



## **CONSTITUTION**

1. The Club is known as Four Paws.
2. The objective of the club is to promote the training of any dog who the Committee accepts into membership.
3. The Club will not accept any dog being abused for any reason.
4. The owner is responsible for their own dog(s) at all times whilst on Club premises.
5. The Club is for the collective benefit of its members, both Full members and Associate members. Members must have completed, and had accepted, an application to become a member and agree to abide by the club rules and constitution. Full members are members who either have, or have had, a dog enrolled in an adult class and have continuously paid annual subscription fees, or are Trainers. Full members have voting rights within the Club. All other members are Associate members. Associate members have no voting rights within the Club.
6. A further class of membership, Honorary Life Membership, was introduced and accepted at the AGM in 2023 to recognise long standing Full Membership. Honorary Life Membership is awarded by being proposed and seconded (by a committee member) at an AGM or EGM and being accepted by a majority show of hands of Full Members present. In order to be considered for Honorary Life Membership a Full Member must have been with the club for 5 or more years. Honorary Life Membership does not convey voting rights nor does it offer access to training classes. Honorary Life Membership may overlap Full Membership; in which case Full Membership rights will apply.
7. The affairs of the club are under the management and control of a Committee consisting of the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, and not less than two other elected members, with the powers to co-opt others. The Committee may change club rules by majority vote, but not to the extent of overriding the Constitution.
8. There must be at least two members of the Committee who are also Trainers at the Club and at least two members of the Committee who are not also Trainers at the Club. If an existing non-Trainer Committee member becomes a Trainer, and this leaves the Committee with only one non-Trainer, the new Trainer must stand down from the Committee at the next Committee meeting. The Committee may co-opt another member to fill the vacancy. If an existing Trainer Committee member becomes a non-Trainer, and this leaves the Committee with only one Trainer, the new non-Trainer must stand down from the Committee at the next Committee meeting. The Committee may co-opt another Trainer member to fill the vacancy. If there is dissension as to whom shall be co-opted, the majority decision will apply. If the co-opted Committee member wishes to remain on the Committee, they must stand for election at the next Annual General Meeting.

9. The election of members of the Committee will take place at the Annual General Meeting. The current committee comprises:

- Chair Jane Armitage
- Vice Chair Jenny Henman
- Secretary Margaret Holmes
- Treasurer David Cleaver
- Membership Secretary Grahame Godby
- Elected Member Sindy Randall
- Elected Member Janie Godby
- Elected Member James Adkins

10. Nominations for new membership of the Committee must be proposed and seconded, but serving Committee members will be automatically nominated. Members unable to attend may forward nominations, properly seconded, by post in order to reach the Secretary at least three days prior to the date of the Annual General Meeting.

11. The Chair's duty is to preside at General, Special and Committee Meetings. The Chair may participate in all votes, and also has a casting vote in the event of a tie.

12. The Vice Chair will take the Chair's duties whenever the Chair cannot undertake them, in particular they shall chair meetings if the Chair is absent. The Vice Chair is the Chair Elect, i.e. expected to become the next Chair of the Club.

13. The Secretary's duties are to summon all General and Committee Meetings. They must keep a record of the proceedings of such meetings, and these are to be presented at the following meeting, and signed by the Chair. The Secretary also conducts correspondence on behalf of the Club, and transacts such business as may be required by the Committee.

14. The Treasurer receives all monies, keeps a record of receipts and payments, and submits an audited income and expenditure account and balance sheet to the members at the Annual General Meeting. They are responsible for maintaining an account in the name of the Club at the Club's bankers.

15. The Membership Secretary co-ordinates intake of new members and allocation to the classes. Where there is uncertainty about membership, applications for membership will be considered by the Committee, which will have absolute power in the admission of members. In the event of a vote being required, a simple majority of those present will decide.

16. No member may hold more than one office of the Committee at any one time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

17. A Committee office may be held for up to three years without further re-election. Thereafter, the member may seek re-election to the same post for a further three years. After two periods of office (6 years), the member must stand down from that office unless there are exceptional circumstances.

18. A Committee member not holding office and wishing to remain on the Committee must stand for re-election at each Annual General Meeting. There is no limit on the number of re-elections.
19. Under normal circumstances any Officer of the Committee who does not wish to seek re-election shall notify the Committee by the 1<sup>st</sup> February preceding the Annual General Meeting.
20. All members must produce acceptable evidence from a vet of having sought protection for their dogs from serious transferable canine diseases. This may be through vaccination or other recognised means.
21. Where protection is through vaccination, puppies can only attend their first class 10 days after completing their vaccination course.
22. Puppies must be at least 12 weeks old before attending their first class.
23. Each member will receive a copy of the Constitution and must abide by it.
24. All dogs should be microchipped and fitted with an appropriate collar that holds an identification tag containing all relevant information.
25. For safety reasons, none of the following items are permitted in class unless otherwise instructed by a Trainer: check chains, noose / slip leads, all in one leads, retractable leads and chain leads.
26. All handlers must clean up after the dog(s) they are responsible for and remove any mess.
27. All dogs must be kept on lead at all times, unless otherwise instructed by a Trainer in class.
28. The Committee may decide, by majority vote, to suspend or expel a member whose conduct appears injurious to the Club.
29. If the Committee believes the conduct of a member is injurious or is likely to be injurious to the Club, they may convene a special meeting of the Committee to decide how to proceed. Notice of the meeting will be sent to the accused member, outlining the complaint and giving the place, date and hour of the meeting. The member may attend the meeting to offer an explanation. If a resolution to expel the member is passed, the membership of the person concerned will cease immediately.
30. A member may resign their membership at any time but will not be entitled to the return of any subscriptions paid. They will nevertheless be liable for the payment of any subscription due to the Club.
31. The financial year of the Club is from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December each year.
32. Fees will be set by the Committee.

33. The subscriptions to the Club are payable on 1st September each year. Members not having paid their Annual Membership renewal fee by 1st October will not be entitled to any of the privileges of membership. If the member does not pay their renewal by 1st November then their name shall automatically be erased from the register of members.
34. The fee for admission to each training session is payable prior to taking part in the training session.
35. Trainers and Committee Members must be club members and pay annual membership fees. They do not pay fees for adult dog training classes, or pay puppy class fees. Trainee Trainers who have completed their first 8 weeks of shadowing sessions and wish to continue on the Trainee Trainers' programme shall also be exempt from paying class fees.
36. Should anyone who is not a Full or Associate member of the Club participate in a Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Scheme assessment at Four Paws, they must become an Associate member for the duration of that assessment and will be charged an Associate member subscription fee.
37. An Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held by the end of April of each year. At the AGM:
  - Committee reports and accounts are presented.
  - Officers are elected.
  - Any resolution or other agenda item is discussed. No business shall be transacted at the AGM unless notice thereof appears on the agenda, with the exception of routine matters, or those that in the opinion of the Chair of the Meeting are urgent.At least four weeks' notice will be given of the AGM. Items for inclusion on the agenda must be notified to the Secretary two weeks before the date of the AGM. The agenda will be circulated at the meeting.
38. Voting rights are on the basis of one vote per Full membership. Associate members have no voting rights.
39. A Special General Meeting (SGM) can be summoned by the Secretary, at the request of the Committee or on signed requisition of at least twelve members of the Club, specifying the business to be transacted. Not less than fourteen days' notice must be given of all SGMs. No business other than that on the agenda can be discussed at an SGM. Members will be notified of an SGM. The notice will detail the business of the SGM.
40. The Committee will meet at least every two months. The Secretary must give seven days' notice to all Committee members.
41. Committee members absent from three consecutive meetings without good reason will, at the discretion of the Committee, be asked to resign from the Committee. The Committee may co-opt another member to fill the vacancy. If there is dissension as to whom shall be co-opted, the majority decision will apply. If the co-opted Committee member wishes to remain on the Committee, they must stand for election at the next Annual General Meeting.

42. The quorum for Annual General Meetings is eight members personally present. The quorum for Committee Meetings is 60 percent of the Committee personally present. When training matters are discussed, the quorum must include at least one Trainer.
43. The Club's bankers are the Co-operative Bank. Not less than two authorized Committee members must sign all cheques. No signatory may also be a payee of the same cheque.
44. The property of the Club is vested in the Committee.
45. The Trainer of any class is in sole charge and may exclude any dog or handler at their discretion. No handler under the age of fourteen is permitted to take part in the class without the permission of the Trainer of that class. A Trainer may exclude any dog that they believe to be infested or to have been in contact with infested dogs. The Committee may require the owner of such dog to produce a veterinary certificate before allowing the dog to attend classes again.
46. Responsibility for the arrangement of displays and shows or competitions, either amongst members of the Club or against other clubs, shall rest solely with the Committee.
47. The dissolution of the Club shall be actioned in the following manner:  
On the unanimous recommendation of the Committee, or on the requisition of not less than three quarters of the members of the Club, a Special General Meeting shall be called by the Secretary, giving twenty-one days' notice of the date and purpose of the meeting. Such dissolution shall take place only when decided upon by resolution carried by a majority of not less than three quarters of the membership present at the meeting. Upon dissolution of the Club all financial commitments shall first be met, and settlement made to any member who has contributed financially to the club, other than by club fees. Thereafter, any remaining assets will be divided equally amongst the full members of the club and any surviving Honorary Life Members.
48. Any addition, deletion or alteration to the constitution may only be made by the vote of a two third majority of full members present at an Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting. Notice of intention to move any alteration must be given in writing to the Secretary twenty-eight days before the date of such meeting. The Secretary will inform all members of such proposed alteration at least fourteen days before the meeting, by a notice posted on the Club notice board.
49. All personal information provided to Four Paws will be treated and kept within the rules of the Data Protection Act.