

EXMOOR PONY SOCIETY

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Monday, 11th September 2017 at The Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross

Present:

Mrs C Bigge, Mr D Brewer (Chairman), Mr M Dewhurst, Mrs F Dickson, Mr N Hill, Mrs G Langdon, Mrs C Phillips, Mr R Taylor, Mr D Wallace and Mrs April Westcott.

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

The Annual General Meeting of The Friends of Exmoor Ponies Ltd took place at 10.30am and, having considered the financial position, the Chairman had pleasure in announcing that the sum of £1,000 would be given to the Society.

Mr David Brewer opened the meeting at 11.15am and then thanked everyone present for attending the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Mrs S Burger, Miss S Harris and Mrs J Graham (President).

2. Declaration of Interest/Confirmation of Confidentiality

It was noted that should anyone feel that they should declare an interest in any topic being discussed they would do so and that the business carried out during the meeting would remain confidential unless otherwise decided upon during the meeting.

The Chairman advised that it was again of the utmost importance that all members of the committee respected the confidentiality of the meeting.

3. Notification of Any Other Business on the agenda

Mrs Mansell and Mrs McGeever advised that there were a number of additional items to bring forward under any other business.

4. Approval of the Minutes of the Meetings held on 5th June 2017

The Minutes of the meeting on 5th June 2017 were approved as an accurate reflection of the discussions.

The minutes were duly signed by the Chairman.

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

Moorland Mousie Trust It was noted that the accounts currently listed on the Charity Commission website did not reflect today's financial situation.

Sweet Itch Project

This project was ongoing.

6. Annual General Meeting

The Trustees reviewed the responses to the Society's replies to correspondence received pertaining to the 2017 AGM.

It was felt that the discussions which had taken place at the June meeting had covered all the points raised sufficiently and the responses were in line with the rules changes voted on and agreed by the membership. It was unanimously agreed that no further clarification was required at this time.

If individuals felt strongly enough that further amendments to the rules were required then they had the option to put forward such change through the channels available to them.

A number of owners whose ponies were eligible for re-inspection had contacted the Secretary requesting such re-inspection.

The Society's solicitor had advised that the revised Articles of Association would not need to be cleared by the Charity Commission before being voted upon by the membership. It was suggested that there should be a separate meeting for such a vote. The Committee felt that holding such a vote on AGM day would facilitate the maximum participation from members.

It was agreed that there would be a revised format for the AGM in 2018:

Stallion Parade

Presentation of Awards

Lunch

General Meeting for the purpose of adopting the revised Articles of Association

Annual General Meeting

Raffle

Open Forum

A projector and screen would be made available so that the wording of any rule change could be put up on screen prior to any vote.

7. Inspections

The working group of Trustees set up to review the results from the inspection questionnaire, address the practical application of the rule changes made at the Annual General Meeting and update the Inspectors Guidelines and inspection paperwork reported back to the committee.

It was agreed that a synopsis of the results of the inspection questionnaire would be prepared by the group and printed in the Autumn Newsletter. The general consensus had been that foal inspections should continue.

It was felt that the wording 'with neat uniformly dark hoof walls' was sufficient and that inspectors were already aware that any white or cream on the hoof wall was not acceptable. There would also be variations in colour on the hoof wall and the common sense of the inspectors would prevail. If required, owners could be asked to wash mud of the hooves and this had been normal practice when the inspection of soles was also required.

The Secretary has amended the inspection form to reflect the revised procedures.

It was agreed that an Inspectors Meeting would be held on Sunday, 3rd June at 1pm so that inspectors could discuss how the rule changes had impacted on the inspection process.

It was agreed that inspectors would be asked to check the microchips of older ponies during the inspection period. Those undertaking moorland inspections would also look at the readability of the new brands.

The Committee re-affirmed that the registration of ponies into the studbook under rule 8 (j) would only take place with the approval of the Committee. It was felt that such cases would be few and far between.

8. Genome Project

Mrs Mansell advised that the project was progressing and two samples were outstanding. Sarah Blott would confirm that she was happy with the samples provided.

It was likely to be late 2018 before any results were known.

9. Articles of Association

The new Articles of Association prepared by the Charity's solicitor to bring the EPS into line with current Company Law and Charity Law had been circulated to the committee.

The Memorandum of Association were now designated Part 1 of the Articles of Association.

The Committee reviewed the wording provided in the knowledge that only limited alterations could be made and it was unanimously agreed that except for small clarifications to a number of articles to reflect current practices, the wording should be finalised then go forward to a General Meeting to be voted on by the membership with a recommendation from the Committee that they should be accepted. The Society's solicitor had advised that the revised Articles of Association would not need to be cleared by the Charity Commission.

10. Show Rules Sub-Committee

The sub-committee had reviewed the rules pertaining to showing in the governing document, the show rules, the bye-laws and the general advice offered to members on the website.

They felt that this information should be brought into one document and that should either be included in the governing document or that the show rules should become a separate document.

There were certain items such as the inclusion of the need for all stallions to be shown with a stallion disc that would bring the EPS rules in to line with NPS rules whilst other suggestions from the group would require a decision by the EPS membership.

It was felt that the rule pertaining to clipping should be reviewed. The show ring and other activities undertaken were the shop window for the Exmoor pony. Any pony that was clipped out and hunted through the winter, for example, was not eligible to be shown in-hand until the coat has fully grown out and thus could not compete in classes in the early part of the year. This did put them at a disadvantage in mixed breed classes.

The sub-committee would put together wording that could be reviewed by the committee and then put to the membership.

There were a number of letters seeking clarification on the showing rules and the work of the sub-committee should make the rules far easier to follow and understand.

The question of whether a newly qualified judge should have a probationer in the ring with them was discussed again. Given the opinion of a number of senior judges, the majority were in favour of the proposal that a newly qualified judge should not have a probationer with them for the first three years.

11. Reports

Secretary's Report

The Secretary's report to the Trustees was taken as read and work was ongoing with regard to DEFRA legislation, the Central Equine Database and Zootech legislation.

The Society continued to attract good PR coverage and an autumn newsletter would be circulated to the membership in October.

Inspections were in the process of being arranged but the microchip paperwork for many in-ground foals had not been returned by the requested date of 1st September 2017. Of those that had, a number had to be returned due to insufficient information or lack of signatures.

Finance

Due to lack of time, the Treasurer's report was not discussed and it was agreed that finance would be put at the beginning of the December agenda.

Show Secretary

The running of Pony of the Year competition would fall within the remit of the Show Secretary in 2018.

The Show Secretary felt that the decision to withdraw Pony of the Year qualifiers should be reviewed at the December meeting.

Breed Show Secretary

The Breed Show Secretary reported that changes to the running of Exford Show had impacted on the Breed Show in particular the lack of paper schedules. The revised layout of the rings had been successful but the late running of events in the main ring meant that the HOYS class took place in the EPS ring and the parade was cancelled.

It was agreed that the trophies issued at the show would be reviewed and given that there were a number of cups not currently in use, there could be a trophy for the Senior Mare Class.

The timetable for the 2018 Breed Show would be reviewed at the December meeting and it was felt the marque should include display boards providing information to those visiting the rings.

Projects

The Treasurer reported that there were no ongoing projects at this time.

Review of Secretary's honorarium

The Treasurer advised that because of the financial situation, she did not wish to implement the honorarium increase for the secretary in September as agreed by the Trustees until the Trustees had had a chance to discuss it again in December.

12. Area Representatives

New Area Representatives had taken over the area comprising Berkshire, Gloucestershire, Hampshire and Wiltshire.

13. Young Judge's Competition

Mrs April Westcott reported that plans were in hand for 2018 with five qualifiers and the final at the Breed Show. Showing clinics/stud visits would be used wherever possible and it was hoped all would take place in March and April.

A revised format for the final at the Breed Show would be put in place so that it did not clash with classes.

14. Website/Facebook

The website and facebook pages remained works in progress with updates and posts being undertaken as and when necessary. For the most part photographers did want a copyright notice on photos used on the website because otherwise people could lift them for commercial use.

15. Exmoor Pony Festival Trust

Mrs Carol Bigge reported that the festival committee had met prior to the meeting to establish the events for 2018. It was felt a shorter festival 5th-12th August would allow for more promotional work to be done on the various events. The festival would then run bi-annually and thus festival organisers would be available to help with the Centenary celebrations in 2021.

16. Centenary Plans

Mrs April Wescott had volunteered to chair the working group and would report back to the December meeting.

17. Any Other Business

Pony of the Year

It was agreed that Fiona Dickson and Mrs Jackie Wharton would take over the running of Pony of the Year.

Social Media

A number of letters had been received regarding threads on social media.

It was noted that the Trustees had no jurisdiction over pages run by individuals on facebook or over the opinions that people posted. Whilst it could be said that members of the EPS did comment on a whole variety of issues pertaining to the ponies so did a significant number of non-members.

Dates of next meetings

4 th December	The Old Forge, Stoneleigh
26 th February	Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross
4 th June	The Old Forge, Stoneleigh

Mr Brewer closed the meeting at 5.20pm.