

# Agility Elections

## 2017 – 2019

### Bios

#### **Important notes**

(Voting opens on Friday, 14 April 2017 and closes on Friday, 28 April 2017\*\*)

\*\*Votes cast outside of the above dates will not be counted

Votes may be cast for up to eight candidates. The two highest polling candidates from each of the islands (North & South) will be duly elected as will the next four highest polling candidates

Voting forms are available on the Agility website and the NZKC website or may be obtained by contacting the returning officer Colleen Begg [colleen@nzkc.org.nz](mailto:colleen@nzkc.org.nz) or direct dial 04 910 1526



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## Rosemarie J Baker - Auckland

A bit about me: I've been involved with dogs since I was 10 years old, having of types of pets. As an adult I bred Rottweilers back in the day, now breeding and competing with my Border Terriers. I was a Veterinary Nurse for 13 years and worked as a Field Officer for the SPCA for 13 years. It would be fair to say I have plenty of experience with animals in general.

I started many years ago in dog obedience with the then named Akarana Dog Obedience Club where I also became an instructor and the club Secretary for 4 years. I competed in obedience trials for a short time with my Rottie. Later on I discovered Agility and decided this was the sport for me with my first agility dog Teeshin. Akarana at that stage didn't have agility training so I joined the Auckland Canine Agility Club where I remained for several years.

Akarana then changed their club format and become more involved with agility, running obedience courses more as a community service. It seemed a better option to move clubs when I lived 5 minutes away. I joined Akarana Dog Training Club again in 2006. As time went by I become involved with training agility and competing with my two dogs. I became the club secretary again in 2012- 2017. This has been a full on job including dealing with Auckland Council, Auckland Transport and club ground issues for the past 3years. We are slowly making some headway with Council and AT.

Although none of my dogs have made Agility Champion as yet I was fortunate to share 7 years with Windygyle Isla ADXGold, JDX, JAX, FD (Kenzy) my beautiful Border Terrier who loved agility and Flygility. Kenzy and I made the then NDTA Zone1 Team Starters dog. That was amazing and became a highlight in our agility time together. We also competed in the Zone1 Flygility Team in Tokoroa 2015. That aside it was Kenzy who made agility fun and encouraged me to continue competing in such a great sport.

Last year I was given the opportunity to join the NZDAC 2017 main committee which is fabulous. This is exciting and I'm grateful to be working with such a good team to bring the next best Zone1 NZDAC.

What I can offer the committee position:

- Importantly my love of the agility sport.
- Help improve knowledge/safety/awareness for competitors, there dogs and the general public.
- Knowing many competitors, I'd like to think they would approach me to discuss agility matters, to make myself available.
- I work well with a committed team.

Ultimately it's not what I've done in my lifetime but my enthusiasm to join the committee.

I'm sure whoever is elected for this committee will be a great asset to all agility members.

Good luck to all nominees.

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## Steve Chester - Rotorua

On a personal note I live on a small lifestyle block just north of Rotorua with my partner Abi and our 11 yr old son Ben, 5 dogs, 4 sheep and a couple of silly chooks.

I have been a member of the Agility Committee for most of its existence and have been a Judge & keen competitor even longer. I have had one Agility Champion and a couple of slow dogs amongst the 8 dogs I have trained & competed with over the 25 years I have been involved in Agility, so I have empathy for all levels of competition. This level of experience allows me to make a useful contribution to the AC as I know what has happened with previous committees and their decisions.

I have always championed communication and consultation with our members and will continue to do so, but also believe that we need to put a limit on how many times a year we should make changes to the regulations to avoid "change fatigue".

There is not much wrong with NZ Agility but there is currently a lot of pressure from groups to change various items of equipment. This pressure is much greater than it has been in the past, mostly due to an increased awareness of dog safety however I strongly believe we need a structured process for objectively assessing the risks presented by our NZ equipment and for improving it. This would reduce the number of changes being consulted on and make sure that informed decisions are made.

I would also like to simplify the equipment regulations and make it possible for manufacturers to make equipment more easily.

I believe that the greatest strength of Agility is the huge diversity of our competitors and that the handler who is ecstatic about a clear round is as important as the handler qualifying their Grand Champion. We need to make sure we continue to cater everyone from the newest starter to our most experienced and successful handler.

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## Bevan Dale - Huntly

The big question is why am I seeking a second term on committee? You have a perception going on to committee about what it's going to be like. A lot of it is very different! It took me at least 12 months to learn about what the committee is and how to lead it and it is only recently that I have started to feel comfortable in my role on committee. It also takes a while to understand the membership, how to represent it and what we need to do to actually support the agility community.

I have got to the stage and at the last meeting we had I expressed the view that we need to consolidate rather than have continual rule change.

I am still against games at a champ show level as I have seen so often judges put in position to judge events they have little chance to get expertise in, in yet we are using them to award championship status. I am still in a minority with this view and it is something that I have just had to live with on committee. I have already stated this in other forums, but if I end up chairing the next agility committee I would like to take our meetings on the road and opening up the first hour for anyone to come along and talk to the committee about any issues they may have. Sometimes this gets a much better result than just sending in a letter.

We also have to get more business-like in how we run our operation. Our turnover would be the envy of some small business and it is time we view it more in this way. Business has stakeholders critical to its success and so does our agility community.

As part of our growth strategy we have to get a better understanding of the IT systems that support our business. We have more than one online entry system in the market, and while competition is good for innovation, there are some basic requirements that any system has to deliver back to the agility committee. I am advocating an "open" back end with rules around it that any supplier can access, but to have how they choose to use the data and supply a front end open. This not only ensures consistency of information, but still allows innovation with how different vendors present their system to market. We have started discussion about this at committee but to date not made effective progress.

I would like to see our profile continue to grow. In that respect I have been central in working towards getting this year's NZDAC on TV1 and with a plan to have more than one episode. Despite all the competition TV1 is still the highest rating media channel on TV so it is ideal for us to spread the agility message.

Our relationship with NZKC continues to be one of not only growth, but a little bit of tension as well. We are continuing to try and get better representation for agility in the organization, and also a better understanding of who we are. It was great to see our new President at NZDAC last year and I think it helped his understanding of the commitment that goes into our sport.

A challenge for the next committee is dealing with the provisions of the new animal welfare code and its implications for officials in our sport. The approach for dealing with it has to be similar to dealing with the Health and Safety act. We have to demonstrate that we have taken all practical steps to ensure the safety of dogs competing. We are well on the way to this with our COF inspections but we need to make sure we are vigilant. I have organized and provided a legal opinion to the committee on the act and it is important that we keep this upper most in our minds.

Much of the above has been a bit of a brain dump on my part – but it also gives you an insight on what has been going on this year and some of the tasks that still need to be accomplished in the agility world.

Thank you everyone for your support this year.

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## Frazer Delamere – Papamoa Beach

Hi, my name is Frazer Delamere, I'm the proud owner of 2 agility fur babies, Myer our 7yr old Huntaway X Heading dog & Geeva our 4yr old Border Collie. We live in Papamoa Beach & belong to the Mount Maunganui Dog Training Club.

My story is simple, I joined the Mount Club in late 2011 with my then pup Myer, with only a view to getting involved with domestic obedience (I didn't want to be that guy chasing his dog down the beach, because I had no idea what a recall was let alone turning it into a "solid" recall), we went through the ranks of obedience 18 long months, and all the while watching avidly these cool dogs & handlers training agility at the far end of the field, and that's when I told myself...."my girl could do that!" So we took the plunge! Signed up for a term of control play, finally got to take the lead off Myer, and she took to agility like a duck to water. Watching the growth and development of my dog and recognising her want and need to learn this new game was all the convincing I needed so off we went to our first Ribbon Trial; knock me over we placed 3rd in Elementary B 3rd in Starters!! Officially caught the "Bug" :) Off we went on our Agility journey, entering shows all over the North Island, making new friends and networks, it's all been a great adventure, even picked up a Border Collie just to add spice to the mix and test both Myer and myself, needless to say Geeva heightened the awareness in myself that "yeah, I really dig this Agility stuff!!".

Behind the scenes I involved myself with the Mount Dog Club, becoming a committee member, then joining the Trainers, training classes at Novice/ Intermediate level, I'm in my second consecutive year as Vice President and recently took on the role of Agility Co-ordinator. Belonging to a club that has supported and encouraged my Agility journey has been priceless, the shared knowledge & training, right from day dot..."this is how you enter a show...", "this is why you got D'd", all done in a positive environment and usually with a huge laugh attached! Super proud of our little club and the team of solid workers that run it like a well-oiled machine, and it's that enthusiasm that compels me to join the Agility Committee.

A couple of years ago I was asked if I'd ever thought about being a judge, it took me less than a minute to respond, "I love competing too much to spend my weekend judging", as selfish as that sounds it was the truth, I admire Judges and the sacrifices they make to make our sport awesome, it's just not for me; that being said, 2 weeks ago when a couple of friends asked if I'd let them nominate me for Agility Committee, that response took less than a minute "Yes", much like my first step in joining the Mount Committee, the thought of giving back to this sport that has become a passion was a no-brainer. To be part of a body that governs and regulates our sport, to voice concerns from club level and fellow competitors and to hopefully just get amongst the mix of it all, I would greatly appreciate the opportunity.

So... that's my simple story, thanks for taking the time to read my bio, perhaps we'll bump into each other at a show... say Hi if we do :)

Cheers Agiliteers!!

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## Karen De Wit - Wellington

I am honest, hard-working, fair, innovative and enthusiastic about agility in NZ. I want to build on agility's strengths, including our clubs, members, judges, range of competitions, raft of experience, enthusiasm and Kiwi innovation.

I am a committee member and instructor at UHDTC, and my major priority is to continue to **advocate hard for clubs**. I believe they are the backbone of our sport and therefore should be helped as much as possible by the national body. I believe agility needs strong clubs and club members, and anything that makes their lives easier and happier has got to be good for our sport. This term I have:

- encouraged clubs to do Displays (and gain \$200),
- get outside instructors in to help (instructor and seminar subsidies),
- begun the 'instructor subsidy' which will help reward our club's hard working instructors.
- assisted clubs to gain new equipment by accepting all applicants and giving them at least 50% of what they applied for. I am proud to say as a result the greatest amount ever was spent by the AC for equipment for Clubs this term.

Next term, I would like to do a **survey of clubs** to find out what is GOOD and what could be done BETTER as far as they are concerned. Publicising the variety of grants available must also be done.

I strongly believe in creating **a sport that is as inclusive** as possible, which means that a range of people and dogs of all abilities can go out and enjoy the range that NZ agility offers, and achieve at many levels. I supported the introduction of the **clear round awards**, and like to see **splits** at events. As a result I would not be in favour of any move that meant we got less splits, particularly in the bottom of the North Island where they can be few and far between.

This term I took on the **treasurer role** after Jo Rennell resigned, and have kept members updated regularly on what the AC is spending their money on, as well as publishing (for the first time) the monthly financial statements of the Agility Committee, showing my desire for the AC to be transparent in the way it manages agility in NZ.

I bring experience and enthusiasm to the job of governing agility in NZ. I will provide accountable, transparent and responsive representation. Vote for me and you will know you have elected a person who doesn't just talk about what could be done - I am always keen to get stuck in! I am also the only nominee from the bottom half of the North Island and believe regional representation is essential, so a vote for me ensures a balanced voice for you all.

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## Robyn Fargher - Otane

Robyn lives in Otane, Central Hawke's Bay and has been a teacher at Hastings Girl's High School for over 35 years. Her working life involves teaching computer applications and she takes on the deanding task of creating and organising the school timetable for the 830 girls.

Her passion though is her dogs. She has been a stalwart member of the Hawke's Bay Dog Training Club (the "Club") for 23 years and a Committee member for 20 of those years. Robyn has been the Club's "Show Secretary" for both Obedience and Agility for over 20 years and she often provides support to other clubs to ensure the smooth running of their shows.

Robyn became addicted to Agility when she had her first competition run in 1995 with her dog, Jacki, who came fifth in her class. At that time, classes were not split; there were no split heights nor micros and all dogs competed against each other. Whereas today, dogs are more likely to compete against dogs in their own height group. As Robyn has competed under both systems she understands the advantages and disadvantages of both.

Whilst she first began competing with a mini dog, she has consistently trained and competed with a range of breeds and heights. Although Robyn doesn't have consistent winners, she has qualified six of her dogs through to senior / jumpers A level, and she recognises that different people have varying goals in Agility. Whilst most want to win, for some people success may be just completing the course! Her firm belief is that Agility should be a sport that nearly anybody can take part in and achieve a level of success at.

Robyn mainly competes in the lower North Island of New Zealand and she enjoys the contact with her dogs and the people she meets at competitions. She thrives on being involved and, as with everything she does, doing a good job in the organisation of shows. Her experience as an Agility Judge (17 years), Measurer (9 years), Agility instructor (8 years) and Rally-O Instructor and Judge (8 years) has provided her with plenty of opportunity to support and encourage newcomers to the sport.

Robyn is open to innovation in the sport; she was one of the first people to use computers to generate Clear Round Certificates and to use a database to process results. She has also been part of the major changes in the sport, for example the way training methods have changed over her 20+ years of competing. Robyn has participated in a range of Agility seminars, some with overseas experts and she continues to improve her skills using eLearning.

Currently, Robyn has 5 dogs aged from 2 to 12 years old. The oldest, Leo, her 12 year old Lhasa Alpo x Tibetan retired a couple of years ago after qualifying to the senior level despite the injuries he received in a car accident 9 years ago. Shuffle, a Pomeranian x Tibetan x Spitz, who at one stage was a starters dog as well as being in jumpers A, is now in senior as well. Wyn, a Miniature Schnauzer x Foxy is currently a senior / jumpers B dog. Astro, an Australian Koolie is a starters / novice dog who has finally worked out what he is doing in the ring. The baby of the family is Lyric, a border collie who is two years old. Together they make up her Hairy MacLary bunch.

Robyn is just finishing a term on the Agility Committee where she had responsibility for the calendar organisation and measurement overview.

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## Diana Gausden - Pokeno

Hello everyone,

Here I am at the end of two years of service as Secretary on the Agility Committee. It has been a very steep learning curve and it did take me a little while to find my feet, but I find that I quite enjoyed the experience and am willing to sign on for another two years, if you'll have me.

When I started in agility, I joined the local club and quickly became a member of the Committee, in the role of Secretary from 2005 to 2008. I was the Founding Secretary of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers New Zealand Inc from 2009-2013 and also held the role of Northern Area Representative for the New Zealand Flygility Dog Association in 2010. During 2014, I wrote a small column for the monthly NALA magazine representing Zone 1. Outside of agility, I have worked as a Secretary/PA, employed in large multinationals for nearly twenty years in the UK and in NZ, until I left to become self-employed. For the last seven years, I have worked as a professional Show Secretary alongside my husband, Scott, as ShowSec.

The reasons that I wanted to join the Agility Committee are still valid – I have experience from a slightly different viewpoint of agility, being behind the laptop at shows. Also I have a neutral position on issues that may arise as I'm no longer competing, so don't suffer from "my dog" syndrome.

I believe in listening to the agility community with an open mind. In the last term of office, I have supported points of view that I felt the majority of the community were holding. I have been instrumental in bringing about some Regulations changes (mostly in the admin side), but only to bring clarification to our rules and not to over-regulate. Our Regulations are meant to provide a fair playing field to all and keeping the balance between implementing proactive ideas and bureaucratic red tape is vital.

What is also important is keeping the lines of communication open between the Agility Committee and the agility community. I will endeavour to ensure that the Agility Committee is the voice of the community and that every competitor feels well represented by their Committee.

Thank you.



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## Wayne Grant - Dunedin

I have been around the Agility scene since my wife Karen first started competing in 1997. In 2001 I started co-handling our dog, Sam who was trained by Karen and in 2008 I got my "own" agility dog, a heading dog called Vida who I have trained and handled through to Senior/Jumpers A level, attaining challenges in both Agility and Jumpers. In 2015 I got my second dog, Gin, also a heading dog and she had just started competing. Gin is the 8th dog we have welcomed into our household and we have owned and competed with mini, midi and maxi dogs of various breeds.

Even before I started handling a dog I was involved in helping with Agility events, primarily scribing/scriming and ring and show managing. I have served on the organising committees for the 2009 NDTA and 2014 NZDAC, where I was also Show Manager. I was President of the Otago Canine Training Club for 2012/13 and 2013/14. I have recently been elected to the committee of the Taieri Canine Training Club. I am a Measurer, an Equipment Certificate of Fitness Assessor and am currently on the Ribbon Trial judging panel.

Prior to and concurrent with my participation in Agility, I was involved with Wrestling, in my youth representing New Zealand at international competitions and then becoming a referee. When I retired as a referee I was an international referee and had travelled overseas to officiate at international competitions. I was Director of Officials for the NZ Olympic Wrestling Association for a number of years.

In September 2015 I joined the current NZKC Agility Committee after the resignation of one of the South Island committee members and have enjoyed the experience and would like the opportunity to continue to work for the agility community.

I believe I am an approachable and fair person and am always happy to discuss agility matters or just have a chat.

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## Paul Needham - Cambridge

Compared to many people I am a newbie to agility, having only been involved in the sport for seven years. But those seven years has built into me a huge passion for the sport and a real desire to see it continue to grow.

While new to agility I have been involved in the dog disciplines for over 30 years and served on club committee's in the past to get my practice at agility administration. Matching this to 30 years working in customer facing roles, and being able to listen to people and understand what they want from our business, has given me transferrable skills I can bring to the agility committee

So while that is about me - why have I put my name forward for the agility committee?

The agility committee has over the last couple of years has worked on the safety of equipment; I also believe we now need to look more towards standardization and how we can achieve this. For example while we have safe dog walks, at just about every club in the country has one of different length. We have a number of handlers that have worked hard at developing training and handling in NZ to match the best in the world, but if we cannot match our equipment to best in the world, we have achieved better and faster dogs, without the equipment to match.

Something I have noticed over recent times is the growth in harsh handling. I believe the agility committee has a responsibility to provide leadership in this area. Changes to the animal welfare code increase the focus on our sport and how we treat our animals, and I believe the agility committee has to be at the forefront of leading this.

Bringing a new voice to the committee always has benefits and I would be happy to provide this!

Thank you for taking the time to read my bio and thank you for considering using your valuable vote on me

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## Nicola Parmenter - Auckland

In 2009, I quit my full-time job in event management and bought a villa in the country. Not long after that, I suggested to my husband that we get a dog. You know, as a companion. After much discussion and deliberation, we decided on a Standard Schnauzer. You could do agility with it, he said to me. And there it began.

Tillie is now nearly 7 and I have been an active member of the Manukau Dog Training Club since I took her along to Puppy Obedience classes at about 12 weeks old. She was never going to be a superstar, she is a Schnauzer after all!, but I loved the bond that we shared as we trained together, whether that was in Obedience, Rally or Agility. And agility was where it was at.

It took me a while to get out on the competition circuits, but we did, and I have gone from doing “just the Auckland shows” to spending weekends away on a reasonably regular basis, now with a second dog in tow. I love the camaraderie that follows the agility community and have made some wonderful friends and met some awesome dogs that inspire me on a weekendly basis.

Over the past six years or so, I have trained, competed, coordinated my own club’s shows, helped at other club’s shows, been on my club’s committee, been their secretary and instructed. From a purely professional stand-point, I have worked alongside diverse groups of people and with a number of (community) boards to make whatever they are doing, successful.

So, my reasons for putting my name forward for the Agility Committee this year are reasonably simple. I enjoy giving back, I enjoy sharing my passion with others, and I enjoy working with people who are working hard to benefit the majority, and make this sport, bigger, better, faster and more! I hope you will support me, and look forward to working with everyone.

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## Carl Ranford - Hawera

After much thought, I accepted my nomination for the Agility Committee. I have been on the Agility scene since 95, over that time I have seen a lot of changes and most for the better. I have been involved in many ways, a competitor, a judge, a show manager and much more. I could tell you more about me, but that would be boring.

- Some of the changes I would like to see made in NZ Agility:
- Improve the quality of Weave Sets
- Improve the quality of Collapsible Tunnels and remove the 5-meter rule
- Improve the quality of Jumps and phase out metal Jump cups
- Spend more money. Provide more grants to clubs for new equipment and public Agility displays
- More consultation with Judges and competitors with greater involvement in key decisions
- Remove the acknowledge the Judge rule
- Provide Judges with professional training such as The Global Judging Program
- A long-term plan to implement 5 Jump heights, with numbers instead of names i.e. 200, 300, 400, 500, 600 heights
- Further investigation into permanent splits
- A long-term plan to move Agility to a similar structure as Jumpers, 3 Classes, Novice, Intermediate, Senior.

I welcome a vote and I don't mind if I were elected or not. I would like to see the sport to continue to move forward and welcome a younger generation.

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## Sallie Remon - Dunedin

Why am I putting myself forward as a candidate for the Dog Agility Committee? I think the first and most important reason is that I don't have any personal or hidden agendas. I want to represent the Agility Community as a whole, from those just starting out, to those at the top of our sport, and those competing internationally. As a senior judge, I want to represent all judges and make sure their opinions are listened to. As the Chairman of the NZYKC Dog Training Committee, I want to represent our young handlers, the future of our sport.

Many years ago, as a young child, I watched the first Dog Agility demonstration at The Crufts Dog show in the UK, I was hooked! From then on, I have been involved in the sport. I competed in the UK first as a member of the YKC, competing at Crufts, and then continued with a variety of different breeds and types of dogs from terriers to Golden Retrievers and several collies in between. I became an Agility judge in the UK in 1995 after judging obedience for several years and continued to judge Agility at all levels until I immigrated to New Zealand with my family in 2004.

I see myself as a dog trainer rather than a competitor and therefore I feel I can look at things from a neutral point of view, rather than the well-known "my dog" approach. I have been heavily involved in the Taieri Canine Training Club since we arrived and as well as serving on the committee for many years, I have been secretary and more recently Agility Coordinator. I have instructed many classes from foundation through to Senior, I'm taking another foundation course for the club at the moment. I also take my own private lessons and Puppy foundation Seminars. I enjoy helping new people and dogs, as well as those who have competed for many years. I helped to organise the first NZ Agility team to compete in the IFCS World Championships in 2010, organising selection trials around the Country and dogs for them to compete with in the UK.

I have served on the senior judge's panel since 2004 and the mentor panel since its inception. I thoroughly enjoy judging and also helping new judges develop their skills.

I currently compete with a border collie in Senior and occasionally get to run my son's micro, a toy poodle X. I believe my old border collie, Dizzy, is still the oldest dog in NZ to achieve the title of Agility Champion at the tender age of 12!

One of my greatest passions is the Dog Training YKC (Young Kennel Club) have taught Agility at YKC Camp for the last 10 years and assisted with the running of camp for several of those. We have some great young handlers in our sport and we need to support and encourage them to secure the future of Agility.

I am happy to answer any questions that you may have so please feel free to email me on [sallieremon@xtra.co.nz](mailto:sallieremon@xtra.co.nz)

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## Joanne Rennell - Invercargill

My name is Joanne Rennell and I have decided to stand again for the Agility Committee. After moving on from the personal issues that lead to my resignation during the last term, I feel I need to finish what I started.

I believe that the committee needs to be more available to the community - keeping the general population informed of any and all matters that would affect them - rather than dropping ideas at the last minutes as I am sure many have felt recently - I know I have.

I also believe that our judges need more support from the committee - at the moment there are rules around staying on the judge's panel that are impossible to complete because the seminars and training required are not being offered. There must be a better way and I would like to help find it.

The other thing I would like to see is the way that non-regulation decisions are made - I have heard on a number of occasions that someone has written to the committee and whilst it gets acknowledged - nothing else had been heard - so making people feel important is a goal of mine

My other goal is a full review of heights - be it jump heights, cut off heights - or a 5th height - I believe these need to be reviewed. There are dogs out there that don't jump at all and other dogs that are jumping more than they should. I think they should be considered and consulted on - it is too big of an issue to be ignored or decided on by just a few people.

I like Bevan's idea of taking the committee on the road - more access to the committee has to be a good thing. Easier to discuss topics face to face sometimes.

I am hoping there will be an actual election this time - would be great to get 3 South Island representatives on committee and I hope everyone takes the time to actually vote - if a vote is required. Happy for anyone to contact me to discuss any agility matter at any time and I hope I can represent every member of the agility community once again.

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## Chris Richardson - Pukekohe

Hey Everyone. I would like to introduce myself to those that don't know me. My name is Chris, and it turns out I am an addict. What started out for me as a bit of fun and something to do with my ONE DOG that I had, quickly took over my life and within months my 2nd dog came along... now it's time to look at upgrading vehicles again, because 5 dogs is starting to get a bit squishy in the Ute.

Over the years, I have become quite passionate about our sport, and have found myself immersed in various roles within the sport. Very early on, I offered to step up and help out my club as show secretary when our existing show sec announced they would no longer be doing it, and continued to do this job for over 4 years, when I finally decided it was time for a break.

I also gave up my time instructing within my club, and it was suggested by a couple of people that maybe I should think about becoming a judge, because I seemed to like putting together challenges, and enjoyed watching people struggle and achieve on a course that I had put up for training... so I applied...and here I am, now on the Senior Judges panel...

Having been in various roles, I have a very good understanding of things from different angles... at a competitor level, at a club level, from a show secretary point of view, and from a judges point of view, and because I this, I believe I would be a suitable recruit for this army of hard workers, and would like to be a part of growing this great sport of ours in a way that keeps as many people as possible happy - cause let's be honest, we can never keep EVERYONE happy... but I think if we can work with and for the majority of our fellow sportsmen (and woman), we are doing ok....

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## Claire Smith (née Van der Hoeven) - Nelson

I have been the Zone 4 rep on the Agility Committee since August 2016. I have been in the dog world since 1997, taking a few years off from 2008 while I travelled overseas and have been active again since my return to New Zealand in 2012.

I live in Nelson with my husband Phil and my two Border Collies; Riot and Hype. I am an active member of the Nelson Dog Training Club, where I have been involved in instructing obedience and agility classes, Agility and obedience Co-ordinator's, Show Manager and have been on the subcommittees and management committee for numerous years, including as Vice-President and currently as Treasurer.

I enjoy agility as a sport because of the challenge of improving my handling and training and having fun with my dogs in a social, friendly atmosphere. Although I have not been on the Agility Committee for long, I have enjoyed my time and believe that I have more to offer over the coming term. I would like to see more support given to judges both in mentoring and training to help us retain and encourage more people onto the panel.

Equipment safety, as always, is a big one – especially with the changes recently taking place overseas, I feel it's important for us to continue to ensure the safety of our dogs and handlers alike, although this is an ongoing area, and I think we have made some great improvements recently, there is more that can still be done.

I hope that you will trust me to keep representing you on the Agility Committee. I would like to see dog agility around New Zealand continue to grow and to be an accessible and enjoyable sport for a wide range of people and their dogs. I would also like to see communication continue to improve between the agility committee and competitors.

I am always happy to be contacted and to voice your ideas, concerns or questions to the agility committee.