



IWHG Annual Report 2022

We are pleased to provide an update on the IWHG activities and the ongoing research projects. Our focus has been to ensure we have cardiologists willing to work with us to ensure Heart Screening sessions continue and that projects which carry more urgency are progressed at pace. We are indebted to our large international network of experienced vets and individuals, as well as researchers and veterinary academics with whom we can call upon to give of their time, experience, and knowledge for the benefit of us all.

Heart Screening

The heart screening 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.

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

Coupled with an increase in cardiologist fees, a lack of bookings for some of the sessions meant the scheme failed to break even and cover its running costs despite the increase to £75.00 per hound.

If the scheme is to be sustainable and cover its running costs in the future, it must ensure that sessions are full. This is your chance to get a 3-part heart screen for a drastically reduced fee. It can cost between £250 and £650 for a private consultation and three-part screen so our breed is very fortunate to have this opportunity for heart screening.

We pay the running costs of the Scheme based on the charges of the cardiologists, which vary; the hosts who offer their premises for the sessions do so voluntarily, and for this we are very grateful. Although the running cost of the scheme determines the annual test fee, the Health Group is determined to keep costs to owners as low as possible.

If you are a breeder, please tell your puppy owners about the scheme and encourage them to have their hounds tested.

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

A reminder that the Health Group has facilitated the publishing of heart screening results. If you wish to add your results from any year, please use the link: www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/publication-of-results.html

After nearly 8 years Wendy Heather has stepped down from the Heart Screening Co-ordinator role. It is heart-warming to see how much passion the Irish Wolfhound owners have for the breed and its heart health and Wendy Heather has felt it a pleasure to be part of the scheme actively promoting and expanding it regionally. The IWHG would like to thank Wendy Heather for her dedication and work over the 8 years leaving the framework for Wendy Reeves to take over as the new Heart Screening Coordinator in 2023.

It is worth reminding everyone that the IWHG Heart Screening sessions will not provide a diagnosis but an indication that, where necessary, an owner should seek further veterinary advice.

Funding

We would like to say a big thank you once again to all our fundraisers and supporters, we sincerely appreciate all your efforts and generosity. The support and commitment from those who raise funds for Irish Wolfhound related causes, of which the Health Group is a regular beneficiary, is amazing.

Easy-fundraising continues to be a good source of donations with a total of £646 received in 2022, so thank you everyone who raises donations in this way. You can check out "how to" on our website or by using the following link <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/iwhg/>.

Mandy Addington raised £1,175 through the Annual Raffle in March 2022 which was split between a number of breed bodies and to support Victoria Bolkina's relief work in Ukraine. The IWHG would like to congratulate Mandy and all those involved in the fundraising efforts and to say a heartfelt thank you for the IWHG donation.

We are also very grateful to those of you who donate regularly by standing order or by just a one-off payment. We know these are challenging times financially and we would like to express our gratitude to everyone who raises funds for the group - no matter how big or small - as every penny is very much appreciated.

All our income is from donations that we receive, and we would 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. The accounts for the year to 31st December 2022 will be published once they have been audited.

Projects

Bronchopneumonia

We see this as one of the most critical projects currently ongoing. Getting the message out to the veterinary profession that pneumonia in the Irish Wolfhound is recognisable, and importantly treatable but that is time critical in terms of the outcome of this condition.

Veterinary Surgeon and IWHG Heart Screening cardiologist Dr Angela Bodey and Professor Mark Dunning assisted in updating the Pneumonia Guides and these are available on the website. The Guide has been approved by Nottingham University and carries their badge and provides a detailed look at the condition plus factors which can affect its development and outcome.

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

It is vital that this Guide is available to all vets, and we recently asked our FB members to support us in our efforts by forwarding the Guide and IWHG letter to their vets. The letter accompanying the Guide invited vets to take part in a Teams meeting with Prof Mark Dunning. In conjunction with the letter being distributed the IWHG has also provided contact details of veterinaries to Prof Dunning to enable him to make direct contact with them. Thank you to those of you who responded to our request for help which we received from around the world. Mark is arranging online meetings to discuss Pneumonia with the veterinary professionals, and he is pleased that he has had many replies about the veterinary working group.

If you haven't done so already, please send us contact information of vets who have treated pneumonia or are interested in learning more and we will forward on to Prof Dunning. If you can help to get our Guide distributed, please contact secretary@iwhealthgroup.co.uk for a copy of the letter and Guide.

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.

The University of Cambridge (AHT) – Osteosarcoma

Dr Maura Lyons has continued to have conversations with the University of Cambridge on the progress of this project following the demise of the AHT (Animal Health Trust) in 2020.

The project has sequenced in full, 6 wolfhound genomes, 5 from osteosarcoma affected dogs and one from an older hound unaffected by osteosarcoma. These six genomes are due to be made publicly available on the ENA (European Nucleotide Archive) sequence database. <https://www.ebi.ac.uk/ena/browser/search>. We will provide an update as soon as we have more details.

Betterbred

In 2019, the Betterbred project launched under the direction of Dr Maura Lyons. The project aims to establish a baseline of genetic diversity for our breed and developing a tool for breeders to maintain the diversity which we have. In 2021 the Irish Wolfhound Health Group decided to encourage participation by sponsoring a total of 26 diversity tests from hounds identified as being as distantly related as possible from the hounds whose diversity has already been tested and stored in the database. There are currently 77 public dogs in their database, 21 sponsored by IWHG, with a further 5 test kits the IWHG will need to allocate. The important aspect is that tests should be for dogs which are least related to the dogs already taking part in the scheme. The aim is to cover the entire range of diversity that currently exists within the Irish Wolfhound breed population. The process from submission / invitation stage to the owner carrying out the swab, putting it in the post back to the US is quite straightforward. We will monitor the progress of this project and keep everyone updated.

Dentition

It is very common for Irish Wolfhound puppies in the 6-12 months age bracket to experience rapid changes in their dental occlusions as they grow. The breed has a single point on the Kennel Clubs Breed Watch list covering the position of canine teeth in all dogs exhibited. The IWHG is preparing a letter to send to The Kennel Club hopefully to obtain acceptance that the breed watch point should be amended so that the Mouth & Dental rule doesn't to puppies up to 12 months old. Caroline Sheppard is preparing information and photographic evidence to support this request. Going forward, we believe it can be demonstrated that some hounds' teeth and jaws are still developing during their time in Junior, so we will be asking the Kennel Club to consider excluding the ages of 12-18 months as well. We will keep everyone updated with our progress.

As part of the ongoing research it is hoped that we can identify whether genetics play a significant part in the dental development of Irish Wolfhounds, as opposed to the known hereditary factors which apply more specifically to jaw formation. This would eventually enable breeders to make more informed choices when considering the blending of certain pedigrees.

If you have a puppy where your vet has told you it has a mouth fault, please consider completing the survey on our website. If you are being advised to put your puppy through surgery, please do not hesitate to contact Caroline Sheppard, who can offer guidance to help you make a fully informed decision. <http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/about-the-study.html>

Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs)

This project is based on the database of heart screening results collected by Serena Brownlie-Sykes over 30 years of testing our wolfhounds and curated by Malcolm Cobb at the University of Nottingham. We will continue to work towards progressing this and will continue to keep you updated with any future findings.

GDV/Bloat

This is still considered a very serious condition in Irish Wolfhounds so is well worth participating in the survey. <http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/health-surveys.html>

Livershunt/Epilepsy & PRA Reporting Survey

This survey 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>

FCE / Puppy Paralysis

The IWHG relaunched the FCE Study in our 2021 Winter Newsletter. Caroline Sheppard heads this important study. It is often practical guidance that is needed immediately to get a puppy up and moving when they are diagnosed with this condition. It is all about learning from what has been done which helps a puppy and sometimes even understanding what things were done which weren't helpful. We will continue to collect data

on this project and provide updates either via our website or in future Newsletters.
www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/puppy-paralysis.html

Congenital Blindness

Congenital blindness isn't a very common occurrence in Irish Wolfhounds but we are collecting case studies to see what conditions are thought to be the cause of the blindness and importantly how owners cope with their hounds and changes they make to their environment. If you have a hound that is diagnosed with this condition, please complete the survey on our website.

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

Megaesophagus (ME) in Puppies

Although not common in the breed in comparison to other issues which affect our puppies there is sufficient interest to have generated an opportunity for research with Professor Jared Jaffey at Midwestern University College of Veterinary Medicine. 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

Breed Health Conservation

Dr Maura Lyons as the Breed Health Co-ordinator has continued to liaise with the Kennel Club regarding matters relating to Large and Giant Breed health. Details of any relevant seminars and workshops are periodically posted on our website and our Facebook group for your information.

The Team

Kirsten Bruce has joined the team and although she is a newcomer to the breed she is enthusiastic about Irish Wolfhounds and particularly her two gorgeous girls. She hopes to help with the vital work the IWHG does and contribute to the health and wellbeing of the breed.

Surveys

A reminder for everyone to check out the surveys on our website and you can also find them listed on our Newsletters.

Webinars

We have successfully held three webinars; one in Oct 2021 on Vaccines and the second in April 2022 on Nutrition and Microbiomes presentations by Dr Jean Dodds. In January 2023 Dr Sue Armstrong presented a talk on Autoimmune Disease. The IWHG plan to organise more of these so watch out for FB posts giving details.

Irish Wolfhound Health Group
<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk>

