



During August the new Council has met and this report sets out what we have done and what we hope to achieve.

Our first Council meeting was held immediately after the Annual General Meeting in Glasgow on 30 March 2019. Colin Thomas was elected Chairman, Wyn Jones Vice Chairman and Geraint Davies was appointed as Chair of Finance and Human Resources.

The Council met with the Society auditors Baldwin's on 29 April 2019 to create an action plan for the coming year which is monitored every three months to track progress and make sure that we are on track to succeed. Also as part of this day all trustees took part in an induction/ training day.

On 29 April 2019 Council met to appoint trustees to standing committees, working groups and outside organisations and these appointments are detailed on this website under Governance.

Council has set realistic targets because we believe that the economic challenges facing our members require a positive and supportive response from our Society. We need to raise our profile to re-invigorate the market for Welsh Ponies and Cobs, help members to understand and avoid welfare problems.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/700200/horses-welfare-codes-of-practice-april2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/700200/horses-welfare-codes-of-practice-april2018.pdf)

As you will observe from the attached strategy document 'Serving our Members' we hope to collect your e-mail addresses as part of our wish to improve communications and so it would be helpful if you could update us with your correct contact details. Your privacy is extremely important to WPCS, so we want you to know exactly how we will use that personal information. Our full privacy notice setting out detailed information about matters such as what personal information we use, for what purpose we use it, what our legal basis for doing so is and who we share your personal information with, can be viewed on our website <https://wpcs.uk.com/homepage/privacy-policy/> If you would prefer to see a hard copy of our privacy notice, please ask a member of WPCS staff and we will be happy to provide you with one.

We wish to encourage your participation in our work and so it would be even better if you also let us know if you would be willing to contribute to any of the projects set out in our strategy or how you would like to help or get involved with our Society, locally or nationally, in any other way.

## **The Welsh Pony and Cob Society** **Serving our Members, a Strategy for 2019 – 2020**

### **Introduction**

Our wonderful Welsh ponies and cobs are part of Welsh culture and heritage, they are the pride and passion of our members and their unique qualities, for performance and pleasure, makes them a global brand. In the current economic climate it is imperative that our Society looks outwards, to improve knowledge about and versatility of the Welsh breeds, to serve our members and to fulfil breed and our charitable objectives which are to:

- encourage the breeding, improvement and integrity of Welsh ponies, cobs and part-breds (Welsh breeds);
- promote the care, management and versatility of Welsh breeds:
- provide or encourage showing classes, activities and events for horses and ponies; and
- through education and publicity to prevent cruelty and welfare of horse and ponies

To realise this mission and meet the aspirations of our members the WPCS must be run in a businesslike way, must have clear strategic direction, measurable targets and a plan to achieve them. We need to be open and accountable, provide high quality services and communicate effectively with all our audiences.



This document sets out the thinking underpinning the strategy, summarizes the key objectives and the targets which will be necessary to ensure its delivery. This plan is not intended as a private working document but represents a prospectus to the wider membership about the sort of Society that Council wishes to create.

External threats, a central passport registration authority, the economic climate, uncertainty of Brexit and consequential welfare problems, weak markets for the sale of horses and dwindling registrations are too stark and too immediate to allow another year, let alone another decade, of internal conflict.

Positive aspects include maintaining the standards and quality of our Welsh Ponies and Cobs during difficult times and we would like to congratulate breeders on this.

### **Governance**

Trustees agree that their first responsibility is to give a clear sense of direction and purpose to the WPCS, set the long term vision and protect the Society's reputation and values. The priority attached to good governance reflects the fact that effective structures, policies and procedures will enable the Society to achieve its purposes and deliver its services efficiently.

### **Committees**

The Society Committee structure aligned to the Society's strategy has been established. The four committees, namely:

- Education and Welfare
- Judging and Showing
- Members Services
- Promotion
- Finance and Human Resources

Council will elect their own Chairman of each committee, with the exception of Chair of Finance, and may appoint small time limited task forces to deliver specific projects. Their primary role will be to deliver Council's strategy and will report to Council:

### **Minutes**

Minutes of a committee should be a matter for that committee and, like Council's, should primarily be a record of recommendations. In exceptional circumstances the reason for a decision may be set out in the minutes but they should never become a transcript of the meeting. It will be the responsibility of the chairs of Council and committees to edit/agree their minutes before circulation. These committee minutes will then be referred to in council meetings and ratified.

### **Pink Papers**

Trustees understand and accept their legal duty of confidentiality and have the current 'pink paper' regime whereby anything deemed confidential is circulated to members at the meeting, with no prior warning, and signed before being collected up at the end of the discussions.

There will be a rationalisation of all papers presented to Council to ensure that decisions are taken in the light of an explanation of the issue, the options available and a recommendation. Low level correspondence will be promptly dealt with by staff, or if appropriate, committee chairs.

### **Target:**



- Make a commitment to our members to be open and to focus on our breed and charitable objects.
- Minutes to be the responsibility of chairs and primarily record decisions in accordance with the agreed model format.
- Council papers to comprise of agenda and papers are circulated 14 days ahead of a meeting.

### **Promotion**

The purpose of the Promotion Standing Committee is to ensure that legislators/regulators are aware of what we are thinking, the media both equestrian, national and local, know what we are saying; and most importantly all our members are informed and know what we are doing. The ultimate aim is to raise the profile of all Welsh breeds as well as that of the WPCS on any issue regarding the breed.

### **Website**

The previous website was not user friendly and hard to navigate and, was not regularly updated. We have now recently transferred to a new website and are in the process of updating the content of the website and working to make this more accessible for all members.

There is a wonderful museum at the WPCS office at Bronaeron in West Wales which includes many photographs and other items from the early days of our Society. To enable this resource to be more widely shared it is intended that, over a few years, the museum contents should be digitized and made available on the website.

### **Target:**

- New website and first tranche of museum operational
- Development of a members only section

### **Raising our profile**

To raise the profile the WPCS it is necessary to become the first choice source of information on Welsh breeds, native ponies and equestrian topics for everyone from the Welsh Assembly to the equestrian media. This can be achieved by producing position papers on contentious issues (passports, welfare) timely and punchy press releases.

### **Target:**

- Issue regular press releases on topical issues nationally and internationally.
- Prepare position papers on contentious issues.
- Develop a long term strategy for raising the profile of WPCS and Welsh breeds aimed at attracting new members and developing new markets for ponies and cobs January 2015

### **Members' Services**

#### **Area associations**

A network of area associations already exists and they organise shows, stud visits, newsletters, social and educational events for Welsh breed enthusiasts in their area. The people who run these associations are prepared to give their time on behalf of our Society and their local members. Council would like to build its services and support for members on those foundations.

The sort of support it is proposed to provide to local associations may include:



- Organise/support at least one educational seminar/presentation/evening covering topics such as preparation for showing, judging, welfare, laminitis and feeding etc. to associations and WPCS members
- Encourage events which involve young people, including 'pre-teens', promote the bursaries available and the role of the Young Ambassador and Achiever.
- Conduct open and objective surveys, to ensure services are fulfilling members' expectations, to identify weaknesses in performance and potential new opportunities.
- Meet twice a year once prior to the AGM and then again in the autumn.

### **Open day**

To arrange a non-competitive family fun day to promote the breed, date to be arranged.

#### **Target:**

- To deliver the event

### **International**

Council believed that the current programme of meetings and support for overseas branches are working well and that new initiatives could be required depending on the outcome of Brexit.

### **Pavilion**

The existing pavilion at the Royal Welsh Showground is maintained through the year.

#### **Target:**

- Annual maintenance of the existing building to be carried out.

### **Education and Welfare**

To foster and further encourage the acquisition of knowledge and dissemination of best practise regarding the management and welfare of Welsh Ponies and Cobs and their Part-Breds in particular and of equines in general

To publicise and communicate the education and welfare of Welsh Ponies and Cobs and their Part-Breds by all means possible

#### **Target:**

- Education and Welfare Committee to produce guidance for members.
- Put into place agreements with other societies on welfare issues and how we work together.
- Arrange a seminar on animal welfare and education. Possibly at Aberystwyth University subject to agreement.
- Education of owners on their responsibility to the welfare of their horse and ponies.

### **Protecting integrity**

### **Complaints and disciplinary**



You would expect an equestrian organization to have a complaints procedure in place to address cruelty to animals and abuse of judges etc. but for a charity you would not expect it to constitute the largest item of expenditure, after staff salaries.

### **DNA**

At the Society's expense one new foal in six hundred is subject to DNA testing and a test is a requirement for registering a stallion. It is likely that, at some stage in the future, external regulators will require all horses to be tested. As a first step towards looking to the future, DNA will be discussed at the General Meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019. To establish members views on how we should progress with this.

#### **Target:**

- This will follow from the discussions at the General Meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019

### **Judging & Showing**

To advise Council on the best way of ensuring Judges on the Welsh Panel and shows affiliating to the Society, abide by the applicable rules as amended from time to time, and to devise a continuing programme of appointing new judges, ensuring they uphold the integrity and good standing of the Society, and to explore their continuing professional development rather than the current requirement to attend a conference. Any complaints regarding a show should be logged initially with the shows' complaints procedure and WPCS rules.

As well as reviewing the Judges' Handbook, clearly separating rules from recommendations and guidance.

#### **Target:**

- Review the Judges' Handbook.
- Review minimum age for judges and develop an appropriate mentoring regime.
- Invite shows to require judges to publicly give their reasons.
- Review the current time frames for both the Judges assessment and Judges Seminar.

### **Infrastructure**

The infrastructures, certainly the key IT systems, are creaking, are not integrated and inhibit flexibility and productivity. Primitive budgetary processes do not give clear accountabilities and anecdotal evidence suggests shortcomings in service standards.

#### **IT systems**

Council are in the process of negotiating a new state of the art database which we hope will resolve any issues and will allow for an integrated membership, registration and financial package which will enable one member of staff to complete all steps for any transaction and, for example, to instantly generate stud books, financial and members services data and be responsive to customer needs.

We are aware that many ponies and cobs registered with the Society remain in the name of their breeder or previous owner rather than their current owner.

#### **Target:**

- Complete review/specification for IT system
- Database repair: Send printouts to batches of members each week to ascertain which animals they have sold or have died to update and maintain the new system once implemented.



- Clean up life members database in instalments
- Collect through mailings, during phone calls and correspondence the e-mail addresses for 75% of members.

#### **Company Secretary**

The Society's previous Company Secretary resigned and a Deputy Company Secretary is currently in place. The recruitment process is currently underway to seek a candidate who can, and a staffing structure that will, turn their ambitious strategy into action.

#### **Target:**

- Appoint a new Company Secretary

#### **Service standards**

#### **Target:**

- Publish demanding service standards for correspondence, registrations, transfers etc. in line with minimum operating standards for passport issuing offices.

#### **Staff skills**

We need well motivated staff able to support, flexibly, the activities of the WPCS. It is certain that a state of the art IT system would increase productivity enormously and so we should now be training staff with the skills required to deliver this plan. This will require more creative skills including journalistic writing, organising events and negotiating with speakers, letter writing and using technology to deliver high quality design.

#### **Target:**

- Provide ongoing training to develop staff skill sets
- Conduct staff reviews to establish training gaps and requirements