

# EXMOOR PONY SOCIETY

## Minutes of the Trustees Virtual Meeting on Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> September

Present in the room:

Nigel Hill (NH) Chairman

Present via TEAMS:

Geoff Bryant (GB) Vice-Chairman/Acting Treasurer

Toby Hickman (TH) Vice-Chairman

David Wallace (DW) Vice-Chairman/ECHO

Dr Sue Baker (DSBA)/Scientific Officer

Sue Burger (SB)/Articles and liaison with PR Company

Vicky Lamb (VL)/Area Rep Liaison Officer

Gill Langdon (GL)/Friends and Exmoor Pony Festival

Jenna Payne (JP)/Social Media

Stephanie Poulter (SP)/Conservation Grazing Officer

Claire Phillips (CP)/Breed Show

Rob Taylor (RT)/DNA and Moorland Communications

Susan McGeever (SECRETARY) was also in attendance at the meeting alongside the Chairman.

Nigel Hill (Chairman) welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 10am. He thanked the Trustees for their attendance and advised that this was a continuation of the meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> September 2020. He then thanked all those who had appreciated the effectiveness of the meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> and went on to acknowledge that it was not easy for those attending by TEAMS. He hoped that with the Management Committee meetings and the additional two Trustee meetings a year, there would be improvements and meetings would be shorter and that there would be more positive outcomes.

It was noted that some updated reports had been received the day before the meeting and it was hoped that in future reports would be provided at least two weeks in advance.

### **Item 1 - Apologies for Absence**

Apologies had been received from Sandra Mansell and David Mansell (President).

### **Item 2 - Declaration of Interest/Confirmation of Confidentiality**

No declarations of interest were made in relation to the business set out in the agenda and Secretary's report.

**Decision:** TH proposed and RT seconded the proposal that all Trustees maintain confidentiality in accordance with the instructions of the Chairman and this was unanimously agreed.

### **Item 3 - Secretary's Update from meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> September**

The Secretary's update on the RBST, Accounts, 200 Club and DNA was taken as read. The Secretary confirmed that a sum of £5000 had been transferred to the Yorkshire Bank to cover outstanding invoices until the mandate on the NatWest account had been completed. The Trustees noted the bank totals in the three accounts held by the Society.

### **Item 4 - Inspections/Inspector's Meeting/DNA**

#### **Rule 8 a) 3 ii)**

The revised form prepared by the sub-committee had taken into account the various comments and concerns of the Trustees.

JP expressed concern that there was no option for the vet to indicate that a pony had 'a few' white hairs and this was discussed and a way forward agreed.

**Decision:** JP proposed and TH seconded the proposal that the following statement was amended to include the words underlined:

All of the hairs are dark brown/black at the roots; no/a few white hairs, but some may have buff ends. And this was unanimously agreed.

JP expressed concern that the note at the end of the form was not clear and this was discussed and a way forward agreed.

**Decision:** VL proposed and TH seconded the proposal that the note at the end of the form be amended as follows:

The veterinary surgeon must complete this questionnaire, along with the silhouette, hair sample, & microchip details. The owner must take clear colour photographs showing the front, rear, near and off sides of the foal and close-ups of mane & tail in the presence of the vet. All items to be returned by the owner to the EPS secretary.

And this was unanimously agreed.

It was noted that the form was to be used in exceptional circumstances and the Covid-19 pandemic was considered to be an exceptional circumstance particularly where inspectors would have to travel distances and/to from lockdown areas. This decision was time-limited as recorded in the previous meeting to end December 2020.

It was noted that a panel of inspectors would review the paperwork and the photographs as if it were an inspection and had the ability to place a pony in Section 1 or Section X. As ever, if a pony was placed in Section X, a re-inspection could take place when circumstances permitted.

#### **Covid-19 inspection paperwork**

The paperwork had been amended to address the concerns raised by JP and it was agreed that the concerns had been addressed.

**Decision:** VL proposed and GB seconded the proposal that the paperwork put forward by the Secretary would be adopted for inspections and gatherings taking place Autumn 2020. This was unanimously agreed.

#### **Inspector's Meeting**

It was felt important to remain in touch with inspectors during the pandemic. To this end, it had been proposed that virtual meetings take place. The first meeting would involve inspectors on Exmoor.

After discussion, it was agreed that NH/RT and DW would be tasked with setting up and hosting the meetings.

NH/RT and DW felt that given the current guidance that socially distanced business meetings could take place for up to 30 people, and given many of the inspectors of Exmoor were in regular contact with each other, the Exmoor meeting could take place in person.

Meetings for the rest of the country would take place virtually.

**Decision:** DW proposed and RT seconded the proposal that the Exmoor meeting would be in person and held during the week commencing 5<sup>th</sup> October. This was agreed with JP expressing her reservations for holding a meeting in person.

SB asked that NH/RT and DW make notes of the main issues raised at the meeting on Exmoor so that they could be discussed at the subsequent meetings.

#### **Inspector's Guidelines**

Changes to the Inspector's Guidelines had been completed in 2019, however, the Risk Assessment required updating.

SB advised that she had written the original assessment and reviewed it in August 2020. She felt that additional wording should be added as follows:

Use of microchip readers/scanners

Risk level: low. Likelihood: low.

Ensure pony is safely secured. Avoid climbing on walls, railings etc.

The revised Risk Assessment had been circulated to all Trustees.

RT questioned the time limit on driving and SB advised that the guidelines for the normal driver was two hours duration.

JP raised the reference to 'safety head gear' and the Secretary replied that the Risk Assessment should be read in conjunction with the Inspector's Guidelines which made reference hard hats.

JP also raised the question of First Aid training and asked if a First Aid qualification remained a requirement.

It was felt that it was prudent to have a First Aid trained person present at inspections. (The Secretary held a current qualification.)

Given the current Covid-19 pandemic, the possibility of online courses would also be investigated.

**Decision:** JP proposed and SB seconded the proposal that the Management Committee look into the cost of providing First Aid training for inspectors and Area Representatives. This was unanimously agreed.

The Secretary's report regarding Colt Inspections, appointments to the Inspection Panel, DNA procedures and Autumn Inspections was taken as read.

#### **Inspections where the breeder does not provide identity of the registered sire and/or dam**

In the vast majority of cases a breeder is able to provide the registered sire and dam for any given foal. On occasion, they may provide information on possible alternative registered sires and/or dams where, for example, more than one stallion is running out. The result being that foals were registered into the main studbook.

In one or two instances, historic records indicated that a breeder may not be able to provide the registered sire and dam for foals bred into a herd. DNA parentage testing resulted in the foals that had been inspected and/or branded being ineligible for the main studbook.

It was felt that where Society records indicated that such a problem existed, the foals should be micro-chipped and DNA parentage verified before inspection. The cost of DNA parentage verified would be covered by the breeder with the Society re-imbursing 50% for each foal that was subsequently eligible for registration in the main studbook.

**Decision:** TH proposed and SN seconded the proposal that where foals had consistently been put forward and subsequently found to be ineligible for registration that DNA parentage testing should be carried out prior to inspection. This was unanimously agreed.

#### **Item 5 - Yearbook**

GB had circulated an updated report regarding the 2021 Yearbook given that normal content such as show results would not be available due to Covid-19. The report gave alternative suggestions for content.

It was also felt that revenue may be low because corporate advertisers may not have the budget to advertise.

It was felt that all herds should be represented and given that this was not possible in the Yearbook, herds should be featured in rotation and all should be offered coverage on the website with the possibility of an interactive map.

With regard to the moorland herds, NH/RT and DW would be contacting and/or meeting with herd owners, the majority of which had now sent in their updated text/photographs for the Pony Map.

Content for the Yearbook should be sent to the editor by 31 December 2020.

#### **Item 6 - Website/Facebook**

It was noted that Facebook had been moved to Breed Promotion.

GB advised that the website was not as far forward as had been hoped. The design and site plan were in place making use of Mega Menus. However, the content of the existing website needed to be reviewed, updated and modernised.

Sole Trader, following six months as PR agents, had concluded that the feel, message and design of the website still covered all the key concepts and did not advocate making any changes.

JP had spoken to Lizzie Raspin who was happy to join the sub-committee and assist with content.

The Secretary advised that Sole Trader were in the process of making a few tweaks to allow for a Twitter and Facebook feed and this should be completed by 14<sup>th</sup> October.

A virtual workshop would then take place so that Sole Trader can run through Wordpress's operation so that populating the site can take place as content was updated.

It was particularly important that the downloads available to members and visitors were modern and eye-catching.

The Secretary would review all forms and passport and legislative information and ensure they were of a standard format.

The current contract with Biziserve has been extended to allow for the necessary development and work to take place.

JP suggested that a photographic competition be run to provide for new imagery for the website. GB was conscious that the Centenary sub-committee had included photographic competitions in their brief and felt further discussion should take place.

GB further advised that he would be bringing a proposal to the next meeting with regard to reciprocal links on the website.

#### **Item 7 - Exmoor Pony Festival Trust**

RT advised that given the Covid-19 situation everything was on hold for 2021 until the way ahead became clearer.

The decision had also been taken to cancel the proposed foal show.

### **Item 8 - EPS Centenary Events**

DSBA asked if there were any questions on the report that had been presented to the Trustees.

Given that there were none, DSBA moved on to providing an update on that report.

The story competition had been judged by Tortie Eveleigh and letters were going out advising the entrants of the results. It would not be possible to hold an 'in person' event in November so plans were underway for a virtual event where the winning stories would be read out.

The art competition closed on 31/10/2020 and a media campaign for entries would be launched.

The children's competition would be launched week commencing 5th October with information going to schools. The competition had a closing date of 20<sup>th</sup> December and could be a short story (500 words), poem, drawing or handicraft. The possibility of extending the closing date to encompass the Christmas holidays would be investigated.

It was agreed that the Centenary sub-committee would produce a booklet to accompany the Winter Newsletter to include the winning stories and further information on the Centenary. Given Covid-19, it was important that the membership were kept engaged with the Society.

The Autumn Newsletter was being written by the Secretary and should be available for review week commencing 5<sup>th</sup> October and ready for mailing week commencing 12<sup>th</sup> October.

The Winter Newsletter would go out in mid-December.

GB then referred to the Centenary Studbook and ran through the figures. It was agreed that this supplement to the 2000 Studbook giving registrations over a twenty year period (2001-2020) should be a limited edition with 100 copies printed and order placed in advance with a cost of between £15 and £20.

### **Item 9 - Review of Charity Policy Documents**

It was agreed that the policy documents would be presented to the November meeting. Given SB's wish to be involved in the Young Judge's competition, the review would be carried out by NH/GB and Secretary.

Appointments to the sub-committee would be considered at the November meeting.

### **Item 10 - Young Judge's Competition**

It was agreed that a sub-committee would be set up.

SB and JP agreed to form part of that sub-committee and Mandy Hill, Emma Wallace and April Westcott would be asked if they would also join the group.

JP advised that given her children may be involved in the competition, she would not be involved in the judging of the Cornish heat or the final.

### **Item 11 - Breed Promotion**

In order to avoid duplication of effort given the work to update the downloads for the website, it was agreed that the Website sub-committee would, in the first instance, look at Breed Promotion.

This would be reviewed following completion of the website.

### **Item 12 - Any Other Business**

**Yearbook:**

The Chairman advised that the matter concerning the Yearbook and a complaint from one member against another, had been resolved with a letter of apology being sent.

**Photographic Competition:**

See website/centenary.

**NPS Summer Championship Breed Accumulator:**

Carry forward to November meeting

**Rare bloodlines:**

Content of report noted.

**Central Prefix Register:**

Following discussion, it was agreed that the Management Committee would come up with a form of words as to when a prefix could be released by the Society.

The key elements were considered to be:

- 1) The holders of the prefix or their family should be contacted to ensure they were no longer going to breed and confirmation received in writing

Where 1) was not possible (breeder/relatives could not be traced) then

- 2) The prefix should not have been used for a minimum of 30 years
- 3) No pony carry the prefix should be alive

**Member email:**

Carry forward to November meeting

**Wildness Survey:**

SB confirmed that in 2019, the opinion of the committee had been that the protocol was neither robust or sound and this view was upheld by RT/TH.

GB felt that a carefully structured reply was required giving the Society's on research projects and the Glasgow University PhD.

**PR:**

GB reiterated the importance of Trustees feeding information to the Management Committee and from there onto Sole Trader.

**Meeting dates**

It was noted that not all Trustees would be able to attend all the meetings given their own work and personal commitments.

Whilst the dates were set, there was flexibility over the locations depending on whether or not face to face (currently up to 30 socially distanced) or virtual meetings would have to take place. Those who were unable to attend in person would be able to attend via TEAMS.

The Management Committee would meet in between the Trustee meetings to review actions and progress and inform the Trustees accordingly.

NH thanked everyone for their constructive participation and closed the meeting at 12.45pm.