.

## Nottingham University Osteosarcoma Longitudinal Project – Dr Mark Dunning

We have around 900 wolfhounds recruited for this study and currently NVS have said they don't need any further swabs. For those dogs already swabbed for this project **please remember to complete the health update surveys annually.**

<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/nottingham-university.html>

For anyone who has experienced bone cancer in their dogs in the past, whether the dog was swabbed or not, there is a Treatment Survey to determine which treatments are offered by primary care vets and which are most successful. There are also two further surveys, one for wolfhound owners who have decided to amputate for reasons other than osteosarcoma and also owners who have never experienced either amputation or osteosarcoma.

**Survey 1** – please complete this survey if you have experience of amputation in your wolfhound but it was for a reason other than bone cancer: <http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/IW-amputation>

**Survey 2** – Please complete this survey if you have never experienced either bone cancer/osteosarcoma or amputation in your wolfhound: [http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/canine\\_amputation1](http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/canine_amputation1)

### If your swabbed wolfhound gets a confirmed diagnosis of bone cancer

Whilst it is hoped that no wolfhound ever suffers from bone cancer again, if your dog is swabbed and gets a confirmed diagnosis of bone cancer, please get in touch with Mark to see how you can help. This is a large project with many angles and full details can be found on the webpage link above.

## Nottingham Heart Disease Research – Prof. Malcolm Cobb and Dr Serena Brownlie-Sykes

By taking part in the IWHG Regional Heart Testing scheme you are contributing to this ongoing project, possibly the longest running veterinary research project ever! The results of your wolfhound's heart screening are recorded in the database and used by the team at Nottingham University to unravel the specifics of wolfhound heart disease. To book a slot and contribute to this valuable research whilst also looking after your own dogs heart please find a session closest to you and get in touch with Anne Vaudin.

<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/dates-and-locations-.html>

## Nottingham Pneumonia Study – Dr Angela Bodey & Dr Mark Dunning

If your wolfhound has ever experienced pneumonia or any other type of respiratory disease or any type of nasal disease (snotty nose) we are collecting case studies so that our researchers may evaluate the most

effective treatments and devise a recommended treatment protocol. We are very aware that wolfhounds are still dying of pneumonia, so please do all you can to help out, if you experience pneumonia with your wolfhound fill out the survey and let Angela know what treatment your dog received and what the outcome was. Please see all details and fill out the survey;

<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/pneumonia.html>

## FCE "Puppy Paralysis" Research – Caroline Sheppard

Irish Wolfhounds appear to suffer from a unique form of FCE, one which affects them in puppyhood, which is why this condition is also known as puppy paralysis. It is hoped that by studying the experience of wolfhounds affected by FCE, this research could determine what causes it and the most appropriate treatment for a favourable outcome. Ellen Kroll has written a comprehensive article about FCE which is available on our webpage. If your wolfhound has experienced any form of puppy paralysis or FCE please fill out the survey.

[www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/puppy-paralysis.html](http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/puppy-paralysis.html)

## Livershunt/Epilepsy & PRA Reporting Survey – Dr Maura Lyons

This is a simple form to record incidences of Liver shunt, Epilepsy and PRA. This enables the IWHG to monitor the prevalence of these diseases within the IW population. If you have experienced these conditions in your wolfhound, please fill out the survey with your experiences.

<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/liver-shunt.html>

## Dentition Survey – Caroline Sheppard

Caroline has been collecting examples of jaw growth in wolfhound puppies to provide evidence concerning the eventual alignment of teeth in the adult wolfhound. The IW is on the KC Breed Watch list for instances of misaligned canines, the IWHG feel that if this is seen in a growing puppy there is every chance the condition could correct itself – either if left or with some targeted therapy. If you have experienced puppies with teeth issues, please contact Caroline to share your experiences.

<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/about-the-study.html>

## Veteran Survey – Caroline Sheppard

The IWHG would like to hear about your veteran wolfhounds. If you have a wolfhound that has lived to over 7 years then please fill out the questionnaire. It includes details about lifestyle and environment to see if there is a correlation between any of these factors and longevity in wolfhounds. You can find the details and a link to the survey on the webpage:

<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/iwhg-veteran-study.html>

## NVS Bloat Incidence Survey – Matthew Keane

Study investigating the factors influencing bloating and the development and outcome of GDV in Irish Wolfhounds in the UK. This project is based on owner reported incidences of bloat and GDV in their wolfhounds and comparison to dogs unaffected by bloating. Please complete the survey here...

<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/health-surveys.html>

## Megaesophagus (ME) in Puppies

Although it is not believed that this condition is particularly common in the breed in comparison to other issues which affect our puppies i.e., Livershunts and FCE, there is sufficient interest to have generated an opportunity for research with Professor Jared Jaffey at Midwestern University College of Veterinary Medicine. It would be appreciated if anyone who has experienced ME in a puppy could contact Prof. Jaffey and provide details in order that an indication of frequency might be obtained. If anyone has an affected puppy being managed by diet and would be prepared to submit a blood sample for the ongoing genetic research, again please contact Prof Jaffey and he will send instructions to your vet regarding preparation of the sample.

Contact details are Jared Jaffey DVM, MS, DACVIM (SAIM), Assistant Professor, Midwestern University College of Veterinary Medicine. Email : [jjaffe@midwestern.edu](mailto:jjaffe@midwestern.edu)

## BetterBred Genetic Diversity Project – Dr Maura Lyons

This project is designed to establish the genetic diversity of our breed, which in turn could help us maintain genetic diversity in the future by identifying dogs that carry less common genes and avoiding future bottlenecks.

We believe this could be a very important project given that we know our breed has a limited gene pool, but to what extent is unclear. The diversity test when complete, will offer a breeder one more tool in their quest to breed healthy typical sound hounds.

If you would like to add your dog to the study, If you would like to add your dog to the programme, the price of a test is currently held at \$50 and can be obtained [HERE](#).

## Congenital Blindness Survey – Jean Timmins

From time to time we hear of a puppy who was blind or had some degree of sight loss from birth. It does not appear to be something that is particularly common, but we would really appreciate hearing from anyone who has experienced congenital blindness in puppies and hear what diagnosis they were given and also how they and the hound coped living with the condition to allow a full and active life.

<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/health-surveys.html>

## Quick Links to Surveys -

[PNEUMONIA](#)

[PUPPY PARALYSIS - Fibrocartilaginous embolism \(FCE\)](#)

[BONE CANCER TREATMENT – \(Osteosarcoma\)](#)

[BLOAT - Gastric Dilatation/Volvulus \(GDV\)](#)

[DENTITION](#)

[LIVERSHUNT/PRA/EPILEPSY](#)

[VETERAN](#)

THANK YOU!

To stay in touch with everything health-wise:

Please sign up for notifications of announcements on our website here,

<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/home.ht>

## Publications & Guides



### DOWNLOAD FROM THE WEBSITE HERE

[Guide to Buying an Irish Wolfhound Puppy](#)

[Breed Guide - Introducing your new Irish Wolfhound](#)

[Guide to anaesthesia](#)

[Neutering factsheet](#)

[Bloat \(gastric dilatation volvulus, GDV\)](#)

[Puppy paralysis \(fibrocartilaginous embolism, FCE\)](#)

[Heart disease \(dilated cardiomyopathy, atrial fibrillation\)](#)

[Megaesophagus](#)

[Pneumonia for owners](#)

[Pneumonia for vets](#)

[Progressive retinal atrophy \(PRA\)](#)

[Dentition Guide](#)

[Heart Testing Sessions Current Dates and Locations Available here](#)

[Heart Test Booking Form to book a session – click here](#)

[Livershunts Testing Forms](#)



## Useful Downloads



The Irish Wolfhound Database is a free to use database of all Irish Wolfhounds of which its estimated around 98% of all hounds ever registered are in the database. The database is valuable to breeders but also of great importance to researchers that have projects involving the Wolfhound, providing them with a huge resource and pool of information to use and support their work.

### *How can you help?*

The database when used for research is only as good as the information you provide, so if you have records of any hounds you have owned, bred, or puppies you have sold, please do consider enter the age and cause of death for each dog, your help is invaluable.

Email information [directly](#) here

## Contacts ..

Chair            Jean Timmins            [chairman@iwhealthgroup.co.uk](mailto:chairman@iwhealthgroup.co.uk)

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Consultant Veterinary Surgeon:

Ian Finney DVM MRCVS

### [Health Group Website](#)



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Irish Wolfhound Health Group

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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/IWhealthgroup/>



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