

**Minutes of an informal meeting/discussion held between:
Officials of the Tug of War Association and Officials of the Tug of War Federation**
The meeting was held at Kessingland, following the pulling on Saturday 10th October

Present: Alan Ludkin Peter Dyer David Ling Steve Gardner Maurice Simons

Alan started the discussion by saying that the Association had no agenda, they just wanted to talk with the Federation to see if there was any way in which the two organisations can work together for the benefit of tug of war.

Steve asked if Alan and Peter could tell him how and why the meeting had come about?

Peter said that it had been discussed at the Association committee meeting and he and Alan were asked to meet with the Federation.

A very good informal discussion took place between those present, during which, all agreed that tug of war in England needs all the help it can get, in order to survive and remain as a vibrant, healthy and attractive sport for generations to come! During the discussion it was clearly established that there was no question of a merger of the two groups, both organisations are clearly entrenched in their activities and their commitment to the sport, and their members are rightly proud of their organisations. Membership of both organisations was discussed, but it was generally agreed that the teams understand and are quite happy to join and abide by the rules of either or both organisations if they wish, just so long as membership of either is not unfairly restrictive to teams.

There was a clear understanding between all present, that neither side had any intentions whatsoever of trying to take over 'the other' or to interfere or encroach on each others activities and programmes.

It was suggested that above all, what was most needed, was a clear understanding of how teams can compete in each others organisations without harmful comments or prejudices being raised. The two organisations can compete happily alongside each other, both providing good tug of war for whoever should want to take part, and teams should feel fully able to compete in any event, whether it be a Federation event or an Association event. The Association permit situation was discussed, and the fact that it has been seen as a restricting element hereto. The Association have an insurance policy whereby pulling members are covered for injury, whereas the Federation only has public liability insurance for all competitions and events, and individual pullers take out personal insurance cover if they so desire. Despite these two differences, so long as people understand the situation, then they can still compete if they so wish.

It was agreed that in these present times of expensive travelling costs, it is unreasonable to expect teams to travel from the North of the Country, all the way to the South (and vice versa) if there is another more local competition in their area! To stay at home and train is not the answer either, we need to encourage the teams to get out and pull, no matter which organisations event they attend.

At the conclusion of the meeting, there were four proposals that both groups agreed to take back to their respective Committees for discussion and hopefully approval:

1) Some events at the start and close of the season should be known as 'Joint Events' where teams and officials from both organisations would be actively encouraged to take part in 'jointly run' competitions. Some may do, and some may not, the point being that all teams would be fully informed that they can so do if they wish. Both organisations would undertake to see that officials from both sides are designated to attend and jointly run the events.

The joint events would be

A) At the start of the season, all training leagues, no matter which leagues and where, all leagues would be open to teams from both organisations to attend as they may so wish. and

B) At the close of the season, the Area 5 Event at Kessingland would be a joint event and the Federation would also organise a similar event, a week or two prior to Kessingland, possibly in the Midlands area, which would then make another 'Joint event' one being run by each organisation. Again, it's not so important to start with how many teams do take part, its more important that they know they can if they want to, without fear of discipline action being taken against them!

2) At all 'Joint Events' whether organised by the Association or the Federation, a permit would be issued, thereby covering all of the Association members, Pullers and Officials, who take part.

3) Apart from the joint run competitions, all teams from both sides should be informed that they can take part in any Federation or Association events as they wish, but of course remembering that apart from the 'Joint Events' they would be expected to join each organisation and abide by their rules.

4) The newly established 'Joint Committee' would continue to meet as a sub committee, on at least two occasions a year, to discuss tug of war in their own organisations in general, sharing information and ideas on how they might improve tug of war together. The group may be known as The Tug of War Association and Federation Joint Committee. The Committee role: to discuss and promote tug of war.

It was felt that these initial proposals are not too far reaching, but are good 'walk before you run' steps to take, the result of which would be a better harmony, promoting full interaction between the two organisations, with tug of war coming out on top as the winner!

It was agreed that the Group would meet again in December 2009, when both sides would have had opportunity to seek approval from their respective committees, and that minutes of meetings will be displayed so that all members can see what has been discussed!