

EXMOOR PONY SOCIETY

Minutes of the 'Virtual' Committee Meeting held on Tuesday, 12 January 2021

Nigel Hill (NH) Chairman
Geoff Bryant (GB) Vice-Chairman/Treasurer
David Wallace (DW) Vice-Chairman/ECHO
Toby Hickman (TH) Vice-Chairman
Dr Sue Baker (DSBA)/Scientific Officer
Sue Burger (SB)/Articles and liaison with PR Company
Vicky Lamb (VL)/Area Rep Liaison Officer
Stephanie Poulter (SP)/Conservation Grazing Officer
Claire Phillips (CP)/Breed Show
Rob Taylor (RT)/DNA and Moorland Communications

Susan McGeever (Secretary)

The Chairman, NH, opened the meeting at 10.07am and thanked everyone for their attendance. It was noted that the Trustees were holding virtual meetings to allow for continued good governance during the Covid pandemic.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received:
Gill Langdon (GL)/Friends and Exmoor Pony Festival
David Mansell (President)

It was noted that Toby Hickman (TH) would be joining the meeting at some stage during the morning session.

It was noted that David Brewer, due to computer issues, had only been to hear but not participate in the meeting.

2. Declaration of Interest/Confirmation of Confidentiality

Decision:

It was noted and agreed by all present that declarations of interest should be made in relation to the business set out in the agenda and Secretary's report.

DW advised that he might need to record a declaration of interest for an item under Another Other Business. It was noted that this item had been deferred to the March meeting.

Decision:

It was noted and agreed by all present that the Trustees should maintain confidentiality in accordance with the instructions of the Chairman.

3. Notification of Any Other Business on the agenda

The Trustees present did not raise any other items of business to be discussed at the meeting.

4. Approval of the Minutes of the Meetings held on 10 November 2020

The minutes of meeting on 10 November 2020 had been circulated to the Trustees and the Secretary had received no amendments.

Decision:

GB proposed and SB seconded the proposal that the minutes be adopted as a true record of the meeting and be signed by the Chairman and this was unanimously agreed.

5. Notification of matters pertaining to:

Health & Safety

The Secretary advised that there had been no reported H&S matters since the last meeting.

GDPR

The Secretary's advised there had been no reported breaches of data since the last meeting.

Safeguarding (Claire Phillips)

CP advised that there had been no reported Safeguarding matters since the last meeting.

The Secretary advised that there were still a number of volunteers (10) who had not signed the new Child Protection Policy and a further reminder had been sent.

Welfare

The Secretary advised that there had been no reported welfare cases to the Society since the last meeting.

6. Responsibilities of Trustees /Management Committee and Chairman's Report

Responsibilities of Trustees

The Chairman reminded Trustees that if they had been tasked with an action point then any actions taken should be reported to the Secretary in good time so that such reports could be included in the Management Committee or Trustee meetings accordingly. Wherever possible, Trustee actions points should be completed prior to the next meeting although it was noted that some tasks were by their very nature ongoing.

There were no questions from the Trustees regarding their responsibilities.

Management Committee and Chairman's Report

The notes from the Management Committee meetings on 15 December 2020 had been circulated to all Trustees and had been incorporated into the report for this meeting. Outstanding action points had also been incorporated into the report.

JP's resignation

The resignation of Jenna Payne has been circulated to all Trustees as had the appointment of David Brewer to fill the vacated post until May 2022. The Secretary reported that JP had advised that she was happy to continue as a member of the Centenary sub-committee if the Trustees wished her to, however, she did not wish to remain on the other assigned sub-committees.

Decision:

The Trustees accepted JP's kind offer to remain on the Centenary sub-committee with a particular interest in online events.

Trustees Code of Conduct

The updated version of the Trustees Code of Conduct had been circulated to all Trustees for approval as directed at last meeting.

Decision:

SB proposed and GB seconded the proposal that the new Trustees Code of Conduct be adopted and this was unanimously agreed.

Trustee Training

It was noted that DB had completed the Trustee Training session during his previous term of office.

Website Photographs

It was noted that all photographs had now been received.

Review of Articles of Association

GB advised that he had temporarily suspended work on the Articles of Association pending a clearer picture on Brexit and any implications this might have had for the Society.

Whilst there would clearly be some new operating procedures, it was hoped that continuing discussions would allow the Society to continue to monitor the population worldwide.

He would now push ahead with producing a draft for the Trustees to approve but would be mindful that the draft was done in such a way as to be able to cope with variances within GB and remain flexible for the future.

The Trustees had no questions.

Sub-committees

The composition of the following sub-committees was agreed:

Centenary: Sue Baker, Jenna Payne, Secretary

Website: Geoff Bryant, Sue Burge, Lizzie Raspin, Secretary

Breed promotion: Geoff Bryant, Sue Burger, Lizzie Raspin, Secretary

Young Judge's competition: SB and Emma Wallace /Mandy Hill plus involvement from April Westcott in the Exmoor heat and DB if agreeable

With regard to outstanding actions of the sub-committees the following was noted:

DNA trip to Ireland:

Deferred.

Outstanding DNA/Information from the Treasurer

DW reported that he had picked up the DNA records from Sandra Mansell together with a file on the HBLB.

The Secretary advised that she would not action outstanding DNA from previous years until all the parentage testing reports had been received for the 2020 foal crop. There was no doubt that the demise of AHT and Covid 19 had had a significant impact on the time taken for results to be reported. It was hoped that the situation would improve at Weatherbys adjusted to the additional workload.

Actions were currently be undertaken to allow the Society itself to export samples to Ireland by courier but from 1st January 2021, samples could be sent to Weatherbys UK for onward transition on a weekly basis. Samples with Weatherbys UK on the Friday would be with Weatherbys Ireland on the following Tuesday.

Where the sire and/or dam proved to be incorrect, additional work could be carried out at a charge of £9 per run. There would also be the option to use SNPs and Weatherbys would be supplying a cost.

DSBA asked if it would be worth investigating other laboratories in the UK but it was agreed that Weatherbys should be given the time and space to iron out any problems.

Showing:

The Secretary has sent the showing guidelines and the HOYS meeting report to NH/MH. NH advised that the updated guidelines would be presented to the March meeting.

Working Procedures

Deferred to February Management Meeting - action ongoing.

Letters from the Chairman

No further letters had been sent – action ongoing.

Presentations to outgoing officials

A flyer has been prepared for inclusion with the Winter newsletter.

NH advised that he had had to inform DB about the upcoming presentation when they discussed DB's appointment to the committee and he requested that this be deferred until he was no longer on committee.

NH advised TH that DB's appointment was to end May 22.

TH joined the meeting at 10.42

Winter Newsletter

GB advised that it was his fault that it has not been done and his next task was to polish off the newsletter for Sandy Wooderson to put into a tidy form. The draft would be shared with NH/Secretary and once finalised provided to the Secretary in PDF and word document form.

7. AGM 2021

The Government guidelines for charities under the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 were noted.

The Trustees were not in a position to make a decision on the date of the 2021 AGM, however, it was felt prudent to look to hold an EGM prior to 31 March 2021 for the sole purpose of allowing the membership to vote on the revised Articles of Association and Rules of the Society to permit virtual Trustee meetings and AGMs.

GB felt that holding an EGM should be achievable given the requirement for 21 days' notice and the ability to use postal votes.

NH advised that the AGM was often more of a social event and should be held in person if at all possible and early May was not looking overly hopeful at this point in time.

It was felt that the Articles of Association should reflect an easing of the quorum for statutory items (approval of minutes, accounts etc) but the major decisions such as changes to the rules needed to remain at the current level of 35 members being present so that the members felt the process was truly democratic.

Presentation of Cups and Awards

The Secretary advised that Denise Sykes was aware the presentation of the Helen Dashwood Trophy would take place at the 2021 AGM.

CP's report to the Trustees giving costings for the valuation of the cups is shown in Attachment A.

NH advised that he had been given a number of cups that would be passed to CP when current Government restrictions allow.

The Secretary had the Olympia cup which would also be passed to CP.

TH and GB both advised that due to the current lockdown they had been unable to speak to their respective jewellers.

The Trustees noted the expense associated with insurance quotes for the cups and replacement values bearing in mind that there was more of a historical value rather than a monetary value for the cups themselves.

Interim decision:

GB suggested as a halfway house and for archive purposes, a photographic record of the cups should be produced capturing all of the engraving and showing size against a ruler and recording weight. In the event of a cup being stolen, a replacement could be bought and the cup engraved if required.

Speakers

Andy Dell has confirmed that he would speak at the 2021 AGM. A PopRep report on the Exmoor pony would be run by Mr Dell before the AGM as well as a SPARKS report and a Mean Kinship report.

Andy Dell and the RBST would be working with Debbie Davy to produce reports on the genetics of the breed by allowing access to the RBST software that has superseded Grassroots Geneped.

Debbie Davy had already confirmed that she would be the second speaker.

8. Secretary's Report (SECRETARY)

The Secretary's report had been circulated to the Trustees prior to the meeting and showed the Society's actions to ensure continued compliance with Companies House, the Charity Commission and DEFRA Minimum Operating Procedures for Passport Issuing Offices.

It also showed the continued work undertaken with regard to Brexit, third country listing, mandatory microchipping, liaison with the RBST, liaison with the 826ESA, liaison with DEFRA and liaison with the daughter societies to provide the extended breeding programme and thus the ability to monitor the breed worldwide.

Administration work included the updating of procedures and QC work to ensure the database reflected the DNA samples and reports received from Sandra Mansell. Preparation of documents for scanning was ongoing.

Insurance

NH had spoken to GL and the Friends stock take would be completed by mid-February.

The Secretary had contacted the insurance company with respect to first aiders and reported as follows:

The insurance company expects the EPS to carry out risk assessments for all its activities, and take account of Covid 19 during the current pandemic. These activities include:

Inspections

Rides

Education talks

Walks

Shows etc

all of which are currently on file.

If the risk assessment deems that a first aider should be present then the EPS should ensure that a first aider is present. In some instances that might be a trained first aider, a trained outdoor first aider or St John's ambulance depending on the risk assessment.

With regard to the insurance review, quotes were being obtained from three companies to cover, general insurance cover; trustee liability cover and personal accident cover for inspectors. All companies had been asked to quote on all three types of cover.

DW requested that personal accident cover being expanded to include judges and then to include all volunteers and probationers undertaking work for or acting on behalf of the Society. The Secretary undertook to contact the insurance companies and add in this stipulation.

It was noted that Employees liability covers the society against any action anyone might take where the EPS was negligent in its duties and someone subsequently sued the Society.

Image Library (DSBA)

DSBA advised this was an ongoing project and the Secretary advised she had been unable to pick up all Dan Hancock's discs and copy to a USB stick due to current Government guidelines

Measuring Stick (DSBA)

Ongoing - DSBA monitoring situation.

Calvert Trust (NH/Secretary)

Ongoing - visit pending end of restrictions

Grassroots

Information had been circulated regarding the virtual workshop for Committee members. SB and CP had attended and the workshop was available to view online.

SB advised she had found the workshop very interesting and had been surprised at how much work could be undertaken on the Grassroots system.

The Secretary agreed that the Society did not use Grassroots to its full potential and needed to but that would require agreement from the Trustees.

Once the system was in the cloud more individuals would be able to access the system with individual rights as to which elements they could use. The online show entries were a prime example as was the ability of owners to update their own information and notify births etc.

Owners could not directly change the database themselves but by doing it online the Secretary was aware of the changes and they could then be authorised and the database updated.

There were no questions from the Trustees regarding the report but recognition that many projects were ongoing and being constantly updated to reflect current events.

9. Treasurer's Report (GB/SECRETARY)

The Secretary advised that a donation of £750 to general funds had been received from the Midland Exmoor Pony Show.

Natwest

GB advised that for various reasons the Society still did not have access to only banking.

Both he and the Secretary had mistakenly assumed that the Society's registered address would be the address registered with the bank as the registered address. This was not the case and thus the address change had only changed the correspondence address.

A fourth application for change of address had been submitted together with a new signature for GB and it was hoped that this would enable the change of address to go through.

Once the change of address had been approved then the 'return to branch marker' could be lifted and correspondence and statements could be sent to the Secretary at the registered office.

A further application for online banking could then be made.

Xero

The Secretary had been tasked with putting all the 2020 transactions up to 9 October 2020 onto Xero and it was hoped that this would be achieved in the next two weeks. Then once the 'marker' had been lifted on the account, it should be possible to receive the bank statements for the remainder of the year. As soon as this had been done and the coding added, the Treasurer would be in a position to circulate the financial figures to the Trustees and budgets for 2021 could be set.

Use of Funds

GB advised that no action had been taken to date and he would report to the next meeting.

Bye-Laws

GB advised that he had spoken to Sandra Mansell who had confirmed that the updated articles of association were changed to adopt all bye laws and there was nothing in the background.

Fundraising Action

DW and the Secretary had a TEAMS meeting on 8th January. It has been a constructive discussion lasting over an hour.

The Secretary had made a good point at the outset and that was there needed to be a purpose to the fundraising. A campaign so that donors knew where their money was going such as the EPS working with RBST to increase the amount of Exmoor stallion semen held in the gene bank. He was sure that all Trustees would be able to contribute ideas and then the PR agency could generate the publicity to get a campaign off the ground.

Fundraising was quite a specialist area and he felt it would be worthwhile to ask the membership if there is anyone with fundraising experience who would assist and bring skills to the committee.

The question needed to be asked 'how are you going to incentivise that person' and he foresaw some form of commission payment for the person bringing funds in. Or, perhaps, a Trustee would come onto committee with the requisite skills.

Over the years the Society had been against links of the website but links and banner ads assisted fundraising. He felt that this was something the Trustees should look at again. An example, would be Children in Need and Sainsburys – you could not have a bigger charity and a bigger link.

Educational material for the website was another area and there were Trustees involved in education who could help put material together.

He felt that at some stage the Trustees had to make some decisions and decide where they wanted to put their efforts and build a campaign. It was a huge subject and all Trustees wanted to raise money over and above the membership fees which could be used to further the Society's aims.

NH asked if there were any comments.

SB thanked DW and the Secretary and agreed fundraising was a massive area and there was a huge amount to be done. She felt that fundraising linked in to breed promotion and the various sub-committees link together for a meeting.

TH felt that links to organisations/companies was certainly worth looking at and a decision

DSBA agreed that it was important to make sure sub-committees were not working in isolation and overlapping on effort. And there was a general consensus that sub-committees had to collaborate and resources need to be more streamlined.

GB commented he had also raised the subject of links as advertisers in the newsletter often raised the question. He agreed it was a topic that needed to be considered and a means of choosing who the Society partnered with was needed and in such a way that we don't seem to be sold the Society out.

TH suggested asking Sole Trader to assist and DW agreed that they were part of the solution. Obvious links were the ENPA, Wildlife Trusts and the RBST.

Articles of Association to reflect change to Supporter

GB confirmed that this had been written into the draft Articles of Association/Rules.

200 Club Action

The November draw had taken place and the December draw would be drawn shortly.

Telephone/Broadband

The Secretary had researched both Zen and BT as requested.

Zen's private landline/broadband charges were slightly less than BT's business landline/broadband which would provide a better service.

Decision:

The Trustees instructed the Secretary to renew the current contract in the name of the Exmoor Pony Society and take a business package.

Cost of DNA

Ongoing

Microchip readers

RT advised that he had been in contact with Datamars and their readers appeared to fit the Society's requirements. He was investigating the most advantageous way of purchasing a reader. The cost was between £590 and £950. It was agreed the possibility of getting a reader donated to the Society should be considered especially given the growing popularity of re-wilding .

ENPA

ENPA meeting with the Chairman

NH reported on the meeting attending by DW and the ENPA on 11/11/2020. It had been an excellent meeting and they were very interested in the funded PhD. The ENPA IT people would be looking at the proposed SatNav project and the information centres would stock leaflets. The ENPA would look to put finance into specific projects.

Further meetings would take place as and when required.

Consider funding projects

The Secretary has been speaking to RBST regarding the gene bank and semen collection. The Exmoor pony is very under-represented in the gene bank and none of the samples are able to be sent abroad. RBST are happy to run a Mean Kinship report which would identify the stallions which are most needed. You can now test stallions away from the collecting studs to see if they would be a suitable candidate which lessens the initial costs. The average cost per stallion to is about £5000.

DSBA and the Secretary had discussed a project to increase the Exmoor's representation as a potential project for funding.

Trustees – good to hear

Other meetings

The Chairman and DW also reported that they had had further meetings with moorland breeders and in each had gone in with an open mind.

The genome project was a topic of conversation and it was noted that the project was under the jurisdiction of the RBST and that they provided updates to all stakeholders.

Discussion had taken place on the prospect of an upgrade system as a result of the genome project and as with all changes to the rules of the EPS that would be a matter for the membership based on the facts and the need.

National Equine Forum

The Secretary, Debbie Davy, DSBA and SB were signed up to attend the 'Just in Time' webinar and would report back to the Trustees. Michael Dewhurst unable to attend.

The Secretary and SB were signed up to attend the 'Great weight debate' webinar and again would report back to Trustees.

Attendance at the National Equine Forum would be decided at the February meeting.

Out of office hours phone numbers

Changes had been made to the answerphone message and the website.

Grassroots second license

The second belonged to the EPS and Grassroots were organizing for it to be transferred to Debbie Davy's computer. In the future access to the database would be available through the cloud.

The Secretary explained that Geneped was now considered to be outdated and DD was in touch with RBST to run PopRep, Sparks and Mean Kinship reports using the EPS's Grassroots data.

10. Show Affiliation Secretary's Report and Judge Training

The Secretary reported that shows continued to cancel for 2021 and that affiliations were being rolled over to 2022 and that she would continue to monitor the situation.

There were a number of action points outstanding that would be brought forward to the next meeting.

EPS Medals

The company that was sponsoring the EPS Medals is no longer able to do so due to Covid-19. The Trustees will need to consider if the awarding of the EPS Medals should continue at the breed show, area and area nominated shows.

POTY

The HBLB terms of reference were as follows:

HBLB has supported non-Thoroughbred breeds since the early 1960s. Grants are made to breed societies and the aim is to improve and maintain the quality of pure-breeding among Britain's native breeds of horse and pony. Since 2010 only breeds that are listed on the Rare Breeds Survival Trust Watchlist are eligible for funding.

Breed societies use their grants to preserve, improve and maintain their breeds in a variety of ways, such as stallion and mare premiums, youngstock grants, DNA testing or blood typing and Artificial Insemination (AI)/semen collection schemes.

The EPS was, therefore, able to provide premiums to ponies and Trustees were asked to consider how this should be done.

It was important that the EPS recorded the use of the HBLB grant and the compulsory 20% match funding required.

Judge Training

The Secretary continued to monitor the situation with regard to the possibility of holding an assessment in line with Government guidelines.

It has been clarified on Facebook new judges could not accept a probationer for the first three years they are on the panel.

Part of the discussion related to the EPS putting on judge training days as opposed to all the training being done inside the ring and this would form an item of discussion alongside the joint seminars currently undertaken.

11. Breed Show Secretary's Report

CP advised that no decision had yet been made as to whether Exford Show would go ahead or if, indeed, the breed show would be able to go ahead.

Grandstand media had been contacted with regard to the HOYS qualifier. The NPS were offering affiliations for 2021 but it was dependent on shows going ahead.

12. Project Report

PhD

DSBA's report on the progress of Debbie Davy's PhD is attached to this report. The key items are:

- a) University of Glasgow currently closed
- b) Potential for a full geno analysis
- c) Research herd of Exmoor ponies established at the university farm (potential of information boards).

There was a potential that Covid-19 would mean that an additional year was required to complete the PhD but that would become more apparent as 2021 progressed and there was potential of funding from the university. GB noted that if additional was funding sought from other sources the EPS would need to protect its interests. Another potential funding opportunity could be the PhD through crowd funding. DSBA would consult the EPS solicitor should such an event arise.

RBST/Genome Project

An email had been circulated to all Trustees from Christopher Price, CEO RBST, regarding the project and its potential. A further report was awaited at the end of January 2021 and project would be on the next agenda.

13. Area Report

VL advised that an email had been sent to all Area Reps but no responses had been received in the Secretary's office or by VL both in terms of the proposed meeting and area reports also YC's had been sent by Royal Mail.

GB advised that he would send through information on what area news had been received by Sandy Wooderson before the gentle nudge for information was made.

TH was working on the Exmoor Area news and RT advised that a number of moorland breeders had sent in information in response to DW's email. SP advised that Dai Thomas was working on the Welsh Area news. Information had been sent in from the overseas daughter societies.

It was noted that there was very little area news and area reps would need to think outside the box.

14. Inspections/Inspector's Meeting/DNA

See actions points regarding Inspector's meeting, first aid and risk assessments.

Inspections

Breeders had been given various options in 2020 – an inspection, the use of Rule 8 (a) 3 (ii) or a Section X passport. There were still two inspections to carry out both put back at the breeder's request.

When the decision was made to include Rule 8 (a) 3 (ii) was made by membership, it was envisaged that it would be used when it was not possible to send inspectors (i.e. overseas).

Covid-19 had changed this and there was the potential for it to be used extensively as opposed to 'exceptional circumstances' although it had been recognized by the Trustees that a pandemic could be judged to be an exceptional circumstance.

Member's emails

Two emails had been received questioning the Trustees decision to include an inspection panel reviewing the forms and photographs as part of the process as opposed to the Secretary carry out such review. It was noted that the Secretary was not a trained inspector and to put the onus on her to interpret the photographs was not appropriate.

NH felt that the wording of Rule 8 (a) 3 (ii) needed to be clarified so that breeder's opting to use the rule in exceptional circumstances understood the process.

Review of the process highlighted that it had not been easier to review photographs and in some instances they had been very dark or had not shown what was requested on the form i.e. close up of mane and tail etc. thus resulting in additional photographs having to be taken. It was also difficult to tell the foals apart if there was more than one.

This in turn raised questions given that the form stipulated that photographs should be taken in the presence of the vet completing the form and it was unlikely if the breeder took new photographs would be the case. In addition, the form called for an independent vet to complete the form and in some instances this might not have been the case.

The Trustees reasoning had been to make the use of Rule 8 (a) 3 (ii) as close to a normal inspection as possible but in reality, photographs were no substitute for an inspection and created a two tier system which had not been the intention of the rule and it was not a level playing field.

Moorland breeders had opted for an actual inspection because it was far easier than a vet working through the form and taking photographs of every foal.

If the rule was going to be used then the basics of the rule had to be adhered to and the wording and intention had to be clear.

The Secretary advised that 12 breeders/owners had used Rule 8 with a total of 25 ponies.

NH noted that emails had been received from 2 breeders (17%) who felt that was a difference of opinion in how the Trustees had interpreted the rule and how they, the breeder's, had interpreted the rule. It should be noted that the interpretation of any Rules of the Society decided by the Committee shall be final.

It was felt that the Trustees had created the form based on the wording of the rule and agreed that it was not part of the Secretary's remit to interpret the information on the form and the photographs and thus had appointed a team of inspectors. It was noted that having to go back and ask for photographs that met the criteria on the form could have created difficulties for the Secretary given she was not a qualified inspector.

After deep and meaningful discussion, the following decisions were agreed with a majority vote.

Decision 1:

To put forward an amendment to the wording of the rule to make it clear what was required of the breeder.

Decision 2:

To create material which would clearly show a set of specimen photographs and a video of a foal inspection to show vets what the inspectors were looking for. Whilst some breeders were vets, the vast majority of breeders used vets who were not aware of the inspection process or the breed standard. The vet should be present in at least one of the photographs.

Decision 3:

To appoint a different set of three inspectors each year for any foals put forward for registration under Rule 8 (a) 3 (ii).

Decision 4:

To organize an Inspection Discussion Day as soon as Covid-19 restrictions would allow.

Decision 5:

To write to the two breeders in question along the following lines:

The matter was fully discussed at the committee meeting held on 12th January.

The Trustees have looked at Rule 8 (a) 3 (ii) and appreciate whilst it does not actually say photographs will be inspected by sub-committee of inspectors, it was clearly what was intended, otherwise, the taking of photographs would not have been required.

The Trustees will put forward amended wording to the next AGM to make clear the reasons for the form and photographs.

The Trustees are fully committed to having another open inspection discussion day when Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

Decision 6:

To write to the vets completing the forms and ask for their feedback.

Decision 7:

To write to breeders who had used the rule for their feedback.

It was important that there was a workable system moving forward.

The dialogue of social media was considered unhelpful and, as ever, in such forums, the posters put up the information that backed their position. It could have had a negative impact on the society and on inspectors. Whilst no names were mentioned, those involved in the various inspections would have realized the criticism was aimed at them.

The Society appointed trained inspectors who reported back what they saw on the day and the Trustees were not in a position to question their opinion given that they were not present on the day. If a foal did not pass inspection then they were eligible to be re-inspected.

It also had to be remembered that many on social media were not members of the Society and would never had a foal inspected and would not know the rules or the processes.

SB had written a piece about inspections which had been well received.

DSBA asked if the practical thing would be to amend Rule 8 (a) 3 (ii) at the same time as the EGM to approve the new Article of Association and it was felt that this would be possible.

SP felt the rule was for exceptional circumstances and hopefully will not have to use it again as there were other options.

15. Yearbook

GB advised that reports have been received from the German daughter society and the Czech Republic and requested from Sweden. The material was starting to flow in and some area reports and herd reports had been received. The report on the virtual show had also been received.

GB was hoping to kick start further articles/advertising with the winter newsletter which was due to now go out the week of 25th January.

He asked all those with action points against their names to send in the material as soon as possible.

16. Website/Facebook/Twitter

The Secretary advised that Biziserve would stop hosting websites from 30 June 2021 and, therefore, this created a deadline for the new website to be up and running.

It was agreed it was imperative that the Website Sub-Committee moved the project forward and to this end the Secretary was setting up website training and had made a start to review the information on the site.

GB asked all Trustees to re-read current website and the Secretary asked that rather than all Trustees review the whole site, they looked at the pages which related to their area of responsibility and report back to the Secretary. Where the changes were simple these could be made by the website sub-committee but where a re-write was required, it would be helpful if the responsible Trustee could create the new document.

It was agreed that it was not realistic for 3/4 people to update 200-300 pages. Repetitious items should also be identified and wherever possible links inserted to pages so that information only needed to be updated once.

Trustees were also asked to identify where a document was difficult to find although it was noted that a download section had been set up.

The Secretary undertook to standardise all the forms.

SB advised that she had had a very constructive meeting with Lizzie Raspin (LR) and discussed the website and social media. LR had volunteered to take on Twitter and Instagram. In this regard, the Secretary had set up an EPS Instagram account and it was linked to Facebook. The Secretary asked the EPS quote when re-tweeting as this was a good way of creating more interest and gaining information.

GB confirmed that the current colour scheme of the website was based on the Yearbook but that this was not set in stone and was open to discussion.

It was noted that the PR were currently doing most of twitter although the Secretary had ran a campaign about the centenary at the beginning of the year alongside the Facebook campaign. It was felt that they did not have sufficient knowledge to be able to quote effectively at this present time.

Prior to taking the site live, it was important to note that the website reflected the key aims and core messages of the Society and this would be covered

It was agreed that DSBA's article should go into the Yearbook and DSBA advised that she would like to make some changes to bring it up to date.

The Secretary's report on the Facebook and Twitter campaigns was taken as written.

17. Exmoor Pony Festival Trust

RT advised that there was nothing to report due to Covid-19 and undertook to contact Linzi Green regarding the account.

Moorland Mousie Trust

NH, DW and the Secretary had held a virtual meeting with Linzi Green and Juliet Rogers on 1/12/20 lasting 2 hours.

It has been a very good meeting and they were very supportive of the Society and the centenary year and the two organisations looked forward to working with each other particularly on the Festival.

18. EPS Centenary Events

The Secretary's report on forthcoming centenary articles was accepted as read and the list would continue to be updated and asked Trustees to put forward suggestions.

DSBA and the Secretary had had a TEAMS meeting and it was very much as case of having to adapt to Covid-19 situation and they were in the process of migrating planned spring events online. A virtual stallion parade was planned which JP and LR would co-ordinate. The art exhibition would move online as would the children's exhibition and DSBA and Secretary were just in the process of sorting out all the entries to go to the judges. It was hoped Adam Henson would film the ponies during the year and had requested a weekday event for this purpose. It was noted that SP and Ann Nicholls would be inspecting foals once Covid-19 restrictions allowed.

It was agreed that asking key partners to record a message of celebrating the EPS's centenary would be beneficial and this would be actioned.

It was noted that 65 people had tuned in to you-tube for story reading and there had been another 240 views. The video would be revised to create a play list so viewers could listen to one story at a time.

19. Review of Charity Policy Documents

Given current workload the sub-committee would like to present the papers to the March meeting.

20. Young Judge's Competition

The sub-committee was waiting to see whether the competition would be able to go ahead in 2021.

21. Breed Promotion

Advertising Budget

GB/Secretary to prepare when 2020 financial report is available

Tourist sites/Rare Breed Farms

Ongoing action by Secretary.

Sole Trader

The report from Sole Trader was accepted as read and it was agreed that an online meeting would be beneficial.

It was noted that SB was continuing to write articles but need input from Trustees and members.

Portly French had been appointed to the position of Young Reporter and SB would liaise with her over articles.

Breed promotional material

A review of the Society's literature was being undertaken with the Website sub-committee taking the lead.

Literature would be distributed to the relevant Trustees for comment.

Core message/strapline

It was agreed that time should be set aside to discuss this one topic away from the Trustee meetings.

Decision:

The Trustees together with LR and Sole Trader would hold a virtual meeting on 21 January at 10am to brainstorm the topic. Those unable to attend should send their ideas into the Secretary.

DSBA commented before we leave, can I say something about strapline. It needs to say something about us as well as what we do. It has to give the right impression about the Society and the image we present. Her initial thoughts had been:

Passionate dedicated guardians devoted
Conservation public education and best breeding practice

Dedicated guardians conserving, encouraging responsible breeding and creating awareness.

22. Conservation grazing

The Secretary advised that she had not had the time to action those tasks assigned to her but she hoped to address this in the near future.

A list of action points had been circulated to the sub-committee and the Trustees.

Item 23 - Any Other Business

Nominate a charity

The Secretary had circulated requests to Trustees to nominate the Society for funds as and when such opportunities arose.

Request for a RDA pony

A call should be put out to the membership to ascertain if a suitable pony was available to loan.

Request for existing President/President Elect to remain in place

The Trustees felt that this was a decision for the membership given that it was governed by the Articles of Association. It was noted there was no precedent for such a request.

Decision:

The Trustees agreed with one abstention (CP) that status quo should continue.

DNA Parentage Testing

The Secretary had received an update during the lunch break on additional work undertaken to establish parentage testing.

Weatherbys had advised that they would be making a charge to run additional ponies against the database as opposed to individual sires/dams.

Decision:

The Trustees decided that breeders should be given this option.

The Secretary also advised that she was waiting for confirmation of the costs of using the more advanced SNPs testing and this would be brought forward to the next meeting.

The following items were carried forward to the March meeting:

NPS Accumulator

Request for funding

NH closed the meeting at 15.51 and thanked everyone for their hardwork.

The next meeting would take place on 2 March 2021 and unless restrictions changed, it would be a virtual meeting.