

EXMOOR PONY SOCIETY

Trustee Minutes from the 'Virtual' Committee Meeting held on Thursday, 6 May 2021

Nigel Hill (NH) Chairman
Geoff Bryant (GB) Vice-Chairman/Treasurer
David Wallace (DW) Vice-Chairman/ECHO
David Brewer (DB)/Policies
Sue Burger (SB)/Articles and liaison with PR Company
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 10.00am 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:

Dr Sue Baker (DSBA)/Scientific Officer
Toby Hickman (TH) Vice-Chairman
Vicky Lamb (VL)/Area Rep Liaison Officer
David Mansell (President)

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.

There were no declarations of interest.

Decision:

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

Proposer GB, seconder SB – unanimous.

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 2 March 2021 and 8 April 2021

The minutes of meeting on 2 March 2021 had been circulated to the Trustees and any notified amendments incorporated.

Decision:

SP proposed and DW 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.

The minutes of meeting on 8 April 2021 had been circulated to the Trustees and any notified amendments incorporated.

Decision:

SB proposed and RT 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 who had not signed the new Child Protection Policy and a further reminder had been sent (DW).

Welfare

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

However, concerns had been raised about ponies on Danish re-wilding sites it was agreed to circulate the email to all Trustees for feedback and action.

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.

Management Committee and Chairman's Report

The notes from the Management Committee meetings on 13 April 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.

It was noted that Weatherbys were looking to improve their service and the Secretary was working with them on outstanding issues.

Grassroots were working on obtaining the second licence.

7. AGM 2021

GB advised that the revised Articles of Association had been sent to all Trustees and had been put together in conjunction with and approved by the Society's solicitor.

He recommended that the Articles of Association go forward to the Annual General Meeting.

The changes to the Articles of Association also meant that there was a new rule regarding membership which would mean that all subsequent rules were re-numbered.

In addition, there was the change to Rule 8 (a) (3) (ii) to be included in the Rules.

It was proposed by NH, seconded by SB and unanimously agreed that there should be separate votes for each section:

1. Articles of Association
2. New Rule 6
3. Re-wording of Rule 8 (now 9)

NH and DW agreed to go to Raleghs Cross to finalise arrangements for the Annual General Meeting

Cups and Awards

CP had called in all cumulative cups. DW to follow up on those on Exmoor.

The Secretary reported that both speakers were in place and were happy to attend the meeting or provide an online presentation.

8. Secretary's Report

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.

The Secretary continued to attend DEFRA and associated meetings relating to Breed Societies and PIO status.

There were no questions from the Trustees on general administration.

Friends would have a stand at the AGM and seek to sell off older merchandise. A final stock take was being undertaken and information sent to the Treasurer. Storage for Friends items was a priority especially with regard to the books.

NH/Secretary were in contact with Christopher Price regarding the Genome Project and a date was awaited for a meeting to discuss its future.

Concern was again expressed over the slowness of DNA results resulting from the demise of AHT and Covid-19. The Secretary asked if the Trustees wished to investigate other laboratories and a decision was deferred until September.

The Secretary would continue to monitor all outstanding items and bring forward to the next meeting.

9. Treasurer's Report

GB reported that the 2020 Accounts were nearing finalisation and that all systems relating to the computerisation of the accounts was now in place. A number of modifications had been identified during the process.

The accountant's knowledge of the Charity Sector had proved invaluable and the accounts would be presented in a different format. GB would write a preface to the accounts for the AGM and the accountant would be in attendance to answer any questions.

There would be a requirement to report the accounts again due to the need to include up to date Friends information.

Financial reports for the year 2021 would be in place for the next Trustee's meeting.

Trustee's decisions regarding the use of undesignated funds needed to be recorded and reflected within the accounts – the funding of the Glasgow project was a key example where the Trustees set aside £90,000 plus costs.

GB advised that Trustees could email him with regard to any questions or queries.

The Chairman thanked GB for his work and the Secretary for her work in putting the accounts on line as well answering questions regarding the 2020 accounts.

It was agreed that the precised financial information with respect to the accounts would be included in the AGM book. The full accounts (22 pages) would be available upon request.

The full accounts would be posted on the website and copies available at the AGM.

PayPal

Further authentication was currently underway to ensure the system was set up correctly.

Direct Debit

Work was ongoing.

Gift Aid

Work was ongoing.

Fundraising

The notes from the Fundraising meetings on 16/3/21 and 16/4/21 had been circulated to the Trustees.

It was noted that the target was £100,000 to ensure sufficient genetic material was placed within the RBST gene bank.

Trustees expenses

Bring forward when gift aid in place.

Grassroots

A licence was being set up for Debbie Davy to assist with PhD work. At present, there was no cost implication.

200 Club

DW had agreed to assist the Secretary in running the 200 Club. This would take effect from 1 July and the June draw following renewals effective 1 June.

Telephone/Broadband

Secretary to set up.

DNA costings

Awaiting completion of accounts.

Microchip Reader

RT advised that he was close to making the purchase of a new reader and hoped to negotiate a good price around the £500 mark.

ENPA

No further meetings had taken place to date.

RT advised that he was working with Richard Eales to sort out the ENPA herds.

Native Pony Breeds (supplementary registers)

As requested the Secretary had contacted the other native pony breeds with regard to the use of supplementary registers and the responses had been included in the report for this meeting.

Only the Dartmoors currently operated an upgrading system for females only over four generations under stringent conditions which required ponies to move to a New Take.

An outline for a similar scheme for Exmoor ponies was on file.

A presentation on the status of the Exmoor pony and breeding policies would be given at the AGM.

National Equine Forum

SB/VL and the Secretary had attended the online forum and concentrated on those areas of specific interest to the breed.

There was a move to ensure that all passports were identical in pages and structure and that virtual passports could be introduced in the future.

The Secretary advised that DEFRA were currently consulting all PIOs on the subject of Equine ID and there had been a number of meetings.

The important information for the breed was the section of the studbook and the pedigree which was currently held within the non-statutory pages of the document.

10. Show Affiliation Secretary's Report and Judge Training

The Secretary's report on show affiliations was taken as read.

On the formal proposal of SB, seconded by SP and unanimously agreed, it was agreed that a centenary rosette would go out to all those participating in affiliated shows, area shows, the virtual stallion parade and the online shows.

Results would be collated to allow for one rosette per person. Area shows would be allocated a number of rosettes and this would be taken into account when collating information to send out rosettes at the end of the year.

Judge Training

It was still anticipated that a judge assessment day would take place in the autumn.

11. Breed Show Secretary's Report

NH advised that he had met with the Exford Show organisers and the show would be going ahead.

Elizabeth Etchells would be co-ordinating entries and numbers prior to the show.

A Show Secretary was required on the day and it was agreed that the position would be remunerated. NH/DW undertook to speak to possible candidates.

It was proposed by RT, seconded by DB and unanimously agreed that the sum of £100 would be offered to the selected candidate.

Any complaints on the day should be directed to the Trustees and one Trustee should be in the tent at all times.

It was also noted that several people were required on the day to co-ordinate rosettes and trophies which were now with NH.

It was still intended to include a tribute to Gill Langdon (Jackie Ablett) through a Tawbitts parade and include dress and showing bridles/ halters from across the years.

Trustees and the Secretary should be available during the day to answer questions and promote the Society on the day.

It was agreed that all Trustees should have badges and DW undertook ascertain the cost and report back.

12. Project Report

In the absence of DSBA, the Secretary read the report that had been circulated to all Trustees.

13. Area Report

In the absence of VL, the Secretary had kept in touch with all area reps and actioned the Trustees offer of assistance.

SB proposed and SP seconded the proposal that Megan Gillon take on the role of Scottish Area Rep and this was unanimously agreed.

RT proposed and SP seconded the proposal that SB step into VL's shoes for the time being and this was unanimously agreed.

SB asked the Secretary to provide full contact details for the areas and it was noted that this information was available on the website.

It was important that area events were published on the website and not just through Facebook. SB undertook to remind Area Reps to send details of events to the Secretary.

SB would organise a meeting of the Area Reps and the Chairman and Secretary would attend.

14. Inspections/Inspector's Meeting/DNA

The Trustees ran through the various action points:

1. The revised wording for Rule 8 devised by the sub-committee had been agreed.
2. NH/RT undertook to provide an inspection video and this would form part of the material for vets to follow.
3. Appointing an inspection team to review Rule 8 registrations would be done as and when necessary.
4. Inspection Discussion Day – no response had been received from the venue in Stratford. Secretary to contact again. NH/MB and SB would organise the event.
5. NH would write to the breeders who had submitted questions once details of the discussion day were finalised.
6. The sub-committee would prepare wording for a questionnaire for vets.

7. The sub-committee would prepare wording for a questionnaire for breeders.

Inspector's Meeting

It was still intended to hold inspector's meetings around the country as and when feasible and NH/RT would arrange them. There might be some reluctance to travel.

First Aid

The Secretary had provided the responses received from various inspectors regarding First Aid qualifications and courses.

It was agreed that the scribe was the preferred holder of a First Aid certificate.

SB undertook to re-assess the risk assessment given that the soles of feet were no longer inspected. It was noted that moorland inspections were quite different to in-ground inspections and a supplement to the general risk assessment would be needed to cover the moor.

The Secretary advised that the insurers recommended that hard hats were worn and not all inspectors wished to.

The risk assessment would have to include all advisable precautions and that it was expected that all inspectors would take reasonable action to protect themselves against injury. Inspectors would need to sign a document to say that they had read and understood the risk assessment.

It was noted that there were four people training to become inspectors.

15. Yearbook

GB apologized for the Yearbook being late and the scheduled date for delivery was 14th May. GB felt that Yearbook should be sent out as soon as possible.

Given the proximity to the AGM mailing, the Secretary asked if all documentation should go out together.

DB proposed and RT seconded the proposal that there be two mailings. One Trustee voted against the proposal.

16. Website/Facebook/Twitter

Website

GB advised that a group of people had been working through the existing website but there was still the task of moving the information across to the new site.

The Secretary advised that she had been updating the existing website.

Facebook

The page was kept updated.

A further budget of £20 was agreed to boost posts of interest.

Twitter

A second EPS account had been removed.

YouTube

The virtual stallion parade videos has been uploaded.

Instagram

An Instagram account had been set up.

17. Exmoor Pony Festival Trust (RT)

RT advised that a number of events had been planned for the month of August.

It was hoped the bank account would be sorted out shortly.

18. EPS Centenary Events

The report of the Centenary sub-committee on 28/4/21 had been circulated to Trustees.

The purchase of merchandise was being actioned through Friends.

19. Review of Charity Policy Documents

DB advised he had reviewed the policy documents and highlighted the need for some amendments.

As the Charity was now an employer, a number of new documents would need to be produced.

The Charity Commission website provided guidelines for all documentation which he would tailor to the needs of the Society and present the updated EPS policy documents to the next meeting.

The finance document needed to be reviewed to allow for the online payment of day to day bills.

Major expenditure would have to be approved by the Trustees.

20. Young Judge's Competition

Given the current circumstances, it was felt that the next competition should be scheduled for 2022.

SB proposed and SP seconded the proposal that the competition be deferred to 2022 and this was unanimously agreed.

21. Breed Promotion

The Trustees had been provided with a report by the Secretary. Key points highlighted were:

A budget to include funding from the HBLB would be presented to the next meeting.

Articles were being written for a number of magazines including Country Life.

The Conservation Grazing leaflets required to be put into a better format with more photographs. SP would work with DSBA and Steve Lodge.

23. Any Other Business

A number of items would be carried forward to the next meeting.

The next meeting was scheduled for 6 July and it was agreed to bring the meeting forward to 30 June 2021.

It was agreed that meetings would normally take place on a Tuesday and would be 2/3rds online and 1/3 face to face to allow for people from all over the country to apply to become a Trustee.

NH closed the meeting at 14.59