

EXMOOR PONY SOCIETY

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Saturday, 7th September 2019 at the Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross

Present:

Mr D Brewer (Chairman - DB), Mr G Bryant (GB), Mr T Hickman (TH), Mr N Hill (NH), Dr S Baker (SB), Mrs G Langdon (GL), Mrs J Payne (JP), Mrs C Phillips (CP), Mr R Taylor (RT) and Mr D Wallace (DW).

Mrs S Mansell (Treasurer) and Mrs S McGeever (Secretary) were also in attendance.

The meeting commenced at 10.30am with Mr David Brewer in the Chair.

1. Apologies for Absence

Mrs F Dickson (FD), Mrs V Lamb (VL), Mrs J McLaren (JM) and Mrs A Nicholls (President).

2. Declaration of Interest/Declaration of Loyalty/Confirmation of Confidentiality

DB reminded all Trustees of their duty to respect the confidentiality of the meeting and only disseminate information where it had been agreed to do so – this was extremely important and should be adhered to.

GL advised that she would be declaring an interest when the discussion moved to inspector training – Item 17.

The Committee Meeting was then adjourned so that the Trustees could attend the Friends of Exmoor Ponies Ltd Annual General Meeting.

The Trustees meeting was reconvened and DB passed the Joint Chair to Mr Nigel Hill and Mr Geoff Bryant to allow the Trustees present to adopt the minutes of the special meeting held on 26th July 2019 and the Secretary and the Treasurer left the room. Following these discussions the Secretary and the Treasurer re-joined the meeting and DB took the chair.

3. Notification of Any Other Business

JP asked for an explanation of the Child Protection Policy and the Pony Map. The Secretary responded that all judges and inspectors were currently asked to sign a self-declaration Child Protection Policy rather than the Society carrying out DBS checks. The Pony Map had been published several years ago and required updating – all moorland herd owners had been contacted requesting updates and replies were still awaited from some.

RT advised that Dunster Estate (Rodhuish and Blackhills) would be registering foals in 2019 and asked if they could be designated a moorland herd. It was noted that the requirement was for a herd to be breeding for 5 years and be used for conservation grazing. DW agreed that his stockman would assist with the 2019 inspection to teach good practice.

4. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of 28th June 2019

GB proposed and SB seconded the proposal that the minutes of the meeting of 28th June be approved and this was unanimously agreed.

5. Review of the action log

As requested by the Trustees, the Secretary had updated the Action Log and this now formed the majority of her report to the Trustees giving individual tasks and actions taken/required. Where an item had been completed, the Action Log item had been closed. The majority of Secretarial items covered the day to day running of the office both for the Society and as a Passport Issuing Office.

6. Matters Arising (*Major items have been given their own agenda item.*)

Measuring Stick - SB advised that she wished to have an agreement and insurance in place before its presentation to The Lion. A draft agreement had been prepared and, following a valuation of the stick at £80-100 with a replacement value of £350, a quote for insurance received of £8.91 up until April 2020.

GB advised that it was important that the display case and the measuring stick were clearly marked as the property of the Exmoor Pony Society. SB confirmed this would be done and had also prepared a notice to go alongside the display case.

It was not possible for Ann Le Bas to present the stick but a photograph of the measuring stick being used to measure a pony had been obtained and this would form part of the press release. A copy of the press release would be sent to Ann Le Bas.

Action: SB

Microchip Readers – RT advised that there was little or no value in the current readers and it was agreed that these would remain with the current moorland breeders who had signed for them. A new deeper reaching reader would be purchased specifically for the moorland inspections and be held by RT. The cost of such readers varied from £500-£1000 with a printer that would provide a print out of all the microchip numbers read at any inspection. This was particularly useful to the Secretary who could then update the database as to which ponies were seen in any given year.

It was proposed by JP, seconded by GB and unanimously agreed that the sum of up to £750 would be made available to purchase a microchip reader and printer.

Action: RT to proceed with purchase

ENPA meeting – SB asked if there had been any further information regarding the ENPA and meetings pertaining to the Genome Project and the Treasurer advised that there had been a number of staff changes which could account for the different make-up of meetings. There had not been a full meeting of the group.

7. Secretary's Report

The Secretary advised that the current Area Reps for the Berks, Glos, Hants and Wilts area had not signed the GDPR agreement and, therefore, had not received a list of members in their area – a further phone call would be made. The Area Rep page on the website would be updated to reflect the new format for contact information.

Action: Secretary

It was agreed that judge's did not need to sign the GDPR agreement and that the information given to inspector's was published in the studbook and, therefore, in the public domain and thus did not fall under the current GDPR regulations.

SB asked the Secretary to contact Lucy Allen regarding her university dissertation on male lineages to gain more background information and the Secretary undertook to do so and pass the information to SB.

Action: Secretary

Articles continued to be submitted by Mrs Burger and Mrs Wooderson, the Secretary undertook to continue to try to obtain editorial in the 2021 Exmoor Review to mark the EPS's centenary.

Action: Secretary

SB was cataloguing the EPS photo archive and it was disappointing that there had been no response to the call for photographs in the Summer Newsletter.

GL advised that the new leaflets produced at the start of the summer had been distributed to visitor centres (Dulverton, Dunster, Lynton and Porlock) and was also proving very popular at events. It was felt that the leaflet could be more widely distributed – village halls, tourist venues, supermarkets etc and the Secretary advised she would look out the cost of leaflets at the motorway services. There was also a leaflet exchange day on Exmoor and again this would be looked into to.

Action: Secretary

The Secretary advised that the leaflets were also at a riding school in London where it was hoped that an Exmoor pony would be present to promote the breed.

8. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer asked if there were any questions regarding the accounts. The comparison chart showed that the Society had been losing approximately £5000 per annum based on income attributed to day to day activities and excluding donations over £10. This loss was met through the reserves, donations and legacies and a breakdown on these funds including the Pam Ney Legacy and the Marion Williams Bursary was provided.

JP advised that Marion William Bursary rosettes had not been issued on the day at a recent show.

Action: Show Affiliation Secretary

GB asked for confirmation that the 2018 figures on the financial statement related to the period up to the end of June 2018 and the Treasurer confirmed this was the case.

DB noted that the Society was losing more members than it was gaining and this was true for many societies. He felt discussion should take place on how to attract new members and membership should be put on the agenda for the future strategy meeting.

The Secretary advised that in recent years more often than not it was the case that people only became members when they were showing their ponies rather than to support the Society and the breed. It was why there had been discussion of a 'supporter' category that ran aside the Articles of Association.

Lapsed members received two letters advising them their membership dues were outstanding and GL felt that a personal call was worthwhile. Secretary advised that with the new GDPR regulations, Area Reps no longer received a list of members who had not paid in any given year. JP advised that the advice she had received from a solicitor was that someone who had joined a society/ mailing list had showed the intent of their interest and they could, therefore, be contacted. The Secretary would send a list to each Area Rep and invite them to make personal contact with lapsed members.

Action: Secretary

It was also felt that Friends should have membership forms on the stand.

Action: Secretary

9. Review of policy on donations

GB and NH asked what the current policy was on donations i.e. what was the cut-off point as to when they went into Special Projects or into the general running of the Society.

The Treasurer advised that all donations over £10 were currently allocated to reserves unless given for something specific i.e. Pam Ney Legacy and Marion Williams Bursary.

GB felt that the figure of £10 should be increased and whilst DW felt it should form part of the future strategy agenda it was proposed by TH, seconded by NH and unanimously agreed that the figure should increase to £100 with immediate effect unless the donor had specifically named a use. The figure would be subject to further review.

The Treasurer undertook to transfer donations of £100 or under donated during the first two quarters into the general account.

10. Show Affiliation Secretary's Report

Given that FD was relinquishing the post, it was agreed that the Treasurer, the Secretary, JP and, if available, Mrs Taylor who had all held the post of Affiliation Secretary would write a job description for future applicants and that the Trustees would consider potential candidates.

RT did not feel it had to be a position held by a Trustee.

11. Breed Show Secretary's Report

CP reported that the number of entries was down in 2019 and that there had only been one child.

She felt that some rings had been judged quickly with the result that some competitors missed classes.

CP also reported that there had been problems with the PA System, and that only been three ponies in the parade and the Exford Show committee had been disappointed. However, a cheque for £500 would be forthcoming and RT commended her for securing the funds.

DB felt that decisions had to be made especially in light of the emails from various members regarding the show and its scheduling. He was in favour of continuing to be part of Exford Show and believed that there should be incentives in place to ensure a good turnout in the parade and the Society should make full use of its representatives on the Exford Show committee.

JP felt that there was a need to look at the classes and ensure that the show truly promoted the ponies and their versatility. There was certainly a case of the HOYS qualifier to be moved to the morning and this would encourage these ponies to enter other classes.

DW felt that there should be a sub-committee to assimilate the emails received and GB advised that there was another email from competitors and GL advised that she would also be putting in a written submission.

It was proposed by GB, seconded by DW and unanimously agreed that CP would chair a sub-committee consisting of GB, GL and JP and if available Lisa Clarke, Sarah Taylor and Emma Wallace. The sub-committee would submit its report to the committee by mid-November for discussion at the December meeting.

12. Project Report

Genome Project – The Treasurer reported that there was nothing to report with regard to the Genome Project. She advised that the Aberystwyth University for the Dartmoor Hill Ponies had used 50,000 markers whilst the Exmoor Pony Genome Project was looking to use 2,500,000 markers.

PhD- SB advised that the EPS funded PhD study at the University of Glasgow had started on 1st July 2019 and the first year outline plan had been approved. Work was ongoing between the EPS's solicitor, the university and Mrs Debbie Davy who was conducting the study with regard to the signed contract and intellectual property rights. The project would look at the use of Exmoors in land management and conservation as well as clarify the ancient genetics in the breed and its overall genetic health in present day. The first scheduled report was due at the end of the year but Dr Bake hoped to have the report in time for the December meeting. The first tranche of money had been paid to the University of Glasgow.

There was evidence that Exmoor ponies were being used in re-wilding and Secretary advised that she had had several enquiries for ponies for such projects. Mrs Davy had recently attending a re-wilding course in Denmark.

It was noted that the decision to fund the PhD at the June 2018 meeting was recorded in the Trustee Notes and not in the minutes.

It was proposed by SB, seconded by TH and unanimously agreed that the decision to fund the PhD should be added to the minutes of the meeting and duly signed by the Chairman.

Action: Secretary

It was agreed that the decision to fund the PhD should be advised to the membership in the Autumn Newsletter and SB agreed to send the wording to the Secretary by the end of October.

Action: SB

SB advised that the study should show scientific reasons for using Exmoors for re-wilding rather than it being simply anecdotal. It would not provide information on whether the use of Exmoors is preferential to other breeds – that would require comparison studies.

PopReport – Secretary advised that the Popreport had been sent to all Trustees and that she had asked Mr Dewhurst for his thoughts and these had also been circulated to the Trustees which had said that the popreport was a useful tool and perhaps needed to be used in conjunction with data from geneped.

13. Health and Safety Report

It was noted that there had been no health and safety issued reported since the last meeting.

It was agreed that the Health and Safety at Work Law and Intro to Health booklet would be provided to all volunteers.

Action: Secretary

It was confirmed that DBS checks were not required for judges and inspectors although it was felt that the EPS's safeguarding policy should be on the website and made available.

Action: Secretary

14. Review of honorariums

It was noted that the Treasurer received £2000 per annum and Secretary a little over £12000 per annum following an increase in 2018.

It was agreed that the review of honorariums would be part of the Future Strategy meeting.

15. Inspections/Inspectors Meeting

Inspectors Meeting - It was noted that there were insufficient inspectors able to attend the inspectors meeting to make it worthwhile and it was noted that there were a number of reasons including clashes with other events.

DB felt that such meetings were important to provide for commonality in the inspection process and to hear inspector's views.

Both the Treasurer and the Secretary advised that some inspectors felt that with the recent rule changes, the need to inspect had diminished but GL felt that it was still extremely important and DB concurred with this. There was no doubt that faults were being seen less frequently than 20 years ago and that reinforced the reason for inspections and there was no doubt that breeders wished the ponies to be inspected.

DB confirmed that he would chair a re-arranged meeting and would set the agenda with the assistance of the Secretary.

Action: DB

SB felt that inspectors were the eyes and ears of the Society and provided an interface between the Society and its members and she felt that the Society needed to know what they were seeing.

The Secretary advised that she had resent the email to all inspectors and further replies had been received since she updated the Action Log.

The Secretary advised that the inspector's guidelines had been updated again to reflect current practice by a group comprising of Mrs Burger, GB and RT.

Inspections – Secretary advised that arrangements for inspections were under way and it was felt that where a good number of foals were being inspected, it would be useful that the passports of the dams were available. There were some 40 foals to inspect in 4 locations in the Czech Republic and a breakdown of the herds would be made available to the inspectors.

Colt Inspections – DB advised that he agreed with the comments made by Mr Dewhurst with respect to the new stallion inspection assessment form and felt that changes should be made. He was about to conduct a colt inspection and undertook to complete both the old and the new form so that a comparison could be made.

Mrs Burger and Mrs Poulter would be asked to re-visit the form bearing in mind comments received regarding its use. GL felt the form was looking for the perfect pony.

Action: Secretary

16. Area Representatives/Events

In the absence of JM, GB reported that she was in the process of preparing a briefing document for candidates for the position of area rep for the North and Dorset/Somerset areas.

Action: JM

The document would be forwarded to the Secretary who in turn would forward it to the committee for comment before it was sent to the candidates.

Action: Secretary

It was understood that three candidates had expressed an interest in the North and three candidates for Dorset/Somerset. It was felt that the members of each area should elect their Area Rep.

It was noted that the review of areas was ongoing and that candidates should be informed that areas might change as a result of that review.

GB had prepared a paper showing the areas as they currently stood and if they were based on postcodes – this document would be used as a consultation document for existing area reps to make sure that any changes were made with the agreement of those on the ground.

Action: GB

17. Appointment of Judges/Judge Training/Inspector Training

The Secretary advised that she was adding the date a judge was appointed to the panel to the judges list going back to 2005. This would allow probationers to identify judges who had been on the panel for less than 3 years.

Part of the review of the procedures manual would look at the current judge training forms to ensure that they reflect current procedures and this would take into account the information received from AN and Mrs Taylor. It was noted that in the past the show affiliation secretary had notified the secretary which shows would accept a probationer and this information had been given to the trainees.

Action: Secretary

Miss Brill had agreed to host the next trainee judge assessment.

Action: Secretary

Mrs Burger had accepted the appointment to judge Pony of the Year 2020.

18. Yearbook

GB advised that work on the Yearbook was ongoing with reports being compiled for the area shows. The calendar showing the deadlines for submissions would be included in the Autumn Newsletter along with the leaflet to book advertising.

Action: GB

19. Website/Facebook

GB advised that there was a large amount of content on the current website and it would be a huge task to set up the new website. That said, it was important to move forward.

Quotes had been received ranging from £500 to £20,000 and he asked the Trustees to agree a budget so that the project could move forward.

The current site had cost £3000 and thus DB suggested that a budget of £3000 be set and this was then proposed by NH and seconded by TH.

DW felt it was important to look at website optimisation and following this comment the Trustees unanimously agreed the figure of £3000.

It was felt that annual running costs should not be budgeted for at this time and would to some extent be determined by the website provider chosen and the support they provided on an ongoing basis.

Action: Website Sub-Committee

20. Exmoor Pony Festival Trust

RT advised that the debrief meeting for this year's festival would take place on Monday, 9th September.

The majority of events had been well attended but the turn out for the ride had been disappointing.

21. EPS Centenary Events

It was agreed that the centenary celebrations would start with a dinner and story-telling session at The Lion in Dulverton on 26th November 2020, this being the date when people first got together to discuss forming an Exmoor Pony Society. The Lion could accommodate 40 people and ticket price was set at £15.

It was felt that it could be suggested to Area Reps to hold a similar supper and story-telling session on the same night.

It was agreed that an 'Exmoor pony' short story competition would run from April-September 2020 and it was noted that a sum of money had been donated to provide for such a competition. It was agreed that Mrs Barker would be one of the judges of the competition.

JP wished to organise a display team that would tell the story of the role of the Exmoor pony over the centuries which could offer to put on displays at South West Shows in the first instance. Somerset County Show had already agreed to an Exmoor display. The Trustees agreed such a display team should be set up.

DB felt that a separate 'centenary budget' should be established so that funds were available to progress ideas.

NH proposed an initial sum of £2000 and this was seconded by TH and this was unanimously agreed.

JP also proposed a Point to Point league in the South West and anticipated 8 runners and again this was agreed by the Trustees.

Action: Centenary Sub-Committee

22. Guest presentations at the AGM 2020

GB put forward the proposal that Andy Dell (SPARKS) and Michael Dewhurst be asked to give presentations at the AGM. The work of SPARKS dovetailed into the genetic work that Mr Dewhurst undertook on behalf of the society. SB seconded the proposal and it was unanimously agreed.

Action: Secretary

23. Set date for Future Strategy Day postponed from 26th July

It was agreed that the Future Strategy Day would take place on Tuesday, 1st October with a start time of 10am. GL undertook to book either the Moorland Hall or Winsford Village Hall.

24. Any Other Business

David Sykes – TH proposed that Mr David Sykes be made a Honorary Vice President and this was seconded by SB and unanimously agreed.

Christmas Foal Show, 1 Dec 2019 – TH advised that the show was going to go ahead but all competitors would need to abide by Cannington's Flu Policy. This might mean that foals were not present but classes for older ponies would take place. The Secretary suggested that breeders would be able to display photographs of foals that they had for sale.

Hannover Zoo – The Treasurer raised the matter of the registration of a 2012 foal that had been received by the secretary. She felt that since they only had one stallion and one mare, DNA parentage testing was not required. The Secretary, on the other hand, felt that the rules on late registrations should be adhered to which required DNA parentage testing and the Trustees confirmed that the rules prevailed and cost of registration and DNA parentage testing should be borne by the applicant.

JP did feel that they should be encouraged to do so and the Secretary advised that stallions normally had a DNA profile on the AHT database and in more recent years all stallions had been DNA parentage tested so the cost would be the dam and the foal albeit that nowadays with the requirement to DNA parentage test all foals, the cost of the dam was normally met through Special Projects.

24. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next committee meeting was confirmed as Monday, 2nd December and it was agreed that the location would move to Exmoor.