

GERMAN SHEPHERD DOG - KENNEL CLUB - THE REALITY

by
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The Health & Welfare of Pedigree Dogs – and the Kennel Club Relative to the German Shepherd Dog

The Kennel Club should answer the following question:

Would the Kennel Club register a blind and deaf purebred litter of puppies from parents with severe dysplasia, severe elbow dysplasia, epilepsy and haemophilia?

The PUBLIC has a right to know the answer!

The Kennel Club make income from REGISTRATIONS their top priority, even over the desperate need to introduce fundamental, meaningful and effective measures to considerably improve the health and welfare of pedigree dogs. This is the main reason significant and sustainable improvements in the health and welfare of pedigree dogs will not be attainable through the Kennel Club.

The Kennel Club do not even include strict identification requirements for entry into licensed shows, and possibly worse still, exhibits do not have to meet any satisfactory health screening minimum requirements. Even the CRUFTS best in show winner, never mind any other CRUFTS winner, may suffer from a number of hereditary diseases, which could be, or indeed may have been identified by health screening.

With the current priorities of the Kennel Club the health and welfare of pedigree dogs would definitely be best served outside of the Kennel Club. You only have to carefully consider the manner in which the Kennel Club have dealt with the numerically large and very popular breed, the German Shepherd Dog, over the last year or so, in respect of its health and welfare. Of necessity this is a summary, which I hope will give the reader a clear picture of what the Kennel Club actually fails to do for the health and welfare of German Shepherd Dogs. This can obviously be mirrored across all other breeds.

German Shepherd Dog (GSD)

I have absolutely no doubts the health and welfare of the GSD would be best served by the GSD National Breed Clubs that are World Union of Shepherd Dog Club (WUSV) members, the GSD League and BAGSD, who along with the GSD Breed Council which represents all GSD breed clubs within the United Kingdom.

These respected organisations joined together in 2008 as the GSD Partnership (GSDP) and jointly agreed a Planned Improvement Programme (PIP). This consists of a list of improvements for the health and welfare of GSD which have been purposefully side stepped by the Kennel Club.

In November 2008 the Kennel Club refused to have the PIP on the agenda at a joint meeting with the GSDP. Despite further meetings with the Kennel Club in April 2009 and

August 2009, no progress was made. Public statements by the Kennel Club appeared to be designed with the objective of derailing the joint discussions, further indicated when the Kennel Club stubbornly failed to jointly agree the minutes of the August 2009 meeting, insisting that their version was correct and stubbornly refusing to compromise on the difference of opinion, so that joint discussions could continue.

All of this culminated in the Kennel Club, completely bypassing the GSDP and returning to their customary dictatorial position with the GSD breed clubs, by discontinuing dialogue with the GSDP and instead issuing a Press Statement in the first week of January 2010. Their original stance to withhold the allocation of Challenge Certificates to the GSD breed for 2012, was now followed by a Kennel Club requirement for individual GSD breed clubs to sign an **"undertaking"** in order for them to be allocated Challenge Certificates. A clear policy of divide and conquer, alongside a clear policy of suppressing the GSDP Planned Improvement Programme (PIP), alongside their blatant determination to continue making REGISTRATION income their TOP PRIORITY. In addition comments within the **"undertaking"** are clearly politically designed to give the impression that the GSD Partnership is not seriously interested in the health and welfare of the GSD. NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH. The Kennel Club are the real failure in this regard. You only have to read the GSDP Planned improvement Programme (PIP) to fully understand that.

This was still not enough for the Kennel Club, they realised that many of the GSD breed clubs were attracted to the German system of exhibiting their GSD. They also knew of the popularity of the GSD BRITISH SIEGER EVENT which had been held annually for the last five years. They also knew this event was held under the German system, through the WUSV member clubs, **and included identification and health screening criteria within the entry conditions.** Something the Kennel Club shows seriously lack. Fearing a real alternative show scene could and would be developed for the GSD, the Kennel Club included the following clause within the **"undertaking"**.

Clause 9. "The Club confirms that it will act in good faith with the Kennel Club on all matters including confirmation that it will not, without the express permission of the Kennel Club, run any events under the rules or regulations of any organisation other than the Kennel Club."

Why this clause has been included in an undertaking primarily and supposedly aimed at improving the health and welfare of the GSD, is open to speculation.

I believe it has been included to stifle GSD progress within the UK through WUSV events.

The Kennel Club clearly illustrate their failure to use the powerful influence the dog shows can exert on breeders, something which Professor Bateson highlights in his recent report, in their reply to a GSD breeder when they were asked the following question:

"We are currently Exhibiting a GSD with a hip score of 3-47=50 (authors note – this is severe hip dysplasia). We would be very grateful if you could please clarify for us that if

a judge is aware of our dog's hip score, should they penalise him in the show ring although he is very sound and displays excellent movement?"

The Kennel Club replied: *"In answer to your query, judges are only required to consider whether a dog is suffering from a visible condition which adversely affects its health or welfare. Therefore any knowledge which the judge may have with regard to the health status of the dog, such as its hip score, should not be taken into account when judging, and it would not be appropriate to base any judging decisions on such information."*

This Kennel Club answer is very revealing, first of all their use of the word visible clearly illustrates their "out of sight – out of mind" attitude towards health screening information. It also reveals their unwillingness to place health screening results as a condition of entry for Kennel Club licensed shows. Something which is disgraceful and which clearly shows they also place show entries above the health and welfare of pedigree dogs, second only to their first priority of safeguarding their registration income. This is completely the opposite of what they should be doing, and clearly reveals that the Kennel Club, in respect of the health and welfare of pedigree dogs, are "unfit for purpose".

I would ask, what "undertaking" regarding health and welfare, are the Kennel Club requesting from each and every pedigree dog breeder who wants to REGISTER A LITTER with them?

Remember the Kennel Club's effectiveness over implementing significant changes to bring about major improvements in the health and welfare of pedigree dogs is seriously compromised by their clear priority of protecting and maximising their REGISTRATION income and the Kennel Club show entries. This could not be made any clearer than seeing their failure to make any progress with the GSDP and their excellent, health and welfare, Planned Improvement Programme. The PIP would have required the Kennel Club to change its priorities, and it is unwilling, and apparently incapable of doing so.

The GSD Partnership (GSDP), and indeed the World Union of Shepherd Dog Clubs (WUSV), is well aware of a degree of unsoundness in the hindquarters of some German Shepherds. This is neither correct nor welcome, but can only be overcome by an educated judging system being put in place, alongside an awareness campaign throughout the GSD breed.

The reader should be in no doubt that the GSD League of Great Britain (WUSV member); the oldest and most influential GSD Club, will continue to take every step possible to ensure significant improvement in the health and welfare of the GSD, in line with the Planned Improvement Programme (PIP) which was initiated by them. I am also confident they will be strongly supported by many of the other GSD Clubs and the WUSV, who all share a genuine interest in the future health and welfare of our magnificent breed.

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VIDEX GSD

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