

**Minutes of the Future Strategy Meeting  
held on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 at Winsford Village Hall, Exmoor**

Present:

David Brewer, Chairman (DB)  
Geoff Bryant (GB)  
Fiona Dickson (FD)  
Toby Hickman (TH)  
Vicky Lamb (VL)  
Gill Langdon (GL)  
Jenna Payne (JP)  
Clare Phillips (CP)  
Rob Taylor (RT)  
David Wallace (DW)

Sandra Mansell (Treasurer)  
Sue McGeever (Secretary)

David Brewer as Chairman opened the meeting at 10am and thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

**1. Apologies**

Trustees: Sue Baker (SB), Nigel Hill (NH), Jen McLaren (JM)  
President: Ann Nicholls (AN)

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

DB reminded all present of the need to declare an interest and the need for confidentiality.

**3. Any Other Business**

CP advised that Pam Cox could not judge the ridden classes at Breed Show. It was agreed to ask Ann Nicholls with Harriet Sykes as reserve judge if Ann Nicholls has already accepted a HOYS qualifier.

**4. Approval of Minutes of the September Meeting**

DB moved for the minutes of the Trustees meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2019 to be approved with the amendments received via email.

Secretary to make necessary amendments and circulate to trustees as approved.

With 5 for and 4 abstentions, DB moved that the minutes were approved and these were duly signed.

**5. Matters arising**

FD raised the decision to change the location of the December meeting to Exmoor as Trustees had accepted their appointment on the basis that half the meetings were at Stoneleigh. It was agreed that the December meeting would be at Stoneleigh.

Having dealt with the normal procedural matters, the Trustees moved on to the agenda for the Future Strategy Meeting.

**1. Opening discussion – round table**

GB added Sue Baker's additional points circulated to all Trustees to the discussion document and noted that under strengths, it should be contact with all breeders.

The Trustees felt the document was comprehensive and covered the discussion required and move on to individual topics.

## **2. Finance, income and membership**

Membership categories and fees

Life £1000

Family £45

Full £30

Associate £20

Junior/Student £10

£5 joining fee (Family, Full and Associate)

It was noted that the article of association gave the membership categories but not the amounts charged which was a Trustees decision albeit that historically the membership had been informed and voted on membership fee amounts.

GB had looked around other societies and the EPS was slightly lower by £5 or £10 and made the following proposal

- a) the Society move to direct debit and
- b) the amounts increase by £5 to:
  - Full £30 = £35
  - Family £45 to £50
  - Associate £20 to £25

For those paying by direct debit these new figures would reduce by £5.

**Agreed**

Student/Junior into one category – under 25 in full-time education - £10

**Agreed**

New members paying by direct debit would not pay the joining fee.

**Agreed**

The Trustees agreed more use should be made of collection boxes and QR codes as well as other potential fund raising activities.

It was agreed that DB/DW/Secretary would look into getting ideas from professional fund-raising companies. Following investigation a ball park figure for possible expenditure would be available.

RT asked could we be making more use of our patron (Baroness Mallalieu) and the Secretary felt it would it be worthwhile some of the Trustees meeting with her. RT advised he was hoping to get her to some inspections and DB felt she had always been exceedingly helpful.

It was agreed the Secretary would write a formal letter of invitation to the AGM and Breed Show.

**Action**

RT also felt the current Prime Minister (Boris Johnson) had a Somerset link.

It was agreed that DW would arrange a get together at Mounsey in January to be attended by 3 to 4 Trustees, Baroness Mallalieu and a small group of influential people from local organisations including the ENPA.

**Action**

## **3. Promotion/publicity**

It was felt the Society needed a PR volunteer.

GB advised that Sandy Wooderson would continue to manage the newsletter and Sue Burger would continue to write articles for the periodicals. A call for volunteers in the Summer Newsletter had not produced any results. JP advised she would like to get more involved but did not have the capacity at present.

Promotion and publicity was linked to fundraising and raising public awareness was important. FD felt the need for the Society to increase its PR and be more pro-active about the work of the Society.

The Secretary felt it was important that the Trustees decide on a message that could be run out to the areas, Friends and the Society. JP felt much more could be done with the website and it was noted that action was being taken to improve the website and use experience.

#### **Action website sub-committee**

The Secretary felt that the website did not have the same impact as social media and JP agreed that social media drove people to the website and her Trustees had hired a company to do social media.

The Secretary felt it was important that Trustees played a part in sharing information on social media. Sharing information significantly increased reach and there was also the possibility to 'boost' posts.

The Secretary referred to the RBST heavy horse campaign and felt the Society could learn from this with regard to the Exmoor pony. The difference between a breed society and a charity such as MMT was that the EPS did not have a heartstring message. The EPS did not have ponies that needed homes or to be fed in winter but, as had often been said, without the Society there would be no ponies.

DB felt the message was that the EPS kept the breed going and promote it and whilst people may know about Exmoor ponies they do not know about conservation and the other work of the Society and messages needed to be sent out. The Treasurer noted that 'rarer than the giant panda' had generated support.

GL noted that conservation grazing was good for the planet and suggested – save the planet – save the pony or saving our pony will save your planet.

It was felt the Society should look into hiring a PR professional and GB offered to take this on and report back to the committee.

#### **Action**

JP also felt the educational aspect of the website was important making it more friendly to public and to potential owners and breeders. Information could be in pdf format rather than within the body of the website page. It was noted that the EPS no longer went into schools etc, this was now an area for MMT but that the best selling point was the pony.

The Secretary felt most of information and PR leaflets were aged and needed to be brought into the 21<sup>st</sup> century to have more impact whilst CP felt encouraging children was important.

DB felt the Society had not capitalised on what has happened to the breed i.e. standard of ridden in recent years has gone up and that this would encourage more children.

The Secretary felt that fundraising should be for a purpose and asked the Trustees to consider that purpose.

DB felt that the Society needed professional people to help it decide. He felt able to deal with equine field but did not understand how to get the message out to a wider audience. He felt the Society needed to demonstrate worth to the members and value of being a member –what did they get for their membership –the Spring newsletter and four other little things a year. Members should be proud to own an Exmoor.

The Society had to do more to promote the ponies and their future. Events like the Pony Racing had encouraged people to find out more about the ponies.

DB advised that he had attended both the German and Swedish AGM. They were concerned at the lack of interest/lack of breeders – breeding tended to go in peaks and troughs and it was currently in a trough.

RT advised that Friends would be going to the Fat Stock Market at Molland and the Secretary raised the matter of them looking for a driving pony for Calvert Trust. The Trustees felt this would be a worthwhile cause for the Society and a budget of £2500 was allocated on the proposal of TH, seconded by VL. FD declared a conflict of interest and abstained from the vote. The remaining Trustees were in favour.

**Action FD/JP/Secretary**

#### **4. Moorland relationships**

RT raised the issue of the moorland breeders and how some did not understand the importance of them providing the names of the registered sires and dams of the foals to assist with the DNA work. Some now do not spend the time to match foal to mare. It was no longer a rule that the foal was seen with the mare but it was advisory.

The Secretary advised that the vet had to specify if the foal was seen with the mare and the breeder did have to provide the registered sire and dam on the inspection paperwork. However, there had been situations where inspectors had inspected foals where not sire and dam had been given and she asked that the Trustees give consideration to only inspecting foals where the breeder provided the information required on the form.

**Action Secretary to contact moorland breeders as applicable**

Gates being left open on the moor did not help the situation and consideration was given to more information on the gates which would require ENPA approval and it was noted that the relationship with ENPA staff in charge of the ponies was good.

Breeders were heeding the Society's message that the number of foals bred had to be in line with the available market.

FD felt it was important that all breeders received the same support and information and that a two tier system did not develop.

DB again felt this could be an issue of communication and the need to get the message of the work of the Society out to members and the general public. Consideration also had to be given to the future management of the breed.

The Secretary advised that the RBST had raised the issue of posters and leaflets and it would be good if the RBST would assist in this regard. A number of opportunities arose each year for Exmoor ponies to be on RBST stands at shows and thanks should go to the members who take their ponies. But again this information tended to be known retrospectively rather than in advance.

**Action better communication with areas/members**

#### **5. Future strategy with MMT**

The Secretary advised that there had been a meeting some four or five years ago with MMT attended by Juliet Rogers, Nicki Moore, Sue Baker and herself to discuss future relationships and at that meeting the MMT had agreed to change their strapline. Both the logo and strapline had become very similar and there was no doubt that this caused confusion among the general public.

Prior to that there had been a decision that Trustees from both groups would meet together and one meeting had taken place.

FD agreed that it was a difficult situation as the public perceive MMT as being the EPS.

Over the past 5 years, the relationship had improved and this was probably in part due to the Festival which had brought the charities closer together.

Work done by the EPS such as education had now moved to the MMT who, particularly because of the centre had a much more public face than the Society.

It was important to understand the work of MMT and the possible crossovers and it was agreed that a meeting would be beneficial. Discussion needed to take place on whether there needed to be a closer relationship. There was no doubt that MMT being set up had had a negative impact on the Society's finances. Both members and the public had a choice to support MMT, the EPS or both and this was evident with their crowd-funding campaign.

There was no doubt that there were crossovers in particular with the promotion of the ponies and DB felt the relationship needed to be worked on.

**Action Invite MMT to a pre-meeting meeting in the New Year to discuss future relationship and the way in which the two charities could work together.**

It was important that the general public understood the differences between the two charities and as discussed under income, MMT had the heartstring/sympathy vote which was not a factor with the EPS. Both charities now offered membership, a fund-raising club etc. and ultimate both charities were looking for support from the same pot.

The EPS objective had to be to maintain the breed and this was achievable through sales which was down to promotion and those looking to buy a pony understanding that the Exmoor pony was a suitable child's pony and capable of taking on all disciplines. JP advised there were 5 ponies in pony club in Cornwall and agreed the need to promote ponies as family ponies noting the market is important to breeding.

## **6. Events and Event Management**

JP felt that the Society did not offer the members enough and suggested a Spring Show linked to the AGM (6<sup>th</sup> May). It was noted that the Bank Holiday would be the Friday (8<sup>th</sup>) after AGM in commemoration of VE day. The Festival would be holding its Beetle Drive on 5<sup>th</sup> May.

The Secretary suggested that perhaps if people had their ponies down on the moor for these events then a ridden display could be part of the AGM. This could increase interest and draw more local people to the Stallion Parade.

JP proposed that she organised a VE Day show and this seconded by FD and unanimously agreed.

### **Action**

FD raised the subject of the Breed Show schedule and felt that the sub-committee needed to start work.

### **Action Breed Show sub-committee to meet**

With regard to HOYS, it was noted that the Midlands area already had a greater number of qualifiers than the South West.

TH felt that the musical ride has been very successful and could be re-instated for the Centenary.

VL asked Trustees to note that a music licence would be required and JP felt that each event would already have its own licence.

## **7. Organisation and Training – (Judges, Inspectors, Trustees, Volunteers)**

DB advised that a number of senior inspectors felt that any sort of meeting implied that they were not doing the job properly. However, the purpose of the meeting was to discuss inspections, what inspectors were seeing on the ground, feedback from members etc. It was disappointing that not all inspectors had responded.

The Secretary raised the matter of Health & Safety and the Society itself ensuring that 'best practice and due diligence' could be proven in an event of an accident as a way of encouraging inspectors to attend – by attending they were helping the Society.

DB undertook to write an email to all inspectors and the Secretary would attach the new Inspectors Guidelines.

**Action DB/Secretary**

FD felt it was important to have meetings around the country – she felt that there would not be a big pick up on filling upcoming Trustee posts if all meetings were on Exmoor. DB advised that it was always up to new committee to decide on meeting venues. Traditionally it had been 2 on Exmoor and 2 at Stoneleigh although this year additional meetings had been added.

VL asked if more meetings were required whilst FD asked if some of the meetings be done on Skype.

Both DB and GB felt that video conferencing was not the same as meeting in person. It would be difficult to organise with a group this size and use lose body language etc. If there were meetings for specific reasons such as following up on fund-raising, Skype might be possible.

DB advised the number of meetings had always been done according to need and sometimes there had been a need for more and he felt each new committee should decide.

The Secretary felt that some people may be held back from putting themselves forward because of the expense. Current Trustees did not claim expenses but under charity law it was possible to do so. She also felt it would be helpful if sub-committees reported back to the Secretary within a certain time so that the information could be distributed to Trustees to consider before a meeting.

DB advised that it had been a traditional not to draw expenses but he recognised that not everyone would be in such a situation and raised the idea of a fixed fee which FD felt was treading on dangerous ground.

The Treasurer advised that other societies advised that expenses are available and then it is up to each individual to decide. GB felt reasonable expenses for attendance at Trustee meetings should be available if an individual wished to avail themselves of such.

GB proposed that the wording 'reasonable expenses for attendance at Trustee meetings are available' should be placed on the call for Trustee candidates. This was seconded by TH and unanimously agreed.

**Action Secretary to add to call for Trustees**

It was noted that Trustees provided their own lunch at meetings.

TH referred to the email on judge training and noted that the points were covered in the information that was sent out to potential candidates. However, DB reflected that once people had started on the course they may well not refer back to the original information provided. JP felt that 'how you go about making appointments etc' could be part of the assessment day. It was noted that Jackie Wharton was in place to assist trainee judges.

**Action amend assessment day paperwork**

JP requested that information on becoming a judge or inspector be included on the website.

**Action GB and Secretary to review current forms and post on the website.**

The Secretary felt that more should be made of 'how you can help your society – how you can volunteer' given the poor response to the newsletter. DB agreed that perhaps the Society was not asking in the right way and needed to be more proactive. JP felt that volunteers were increasingly difficult to find and did the Society really appreciate those who did?

FD advised that three very positive people had come forward from the Northern Area to replace Denise Sykes and JP asked if she had been thanked.

The Secretary advised that the Trustees had the ability to nominate individuals for the Helen Dashwood trophy and whilst a decision had been made to open this up the membership, the Trustees might consider Denise a worthy recipient.

VL proposed that Denise Sykes receive the Helen Dashwood trophy and this was seconded by TH and unanimously agreed.

**Action advise Denise so that she could make arrangements to travel to the AGM or the trophy could be presented at the Northern Show.**

### **8. Legal and Compliance (including PIO etc)**

The Secretary reported on the Society's compliance with respect to the Charity Commission, Companies House and PIO compliance.

DB echo what secretary said saying the Society had always been extremely good in ensuring returns were done on time and this was due to both the Secretary and Treasurer. Policy documents etc were in place.

The Secretary then raised a SAR request and the Trustees confirmed that only information pertaining to the individual concerned could be released to the individual concerned. Any third party information that may arise as a result of contracts the individual had entered into was between the individuals concerned.

The Secretary advised that a Health & Safety policy pertaining to inspections was sent out to inspectors and it was felt that they should counter sign a copy and return it to the office.

It was noted that Maddy Buttner would be approached to review policies etc.

**Action Secretary to write**

### **9. Health and Safety, safeguarding , diversity**

See note on inspection guidelines.

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

**Action: Secretary to distribute with Autumn Newsletter**

It was felt that whilst no incidents had been reported it would be worthwhile to put in place a Safeguarding Officer.

It was noted that CP, GL and VL had all completed safeguarding training and it was known that CPs training was in date.

GB proposed, GL seconded and it was agreed with one abstention that CP be appointed the Safeguarding Officer.

**Agreed**

It was noted that Trustee Training had taken place at the June meeting and the documentation used would be sent to Trustees appointed in May who could then bring any questions to the meeting.

### **10. IT backups – disaster recovery**

The Secretary explained the procedure of backing up to Grassroots and external hard drives. GB asked if possible one hard drive should be in a separate building.

The Secretary advised that she was also looking at the possibility of backing up securely in the cloud.

## **11. Relations with daughter society and areas within England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales**

FD spoke with regard to Northern area. It was a very active area with a number of events taking place, achievements of members were posted on Facebook and circulated to members. The relationship between the Society and Northern members was good but they did need an Area Rep.

Work was ongoing to secure nominations for Area Reps in the North and Dorset and Somerset – Area Reps were the link between the Society and members.

Prior to the meeting GB had revised the current areas based on postcode instead of 'county' and had asked Trustees for comment. None received.

After discussion, it was agreed to ascertain if those interested in the positions of Area Reps could work together and this would be reported back to the committee.

DB felt it was important to define the areas and then discuss the method of appointment but that something needed to be in place to allow Denise Sykes to retire.

GB undertook to speak to all the areas reps regarding re-defining the areas and send a report to the Committee in association with the Secretary.

### **Action GB/Secretary**

DB advised that he had wanted to go to AGMs in Germany and Sweden as an ambassador from parent society and both wished to continue to register ponies with the main Society. However, they were not always happy with decisions taken and would have preferred status quo on stallion inspections in Sweden that said the decision had eased the process with respect to the Swedish Horse Board but did not prevent the Society sending over a judge.

It was felt that these overseas herds were important to the conservation of the breed.

The Secretary advised that there were still ponies in Canada to be inspected and the suggestion of video inspections had been raised and this was being investigated with Ann Holmes.

DB advised that Northern Ireland was contracting and with very few foals being bred but again the mares were important to overall breed conservation.

With the agenda for the Future Strategy Meeting completed, GB wished to raise two additional points.

1. The Fells/Dales/Highlands were inviting the EPS to join two study days located at the Unicorn Trust in Middlesbrough (5<sup>th</sup> April) and Stow on the Wold (10<sup>th</sup> May) and he wished to know if the Trustees would approve EPS involvement which would require a contribution to costs.

GB proposed and FD seconded EPS involvement and it was agreed with 1 abstention.

2. Signatories for the second bank account – GB proposed that T/Sec/Chairman/Vice-Chairs should be the signatories and that there should be two debit cards for the Treasurer/Secretary and internet access for GB/Treasurer and Secretary. The Treasurer was not happy with the proposal and it was understood that NH was not happy together with TH – Natwest only have three signatories.

The Treasurer did not understand why the proposal was for the Yorkshire bank and why changes were needed at this time when she would be giving up the role this year or next.

GB advised that Natwest were close to the bottom and Yorkshire were near the top on security matters. The additional bank account had been discussed for six months and related to all the trouble that the EPS has had with the accounts. Any changes required three Trustees to go into the bank and that was not always feasible.



DB advised that part of the problem was that Natwest considered the EPS was a business and business managers were thin on the ground.

The question of the need for debit cards was raised and GB advised that the Treasurer, Secretary and himself were all using personal debit cards to make purchases on behalf of the EPS and debit cards would allow for online purchases.

GB advised that there would also be a cheque book which would require two signatories.

GB felt if the Society could not trust its Treasurer and Secretary it was not in a good place.

It was felt that 4 signatories was better than 3 and GL proposed and VL seconded that the signatories be DB, GB, Treasurer and Secretary and that the Treasurer and Secretary should have debit cards and this was unanimously agreed.

**Action GB**

The Treasurer was concerned that the new account may be as vulnerable as the old account but it was noted that a transaction limit could be put in place.

Monies would be transferred out of the account on a regular basis.

The internet banking administrators would be GB and the Treasurer and this was proposed by RT, seconded by JP and unanimously agreed.

**Action GB**

GB advised that once the Yorkshire account was set up then Pay Pal will go into that account and he felt speed was of the essence.

**Action GB**

GB thanked the Secretary for picking up FD at 10.30pm and providing a bed for the night.

DW proposed a vote of thanks to Sandra for attending today given her recent operation and all wished her a speedy recovery.

DB closed the meeting at 4pm