

2nd Helmsdale Dog Show a great success

Twenty-seven hardy dogs and their owners gathered in a damp Helmsdale for the 2nd Helmsdale Dog Show, organised by Dementia Friendly Communities, at the Community Centre on Saturday. Local residents were joined by visitors from the West Coast and Invershin for 11 competition categories, ranging from Best Veteran to Best Biscuit Catcher and Dog the Judge Would Most Like to Take Home.

Judge for the day was professional dog trainer Annabell Smith from Aunty Annabell's Daytime Adventure who had her work cut out for her as she assessed the condition, behaviour and skills of 20 different breeds of dog.

Best in Show saw Vinnie the Yorkie (Best Veteran) go up against Archie the Cairn Terrier (Best Small Dog) and Tess the Pointer Cross Setter (Best Cross Breed) who all narrowly missed out to Pepper the Labrador (who won Best Large Dog) who was runner up and overall winner Boorach the Irish Setter. Boorach, who had previously excelled in the Best Pedigree category, and his owner Billy Cowie received a special rosette as well as a bag of Burns natural pet food. As well as providing this winning prize, Burns also donated goodie bags for all entrants containing a range of treats, while sponsorship from Easter Ross Vets funded the rosettes.

Other winners on the day included Sophie Sparkles the Lhasa Apso for Best Trick, Katie the Collie for Best Biscuit Catcher, Chilli the Chocolate Labrador for Waggiest Tail, and young Charlotte was awarded Best Young Handler alongside Jake the Fox Terrier Cross Jack Russell. After much deliberation Annabell chose Goose the Pointer Cross Labrador as the dog she would most like to take home.

Annabell also brought along her dog agility equipment, allowing everyone a chance to see how well their dog coped with the tunnel, the slalom or the jump.

A well-received pop-up café serving an array of sandwiches, quiches, cakes, and hot and cold beverages was open in the Community Centre hall alongside stalls selling the work and goods of Alsorts Arts and Crafts, Highland Hounds, Highland Candles, the SSPCA, Anne Rutt Arts and Crafts, Kenny's of Brora and Munloch Animal Aid. Further support for the event was given by The Bunilidh Rowing Club, Pet Pals Pet Shop, lairg, Bliss Brora, Marine Hotel Brora, Glenmorangie, Nicki Hughes and Alder Holly and ITC Dog First Aid Courses.

Wendy Simmonds, Project Lead at The Helmsdale Hub, said following the event: "We were concerned that the bad weather would have put people off, but it didn't seem to phase the dogs or their owners at all. We had a fantastic team of volunteers, as well as Annabell our judge, who worked really hard on the day and we couldn't have managed it without them. We've had some very positive feedback and it was great to see so many familiar faces from last year's show as well as new dogs and others who had travelled from further afield to join us. Our sponsors, exhibitors and those who contributed prizes for the raffle and tombola were very generous this year and we'd like to thank them for all they did to support this really enjoyable event."