

CYMDEITHAS Y MERLOD A'R COBIAU CYMREIG THE WELSH PONY AND COB SOCIETY

Summary Minutes of the online Council meeting held at 1.30pm on Wednesday 20th May 2020

Present: **Via laptop/pc** Colin Thomas, Wyn Jones, Sharon Charlton, Liz Hampson, Gwyn Jones, Roger Davies, Elgan Evans, John Welsh, Barry Hall
Via mobile phone or landline Geraint Davies, Debbie Jones, Daydre Chambers, Dilwyn Roberts, Daniel Morgan

*Mrs Debbie Jones joined the meeting after the confidential minutes

Apologies: **President** Brian Foster **President-elect** Roger Davies (Hafdre)

In Attendance: **Via phone** Gemma Bassett-Burr (Office Manager)
Via laptop Meirion Davies (Company Secretary)

Minute Taker: Gemma Bassett-Burr (Office Manager)

The Chair welcomed everyone and thanked them for joining this online meeting by phone or laptop during these continued difficult times.

**ACTION
POINTS**

Declarations – there were no declarations

Apologies - President Brian Foster President-elect Roger Davies (Hafdre)

Any other business

- a request for extension of the prefix
- a DNA harvesting problem
- RWAS Gold medal replica request

Disciplinary methods

(CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES)

The Chair welcomed a trustee who joined the meeting at this point.

Corrections Minutes 17th March 2020

The Chair noted that these minutes were now presented in their numbered form as noted that they would be further considered for approval once numbered

The Chair proceeded to ask the individual Trustees whether they accepted the minutes.

All were in Favour.

Correction Minutes 22nd April 2020

The spelling of [REDACTED] to be checked.

Matters arising

Page 3 – A members request for a duplicate gold medal. The Chair declared an interest that the member had spoken to him about his request. The Company Secretary suggested that

producing duplicate medals on request, presented an opportunity for the Society to create an income stream should the Trustees wish.

It was suggested that a high price should be placed on this option to manage the level of requests and to make the extra work involved worthwhile. If passed the feeling was that the duplicate medal should replicate the original exactly and include the original names. A trustee suggested that it be noted that it was a duplicate on the back of the medal, and the Office would make a note of this on the Animals notes in the database.

The consensus was that the topic be added to the agenda for the next meeting to decide on the outcome and cost if voted in favour.

It was also decided that Judging and Showing Committee would consider all aspects of offering duplicates in their next meeting.

Following the hiatus due to the pandemic and a period of inactivity it was suggested that the 'Past Young Ambassador wall of honour' is to be added to the agenda for the next Council meeting as well.

The letters regarding Harmonization have both gone to the two Dutch societies. They have acknowledged their receipt and expressed disappointment. Once Brexit is in place and a new order it was noted that they may well suggest harmonization once again.

It was proposed that the Minutes are an accurate reflection of the meeting and are accepted as a true record.

Proposed and Seconded All in favour.

Chairman/Vice Chair's report

The Chair read his report expressing sadness and sympathies to each family across the world who has lost loved ones during this pandemic. He was pleased to report that staff have kept the Society operational according to Defra and Welsh Government regulations. Surprisingly despite the periods of lockdown the workload has been the same as last year. A meeting had been held to discuss staffing with the Vice Chair, Chair of Finance and HR, Company Secretary and Office Manager. The Chair wished to thank the two staff members still based in the Office at Bronaeron; [REDACTED] for her daily communication as to the Passports and Transferred documents that were leaving the Office during the lockdown period. The Office Manager had also kept him up to date on the PIO status and passport applications, in such adversity it was remarkable what has been achieved by all. The Office manager had also taken on the role of finance due to the furloughed staff being absent. [REDACTED] has been working remotely and been extremely busy with a huge amount of phone calls. [REDACTED] is also working remotely on website and database and a milestone piece of work on prefixes (16,000) being uploaded as a 'check' document to the website which will help members cross check names before registering. The Chair noted how hard the Company Secretary had been working – working Friday's which were beyond his contracted hours and evenings, coupled with Saturday and Sunday work due to the Sales, DNA and the added unnecessary work loading of another subject access request, to meet deadlines. He wished to thank Meirion.

He also wished to thank the Sales committee Chair and Vice-Chair for moving this forward for the society and its membership. The Chair wished for a copy of the report to be shared with each trustee after this meeting.

At this point trustee requested that trustees show their appreciation of fellow trustee for her hard work in the NHS during this difficult period. Trustees showed their appreciation by applauding.

Company Secretary report.

The Company Secretary began by thanking the Chair for his unstinting support and commitment to the Society – especially given the current circumstances and restrictions. He outlined the progress which had been made on developing Sales for the Society and mentioned the forecasted worry for the autumn and the excess supply of unwanted foals and the welfare issues that could raise, in the wake of no ‘traditional sales’ being held. The Company Secretary noted that he and the Vice Chair had both attended a webinar regarding investments and current situation organised by the auditors.

The work done on the ‘Prefix’ as a concept has raised several issues regarding the stewardship within the society. He suggested that Prefix and Suffix as topics should be added under the wing of Members Services. Since the post on Social media and the website regarding the number of prefix and the ‘check-list’ the Society had seen a surge of new prefixes and others wishing to create extensions to those already owned. This is a revived income stream for the Society as a direct result of promoting the service.

The Company Secretary had been telephoned by banned member [REDACTED]. The Company Secretary wished to declare that he knew him personally and had shown ponies for that breeder. The Company Secretary had pointed out [REDACTED] that he could not discuss anything with him. The Company Secretary had asked for a letter of authorisation from the member to confirm that another family member can do this work on her behalf. The Company Secretary noted his wish to resolve the outstanding issues to enable registrations, rather having ‘pending’ files, which will cause problems later. The Chair of Education & Welfare offered his services to help if required.

The Company Secretary drew attention to a few very awkward customers who are very vocal on Facebook. They are not members and level unfair criticisms at the Office where in truth their transfers or registrations are fraught with problems. These are ‘use us once’ customers who have little understanding of the process and unrealistic expectations of response times. The Office Manager and Company Secretary feel strongly that non-members should be asked to pay higher fees for the problems they create. Currently the transfer fee is the same for a member as it is for a non-member. Should the non-member be levied with a higher fee?

The Company Secretary confirmed that the Amended Registration form is available for download from the WPCS website. The Company Secretary will respond directly to a member regarding his points on the registration forms.

The Company Secretary outlined an idea which had been thought of by the Office Manager as a potential revenue source for the Society – the hosting of a WORLD ONLINE SHOW. The concept was discussed briefly. It was proposed that the Company Secretary draft and circulate a document for the approval of Council before the next meeting. In principal all trustees present responded positively to the concept.

The Company Secretary thanked the Office team for their work, commitment and energies during the month. Even though these were difficult times the Office was catching up.

Weatherbys Scientific DNA and the Animal Health Trust.

Weatherbys Scientific have now commenced processing profile and providing data. It is a very quick and efficient service. At the AHT the Canine department have begun working to clear any outstanding work, hopefully the equine genetic department will follow suit. The Company Secretary mooted that maybe the Society should pass on any fees for a requested profile by another Society or Lab. This could be discussed at the next meeting.

Finance and HR Report

Staffing – The Chair of Finance thanked the staff for their continued efforts during this difficult time and with the clearing of the backlog. Three staff are on furlough. It was flagged that an issue could arise as staff have not been taking holiday. The holiday position for

furloughed staff was discussed briefly. The Chair of Finance & HR thanked the Office manager for her work on the Society's finances. Staff have been very prudent with expenditure costs showing a profit. The Society's income shows that investments will be down and memberships numbers down. It is difficult to estimate the level of registrations and transfers. The staff have offered some good ideas to implement costs saving. There should be a saving on professional and legal fees due to drop-in legal fees and last year's agency costs no longer being there. If we can carry on generating ideas for income and cost savings, we can then hopefully avoid using the reserves, and keep the calling on those funds to a minimum. Further savings were noted on postage as no medals to post. The decision to utilise the judge's handbook over a period of two years will also contribute. In essence the Society is in a slightly better financial position than had been foreseen. It is hoped that the Investments will pick up.

Sales Committee.

Chair of Committee, thanked the Sales committee for their work during the period and thanked the Company Secretary for the amount of preparation and work he had done. At the moment we will not be able to hold a normal sale and are looking at holding a series of online events. A consultation with three independent Auctioneers has been held to receive advice and guidance. A Press release issued to the members engendered an excellent positive response. The aim is to host the 'traditional' sales in the autumn next year. The Society is currently in negotiation with the RWAS and are awaiting detailed costings. As regards the Online sales, the Company Secretary is in the process of creating the ITT tender document to secure an auctioneer. A number of companies or individuals have already expressed an interest in providing Sales in general for the Society. The Chair of Council declared that the auctioneer of [REDACTED] had contacted him to thank the Society for the way they had conducted the consultation meeting in a professional manner. The two processes will run in parallel with a tender for online sales run first; followed by a tender for traditional sales. In principal as the Online sales are new uncharted territory it is envisaged that the first sale will be a pilot sale with a small number of entries to test the waters. If successful, the plan is then to look at a second third and fourth if they work and engage enough people. Focusing on a small number to begin with, to make sure it works.

The Chair of Council thanked the sales committee. The positivity on Facebook has been welcomed in promoting the society.

(CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE)

2021 Journal

It was discussed that the 2021 journal presents many challenges as it will be missing so many elements due to the devastation of the Society's calendar of events. It was mooted that the society should look at reduced cost for adverts to encourage members to take spaces.

If an advert was placed by a member or stud, they could be given a free page as an advertorial to illustrate how their stud started to provide added value in these difficult times. It would create content and encourage people from less well-established studs as well.

Proposed and Seconded All in favour

A trustee has been working with the Company Secretary to look at ideas for creating content. Champions from the online show could be included.

It was proposed due to the extenuating circumstances of the Covid 19 pandemic that we should extend the contract for printing the next journal rather than tendering. A new tender for three years would be actioned once the pandemic was over.

Proposed and Seconded All in favour

Discussion ensued about how to support the cost of the journal with commercial revenue through adverts.

It was agreed that this was a proactive idea.

Proposed and Seconded All in favour

The Company Secretary noted that there were no terms of reference for the Journal Committee. He offered to draw up a draft for the committee to consider and implement for approval by Council

Stud Book

There have been a few teething issues with bold wording and layout from the new data-base but this has been resolved by working with the company. Company Secretary is awaiting further information from the Society solicitors regarding a wording for the newsletter and website to enable the inclusion of members addresses.

The Company Secretary noted that the proposed new membership form includes a tick box for this approval by each member for this going forward.

A trustee offered to continue his support if required. The Chair noted that the trustee has pushed for these stud book to be published and thanked him for his efforts that have unfortunately been delayed due to IT issues.

2020 AGM June 20th

The dilemma regarding the hosting of the AGM on the 20th of June 2020 was discussed due to the ongoing current government restrictions regarding large gatherings of people. The Company Secretary outlined his conversations with the Charity Commission asking for guidance, some Charities are able to have the meeting online. The largest group you can convene online is 1000 but the Society has approx. 5,000 members and it prevents those without a computer taking part. Company Secretary has requested advice from the Society solicitors, suggesting hosting an AGM 'day' it would not be live but with various postings through the day with the last announcement being the result of the trustee ballot result. We do not have the facilities to enable a meeting that can include everyone. The Society solicitor's original advice was given during the pre-lockdown period. Their subsequent advice has been followed.

Concern was expressed regarding the nominees for election to serve as trustees, and how we would best convey the message to those individuals, and the result of the election. The Charity commission suggested the potential if our Articles allowed for several smaller online meetings – this was felt to be impractical and again did not address those members who are digitally deprived.

The decision was to await the Society solicitor's updated advice, in the wake of daily changing situations because of the pandemic.

The next Council of Trustees meeting is scheduled for the 19th June 2020 at 1:30pm. This is the pre-AGM meeting.

Membership application form

The Company secretary asked trustees to consider the removal of life membership in future as an option as this is currently costing the society a lot of money in the long run. If announced soon this could then generate income as a cash injection during this difficult year as some members may wish to take up this option before it is withdrawn. This is to be considered and returned to.

The Company Secretary also noted that the new form could have a Tick box to remove multi delivery of journals to the same household; if members elected to forego a journal for each member of the household where multi members reside at the same residence it could offer the Society savings on printing and postage.

The Company Secretary noted that the revised membership form would be circulated amongst the Trustees for their comments prior to the next Council meeting

Welsh Government and Defra

The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for June. The Company secretary requested that the Chair and Vice-chair also be present to represent the Society. The Society would like to discuss the Governments position on the potential welfare problems this winter, due to the inability to hold traditional sales across the UK. The trustees were asked for any ideas or experiences that they could share from the past during times of hardship and recession. The society Honorary vet to be consulted for his opinions.

The Company Secretary expressed concerns that the society and the Office in particular could be vulnerable in the same way as last year to a deluge of registration applications in the final two months of the autumn, due to members feeling the financial effect of the pandemic and the inability of vets to microchip due to social distancing restrictions this summer. It was the Company Secretary's intention to propose to the WG that a 'holding licence' embossed with the Society's logo could be issued as a temporary document to avoid a backlog in order to avoid having to increase staffing levels to process within the current PIO time limits. This valid holding document would suffice until the actual passport is issued. If the WG agreed, then they would be requested to inform DEFRA.

Transfers and Registrations update

Approximately 247 registrations and 476 transfers had been completed since lock-down. 178 registrations are still pending – and all have attached problems, and the majority have either been written to or emailed.

189 registrations have been returned to the customer as they are not processable in their current state.

There are currently 30 still to establish what the issues are as to why they cannot be processed.

Of the new submissions for 2020 registered foals 67 have been returned or new registrations arrived in the office this week. The majority are accepted at submission.

The 2020 Judging and Showing Handbook

Will be despatched early next week.

Website updating progress

The list of 16,000 prefixes has now been uploaded.

Breeding Rules

Trustees responded to the circulated document which had been revised.

Queries were raised over the status of Section X and this needs to be clarified at the next Council meeting before the revised document can be proposed for approval.

Silver Medal status requests

The Tudor Rose Association had requested silver medal status and were refused but the South Yorkshire Association were awarded a silver medal. This was to be reviewed by the Judging and Showing committee. The current criteria note that a show had to hold Bronze medal status for 5 years before a silver Medal can be granted.

In answer to a similar request from Bucks Counties Spectacular show, they must have been awarding Bronze medals for 5 years before they can request a silver medal.

Over stamping fee

The Company Secretary requested that Council reviewed the fee over stamping for non-members as this was often a 'one transaction customer' who are currently paying the same fee as members.

Enrolment of new members and renewal of memberships

The Chair – deputising for Council due to GDPR issues and the sharing on email of members details, declared that he saw no reason to withhold membership from those applicants who had applied during the month under consideration.

AOB

██████████ – Prefix extension request. Member had provided the Society with a letter as executor of the will following her mother's death to arrange transfers and would like to be able to use the ██████████ prefix. The request is to be added to the next agenda for formal consideration.

The Company Secretary noted that the Society does not currently have a 'Bereavement package', which could assist members when preparing their estate or members families when a breeder passes away. The Company Secretary offered to create such a document for Council's consideration. This service could be of public benefit and ensure the welfare of the members' stock at a time of vulnerability.

Member ██████████ ██████████ has contacted the Society regarding the licensing of a young stallion. The elderly Sire of the colt doesn't have DNA but vets will not come out to harvest a sample from that animal as it is not an emergency. This case is exacerbated by the lock-down. The practice of covering with unlicensed stallions prior to their licensing was discussed and the opportunity to harvest the DNA of elderly stallions who predate the implementation of DNA against the sampling of blood. It was suggested that we invite owners to offer their old stallions over the age of 18 for free DNA profiling to capture this data for the future.

With no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 18.30.

This report is prepared solely for the purpose of Council. It is private and confidential to members of Council. They must not be produced or disclosed to any other individual. The remarks made by any specific members of Council as reported in these Minutes are their personal views and not the views of the Society unless ratified by the Society.

