

## EXMOOR PONY SOCIETY

### Trustee Minutes from the 'Virtual' Committee Meeting held on Tuesday, 7 September 2021

Nigel Hill (NH) Chairman  
Geoff Bryant (GB) Vice-Chairperson/Treasurer  
David Wallace (DW) Vice-Chairperson/ECHO  
Sue Burger (SB) Vice-Chairperson/Articles and liaison with PR Company  
Dr Sue Baker (DSBA) Projects  
David Brewer (DB) Policies  
Mark Drummond (MD)  
Sheralee Matravers (SMA)  
Marcello Riggio (MR) (morning session)  
Stephanie Poulter (SP) Conservation Grazing Officer  
Rob Taylor (RT) DNA and Moorland Communications

Susan McGeever (Secretary)  
Margaret Partridge-Keane (MPK) President (morning session)

The Chairman, NH, opened the meeting at 10.00am and thanked everyone for their attendance. He welcomed Mark Drummond, Sheralee Matravers and Marcello Riggio to their first full meeting. Anyone wishing to ask a question should raise their hand.

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Vicky Lamb (VL).

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

There were no declarations of interest.

GB proposed and SB seconded the proposal to maintain confidentiality and this was unanimously agreed.

#### **3. Notification of Any Other Business on the agenda (All)**

There were no other items of business raised by Trustees present.

#### **4. Approval of the Minutes of the Meetings held on 30 June 2021, 21 July 2021 and 17 August**

The minutes of 30 June, 21 July and 17 August 2021 had been circulated to all Trustees.

No amendments had been requested to the minutes of the meeting of 30 June 2021.

##### **Decision:**

GB proposed and RT seconded the proposal that the minutes of 30 June 2021 be approved as a true record of proceedings. This is unanimously agreed and the Chairman would sign the minutes at the next available opportunity.

No amendments had been requested to the minutes of the meeting of 21 July 2021.

##### **Decision:**

GB proposed and RT seconded the proposal that the minutes of 21 July 2021 be approved as a true record of proceedings. This is unanimously agreed and the Chairman would sign the minutes at the next available opportunity.

No amendments had been requested to the minutes of the meeting of 17 August 2021.

##### **Decision:**

SMA proposed and RT seconded the proposal that the minutes of 17 August 2021 be approved as a true record of proceedings. This is unanimously agreed and the Chairman would sign the minutes at the next available opportunity.

## **5. Notification of matters pertaining to:**

### **Health & Safety**

The Secretary advised there had been no health and safety issues raised.

### **GDPR**

The Secretary advised there had been no GCPR issues raised.

### **Safeguarding**

It was agreed that Sheralee Matravers (SMA) would take on the role of Safeguarding Officer replacing Clare Phillips who was not longer a Trustee.

### **Welfare**

NH advised that there had been no further correspondence with regard to the unregistered ponies on a rewilding site in Denmark. It was agreed that these ponies were outside the jurisdiction of the EPS.

Complaints had been made to the Patron and the Society had been working with World Horse Welfare and the Rare Breed Survival Trust. The RBST were putting together new documentation which would be sent to the Society.

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

Sue Burger had taken over from the late Toby Hickman as the third Vice-Chairman. Sheralee Matravers had agreed to take on the safeguarding role as detailed above.

The late Gill Langdon had been part of ECHO and on the conservation grazing and inspection sub-committees and someone was needed to join these sub-committee. It was noted that it did not have to be a Trustee and RT suggested the conservation grazing sub-committee could work with the Moorland Mousie Trust.

### **DNA:**

Trustees to approve expenditure as and when the trip by the sub-committee is possible post Covid

### **Outstanding DNA**

Secretary's report:

Fourteen DNA samples remained outstanding – the majority being free-living or overseas. The breeders concerned were aware and dialogue was ongoing with breeders and Weatherbys to identify sires and dams. There was no indication that the samples were not viable.

Weatherbys had reported intermittent problems with their DNA analyser which is contributing to the delays and thus results for samples sent for 2021 foals have also been delayed . Most of Weatherbys staff continued to work from home.

The 2-3 week turnaround for parentage testing to a known sire and dam was considerably longer. Breeders must take responsibility for submitting the correct sire and dam to the Society.

The possibility of using SNPs to identity closely related animals was becoming closer as the price decreased.

All breeders were kept updated with DNA results as they were received and passports issued.

### **Presentation**

DW had travelled to Richmond to present Sandra Mansell, the retiring Treasurer, with her painting and gift.

## **7. AGM 2021/2022**

The AGM had been very successful and Debbie Davy's talk had been well received. All Society business had been transacted and approved. That said, there had been a relatively small turnout with regard to voting and this reflected a general apathy amongst members of breed societies.

If a village hall was used again (Brompton Regis/Yoe Farm) then the caterers should be asked to quote again.

Thoughts should turn to 2022 and whether the AGM could be part of the centenary celebrations and all possible options should be explored.

Options could include:

- stallion parade (potential difficulty re stabling if held over two days)
- attendance in person and via Zoom
- holding on a weekend day rather than weekday (possible dinner on the Saturday night)

DSBA advised that Ian Baker would be willing to run the PA as normal but the equipment had reached the end of its life. Thus the Society would need to purchase or hire equipment for the AGM. See Management Committee notes

Travelling to Exford was not easy for all people and a weekend date could make it more feasible.

The suggestion that a survey be carried out of members found favour with the Trustees.

SMA suggested that the inspection day could be held on the Sunday following the AGM which may well attract greater attendance.

With the current date of April 2022, it would not be possible to discuss and formulate ideas for a May AGM and, therefore, if changes were proposed as a result of the Inspection Day discussion, an EGM would have to be held before the autumn so that members could vote on such changes.

With regard to a stallion parade, it has been in existence for 50 plus years and various premiums had been offered over the years. To draw people in, there must be sufficient mature stallions and youngsters.

## **8. Secretary's Report**

The Secretary continued to cover:

Ongoing general administration covering but not limited to all aspects of membership, passports, website, inspections, stallion inspections and list, GDPR, grassroots, accounts/bookkeeping/banking, Company House and Charity Commission compliance, correspondence and enquiries (email, letter and telephone), liaison with area reps, liaison with Friends, liaison re Exmoor Pony Star, child protection, training, 200 Club, Show Affiliations, website updates, Facebook updates, attendance at Trustee meetings, management committee meetings and sub-committee meetings.

Membership retention:

Trustees were contacting those who had not renewed their membership as retention was key to the finances of the Society as were new members. There were fewer people joining the Society to support the Society itself, membership tended to relate to pony ownership.

It was noted that a number of members had passed away during 2020 and the first half of 2021.

Area Reps received lists of active members and those that had not renewed in any given year as well as a list of owners. There were far more owners than members who did participate in Area Shows etc.

### **9. Treasurer's Report**

GB advised that a further £30,000 had been sent to the University of Glasgow to cover the PhD.

Figures had been produced to the end of August and circulated to the Trustees and at present expenditure was equal to income given that the PhD was funded through reserves.

The Breed Show had been very successful and had nearly paid for itself. A sizeable amount of income had come from the sale of teas, coffee and cakes.

The figures were different to those produced by the previous Treasurer and were shown on an accrued basis within meant that it included outstanding costs and income from the previous year.

The Fundraising sub-committee had met and additional ways of generating funding were required and methods to encourage members to donate to the charity.

Amazon Smile had been set up at no cost to the Society and Just Giving was in the process of being set up and would provide a landing page for campaigns and again there was no charge for amounts raised under £15,000.

The Trustees agreed that both Amazon Smile and Just Giving would be of benefit to the Society.

The EPS finances were now fully computerised.

Secretary's contract:

The Secretary's contract was discussed and it was agreed that the HMRC weekly allowance of £6 for 'working from home' could be claimed as an expense.

In addition, the Society would pay the sum of £16 per month towards costs for the use of the Secretary's mobile phone as the emergency number – this phone had been given out on the answerphone message since January 2005.

Friends:

GB advised that the Friends accounts needed to form part of the EPS accounts and, therefore, had to be completed in time to be included in the accounts which went to the AGM.

Changes were taking place at Friends and GB would work with the directors and accountant to ensure that the accounts were brought into line with Charity Commission requirements.

There was also the need to provide for an accurate stock level.

GB recommended that the financial services of the EPS accountant Dan Stone be used to ensure that Friends accounts were compliant and there was an estimated cost of between £250-500 a year.

Friends were happy to move forward on this basis.

Genome Project

NH advised that the Genome Project had been set up in cooperation with the RBST, ENPA and MEPBG and had originated from the Peter Green report. A sum of around £20,000 had been raised of which £15,000 had been paid to Nottingham University (Sarah Blott) to undertake the work. Due to illness the project had not progressed albeit that Novogene had also sought to extract DNA from the samples provided.

It had now been agreed that the samples would go to Weatherbys/Dublin University to look to carry out the whole genome sequencing. It was understood that not all the £15,000 had been spent and there was approximately £20,000 to allow Weatherbys to carry out the work.

## **10. Yearbook**

GB had prepared a paper on taking the Yearbook forward bearing in mind that Sandy Wooderson's circumstances had changed.

There may be some additional costs relating to the design and greater clarity was required on the articles submitted, for example, the area reps submission should be a single document rather than a combination of members articles. Some assistance from VL may be required.

GB was investigating whether the design, printing and distribution could be carried out by a printer. This would require the various AGM documentation and associated leaflets to be combined into a single document. It was unrealistic to expect a printer to put 12 documents in with the newsletter. And the possibility of introducing online voting should also be considered.

It was important that the Yearbook remained self-funding and that would require some increase in advertising.

## **11. Show Affiliation Secretary's Report and Judge Training (SECRETARY)**

The Show Affiliation position remained vacant with the Secretary carrying out the role.

Susannah Muir's offer to assist with Pony of the Year was welcomed by the Trustees and it was suggested that she be asked to consider taking on the show affiliation secretary position.

Portly French's idea to allow the Marion William Bursary rosette to pass down the line was welcomed but it was noted that this would have to be members only. As David Sykes had set up the award, he should be consulted but providing he was happy, SB proposed and SP seconded the proposal that the rosette be handed down the line.

EPS Medal rosettes would be sent out at the end of the year.

### **Judge Assessment Day**

Correspondence continued with Lauren Brill to identify a day for the 6 candidates to be assessed. Once a date had been established, the candidates would be contacted.

## **12. Breed Show Secretary's Report**

The day had been an outstanding success and the feedback had been very good. Friends had had a good day and there was much more of a community feel and more members of the public visited the rings.

NH advised that the Exford Show committee had been pleased with the new layout but he was unsure if the EPS would be receiving contribution.

### **HOYS**

An official complaint had been made to GrandStand Media with regard to the HOYS qualifier and the outcome was awaited. This could mean that the results of the HOYS class would need to be amended. The EPS was not involved in the investigation. It was ultimately the responsibility of the competitor to ensure that they were able to enter a class compete under the assigned judges.

It was felt that a number of sets of rules came into play, the Exford Show rules, the EPS rules, the NPS rules and the rules governing the HOYS class.

It was incumbent on all those involved in the show – judges, breed show secretary, entry secretary, stewards etc to be aware of the rules so that such situations could be avoided in the future.

Whilst the HOYS class did not bring in any additional revenue, it was put on for the benefit of the members as it was an Exmoor only qualifier. When the EPS had an Olympia qualifier the two events had alternated between the Breed Show and the Midland Show which had had the supreme in-hand qualifier this year as well as the Pony of the Year final.

The overriding feeling was that the Breed Show should host the HOYS qualifier and it had been a quality class this year.

SB expressed her concern that rules had been broken and that subsequently has repercussions on the Breed Show, the Society and the competitors. Whilst DB felt that there should be two judges for each class.

The Secretary felt it should be absolutely clear in the schedule which rules applied to the different classes and qualifiers, for example, the in-hand classes had been NPS qualifiers and thus NPS rules applied albeit EPS members did not need to be NPS members to enter.

DB felt that the EPS showing guidelines were very comprehensive and he found it very sad that people had found cause to complain and had also provoked so much discussion between members.

RT felt that the breed show should not host qualifiers because the Society was small and everyone knew and/or had connections with everyone else and that the show should be primarily to allow members to show their ponies and be a friendly show. He noted that no complaint had been made to the show secretary on the day.

#### EPS Show Rules

It was agreed that the three sets of rules should be reviewed and it was suggested that Michael Dewhurst, Emma Wallace and Jackie Wharton should carry out this task alongside Mark Drummond who would be reading the rules for the first time.

It was further decided that the need for the showing guidelines should be assessed by the sub-committee.

#### Entry of non-members

Where non-members had entered through the online system, it was agreed that competitors should be given 28 days after the show to join the Society. The time would be extended this year as it had only come to light when processing PayPal transactions. The Secretary felt that using Grassroots entry system might have highlighted the issue earlier.

#### Role of volunteers

It was important that those volunteering for the EPS understood that members and the public considered that information given out by them was thought to be on behalf of the Society and not a personal opinion whether it was on an email, Facebook post or in Messenger.

#### Judge Appointments

The following appointments were unanimously agreed

##### Breed Show

Karen Logan          Ridden

Proposer SB

Secunder SP

David Lee              Geldings and Groups

Proposer RT

Secunder SP

Ann Western     In-Hand  
Proposer SM  
Secunder SP

Dai Thomas     Reserve  
Proposer SB  
Secunder SP

Pony of the Year  
The following appointments were unanimously agreed  
Jill Graham  
Proposer DB  
Secunder SB

Emma Wallace     Reserve  
Proposer RT  
Secunder GB

### **13. Project Report**

Deferred to next meeting.

### **14. Area Report**

Deferred to next meeting.

### **15. Inspections/Inspector's Meeting/Inspection Day/DNA**

Inspection Discussion Day

GB advised that the venue for the September Inspection Discussion Day had accepted the cancellation.

Initial thoughts were that the discussion day should not be later than February to allow for any potential changes to go through to the AGM. On reflection, it was felt February was not the best month for travel and the time-scales were too short to allow meaningful discussion following the discussion day. It was such an important topic that time should be taken to ensure that if any changes were made the repercussions of those changes had been well thought out prior to any proposals going to an AGM/EGM.

It was absolutely crucial that the members had sufficient information to be able to consider the matter for themselves given that many were not involved in the breeding and inspection process. It was most probably one of the most important decisions the members will make in the lifetime of the Society.

There were two very strong camps, the traditional people who thought the inspection process was key to the breed and the envy of other Societies and those who wanted change.

In order to maximise participation a series of online workshops could be run for members – each would have to be run to the same format and the same information given out.

The Secretary advised that the use of chat for people to post their messages helped control the meeting and ensure that everyone's voice was heard.

The possibility of then holding the actual inspection discussion day on the day after the AGM could maximise participation and the general feeling was that it should be in person.

A hybrid meeting could mean that the people in the room were able to be more dominant than those online.

Thought should be given as to whether the AGM could be held in a different location to allow for the most members to attend – Exford not being accessible to many in a day.

It was agreed that the online meetings would take place in March and the inspection discussion day on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

It was important that all members received a report of the issues that were raised during the online meetings and at the inspection discussion day. The possibility of an online seminar was also discussed.

DNA

As reported earlier, Weatherbys were experiencing problems with equipment and there were slower turnaround times than published for parentage testing results.

#### **16. Website/Facebook**

GB advised that the website had been migrated on an emergency basis and did not reflect the vision for the site originally discussed with Sole Trader.

He believed that there should be a focus group of members to look at the site and decide how best to go forward. The costings from Sole Trader gave an outline of costs of achieving what the Society had originally set out to do, however, he felt that until the content was up-to-date and a clear picture formed that no additional funds should be allocated to the website.

Once the content was updated and the way forward agreed then Sole Trader's costings could be assessed and financial decisions made.

MD advised that he was happy to look at the website as an outsider.

It was noted that SB and LR had limited time available to assist.

The Secretary continued to put up news items and update the site as and when time allowed. There were certain features where the assistance of Sole Trader was needed to make updates such as tables and this, of course, incurred a charge.

#### **17. Exmoor Pony Festival Trust**

RT advised that there was a meeting the week of 13/9/21 to discuss the festival. It had been a subdued affair but overall a good festival albeit that the visits had not been well attended.

GB felt that having a festival week during the week of the Breed Show allowed those coming down to the event to attend all the various walks and visits whereas when they were spanned the whole of August, there were a limited number of events they could attend.

#### **18. EPS Centenary Events**

DSBA gave her apologies for not being as active as she could have been over the summer. Events had continued and there was still work to do and she agreed that it was correct to cancel the centenary lunch and move the event to possibly be alongside the AGM in 2022.

It was noted that further work was required on the Ark Project.

#### **19. Review of Charity Policy Documents**

Deferred to a separate meeting when all documents completed

#### **20. Young Judge's Competition**

Sub-committee to report to next meeting

#### **21. Breed Promotion**

Defer to a separate meeting to further the initial concept of the strapline (Guardians of the Breed since 1921) and associate paragraph on aims etc



## **22. Conservation grazing**

Defer to a separate meeting to consider new guidance for those taking on Exmoor ponies as conservation grazing

## **23. Any Other Business**

Member Correspondence

Members correspondence regarding the Breed Show had been addressed through the setting up of a sub-committee to review the EPS rules.

SB felt that in general the EPS should try to keep members more informed in respect of all functions of the Society and canvas the membership for views on such issues as the Inspection Discussion Day, AGM date and venue etc. This could be via the Facebook page, website, newsletters, emails etc

She did feel that a meeting of Area Reps would be beneficial and that, perhaps, Area Reps could be more involved in the Society's activities and in assisting to canvas members.

Social media posts

The Trustees felt in unhelpful that the membership took to social media to air their frustrations rather than contact the Society be that the Secretary or the Trustees themselves.

Working Hunter Pony jumps

NH agreed to continue discussion on the WHP jumps.

Autumn Newsletter

It was noted that Trustees had a deadline of 10/9/2021 to ensure that their reports with photographs were filed with the Secretary.

NH closed the meeting at 4pm.