



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

Summary Minutes of the online Council meeting held at 9.30pm on Tuesday 28th July 2020

Present: **Via laptop/pc** President - Brian Foster, Colin Thomas, Wyn Jones, Elgan Evans, Sharon Charlton, Geraint Davies, Gwyn Jones, Roger Davies, Liz Hampson (for the afternoon)
Via mobile phone or landline
Debbie Jones, Dilwyn Roberts

Welcome and Apologies: Roger Davies (President Elect) Barry Hall, Liz Hampson (for the morning), John Welsh, Daniel Morgan

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

Minute Taker: Gemma Bassett-Burr (Office Manager)

NOTE. The Confidential minutes are read out at these online meetings, they are not circulated.

The Chair welcomed everybody present to the meeting and thanked them for continuing to take part in this way.

Declarations.

A Trustee wished to note that it had come to his attention that a person working at 'Farmers Marts' is possibly related to him and wished to record that he was not involved in the Sales tender process to appoint that company as auctioneers

Any other business –

Chaps over stamped Passport. This has been dealt with in the DNA meeting.

A HOYS Duplicate Gold Medal request

Hill Ponies update

Belgium society request regarding their proposed online show

The Risk register.

Prefix transfer.

Matters arising

Boiler – no progress as yet. It was proposed that we service the boiler in the first instance.

Proposed and Seconded All in favour

The Company secretary noted that the Bill to allow extensions for holding AGM's has gone through parliament and is now law.

The Company secretary noted that the new Microchipping form is being used and people are starting to now microchip ahead of the October deadline in England and the February deadline in Wales.

The Duplicate gold medal will go for engraving once the engravers re-open.

The Section C filly's requested re-naming is being looked into.

Proposed and Seconded All in favour.

Corrections Confidential Minutes 19th June 2020

Company secretary read the confidential minutes to everyone present.

Matters arising

There were no matters arising

Chairman/Vice Chair's report

The Chair noted that in his role he had supported trustees and members and Chairs of committees when approached. He noted that as all trustees were aware there had been an increase in newly formed committees, which is purely down to the increasing scale of work that the administration, governance / objectives and the ever-increasing new legislation creates for the day to day running of the organisation.

Since the last meeting, standing committees have successfully completed a number of tasks and the relevant chairs and Company secretary will update the Council on these matters.

The meeting with the Welsh Government Shadow Minister was very positive and the Chair felt that he has guided us to where we need to go for assistance and to create an identity for the Society within the Welsh Government.

It has been a very busy period for the staff again and the Chair noted that he had continued to support and assist in every way possible – he expressed his sincere thanks again to the Office staff.

He noted that agenda item number 10 – “AGM 2020” is very important to the next 12 months or so, which relates to the governance and the administration of the Society. The Chair requested that when this matter would be discussed that a balanced view be taken on the information provided.

Because of Covid-19, once again, the Chair thanked the trustees that are continuing to support by way of video meetings and telephone.

The Chair also wished to thank the Hon. Veterinary Officer of the Society who had attended and given professional guidance and advice online where needed in the Education & Welfare and DNA meetings

Vice Chair wished to re-iterate his thanks to everyone at the Office and trustees during this difficult period.

Company Secretary report.

The Company secretary noted that the last month had been a very busy period with all of the sub committees' meetings and the minutes and actions that arise as a result.

The Company secretary noted that he has been putting in a lot of hours on top of his normal working week from home working on the 'enquiries inbox'. Quite often there are up to 400 e-mails in the enquiries inbox with the majority asking about transfers and duplicate requests. He noted that it does reveal that people have no knowledge of those processes. There are also many random questions received that need a very specialist response. The enquiries inbox needs constant attention and is a draw on resources.

The Company secretary also noted that much of his time had been taken up with the Online sales. He reported that the meeting with the Shadow Minister for Rural affairs was very open in sharing the government processes. In the short term, a discussion took place about the aim to include Welsh Ponies and Cobs on the new educational curriculum for Welsh students, noting their heritage value and contribution to the economic development of the country. The Shadow minister was very surprised to realise that Welsh ponies Cobs make up 25% of the Equine population of the UK according to the CED. Brexit was also discussed and its potential effect on the Society and its members, followed by a frank discussion about the Welfare worries the Society has in the light of the impending recession. It was agreed that a follow-up meeting with Shadow Minister for Rural affairs would be arranged in six months' time.

At this juncture the Chair thanked the trustee for arranging the meeting.

It was noted that a meeting was arranged for the 29th July with Fanatic to review the website.

He noted that the Office had been busy on Facebook and the Society website issuing news and bulletins with a mix of positive and negative comments, and felt that the responses from members and the public has become a more measured discussion compared to last years mood. He noted that the majority of negative complaints were from non-members who often submitted materials which were incomplete resulting in a delay. He had actively been engaging via 'messenger' with any of those complainants.

The Company secretary noted that the coronavirus had impacted hugely on the efficiency of the postal delivery service. As an example, he noted that on the 27th of July the Office was made aware that a passport posted on the 29th April had finally arrived with the customer yesterday. This indicates some of the delay's customers are facing with Royal Mail.

Confidential issue

He also confirmed that we will be cancelling the Sire rating this year due to the lack of events held where points can be won.

Confidential issue

Finance and HR Report

Chair of F+Hr reported to the meeting on the F&HR committee held on the 29th June. He noted that from Investec would be invited to the next meeting.

Following discussion it was decided to review the fees for providing services to non-members of the Society at the same rate of members and they are normally the most problematic and time consuming to process and often the customer can be very demanding and a one touch purchase.

The suggested fees are as follows.

Transfer non-member to be £25, Over-stamp for non-member £35, Prefix extension for non-member £40. It was important to note that Members fees are to remain unchanged at their present level. This would also incentivise the non-members who use the Society's services on a regular basis to join.

It was proposed that these fee changes be adopted.

Proposed and Seconded All in favour.

The Company secretary had raised the issue that when a breeder registers a foal in the name of the new owner the Society loses out on the £15 transfer fee. This might be something to consider as an income stream in future.

It was noted that the next meeting would be held in August 2020.

The Finance report for June provided by the Office Manager, shows the Society in profit, however not all energy costs are included.

Chair of Finance thanked the Office manager for claiming the furlough money under the Government scheme. Investment funds have also been received.

Chair of Finance noted that the Company secretary has worked hard with a savings of on the post and a 6-month holiday period from the company on costs. The Company secretary had also secured a grant for the RWAS pavilion.

Registrations are up in June and up overall, transfers and memberships are slightly down on this period in 2019.

The trees at Bronaeron and in the neighbouring property are possibly a danger to people and the building. It was suggested that we move dead ash tree. The Company secretary noted that he has been trying to contact the person responsible for the trees on the neighbouring land to get these removed. It was suggested that it would be possible to find the owner via the land registry,

Chair of Finance noted that the new team at the Office is now more commercially aware than previous administrations and looking for savings on all levels.

The President noted that he had looked at the finance procedures of the Society and has some comments that can be shared. Chair of Finance suggested that these be presented at the next Finance meeting. President declared that he didn't feel that cheques should be pre-signed, they should only be done on receipt of a statement. The Financial procedures were last re-drafted in 2017, and it was suggested that the President suggestions if accepted be sent to the auditors for them to incorporate into the procedures.

Confidential matters

The order of items on the agenda was changed slightly due to the President having to leave the meeting early.

AGM

The Company secretary informed the room of the current situation. Following the Government guidance and the new law the Society does not have to hold an AGM until the 26th September 2020. The government may then extend this, and the Society would then be faced with the dilemma of having to produce nomination forms etc for another election for Trustees for the period 2021 - 2024 before being able to announce the results of the election for Trustees to serve between 2020 and 2023. With the delay and time running out, and the cost implications of hosting an AGM and another very soon after, lengthy ensued.

President felt that the potential cancellation discussed was the common-sense point of view. He noted that the President elect would only be able to serve a very short term in Office which would not be good, His feelings were that it would be sensible to delay the AGM to next March or April. In effect rendering 2020-21 status quo as it had not been possible to hold any events due pandemic. A trustee noted that the Society should start again from March as it was not fair on those coming in as elected Trustees for such a short 'first year period' if two AGM's were to be held in such close proximity of each other dates.

A trustee thanked the President for his work during his year of office and felt we should follow his advice.

A trustee felt that we must follow the solicitor's advice, noting it had been a very difficult year.

A trustee felt that it made sense to follow the example of the other Charity who had cancelled and asked would those nominated for council this year, be carried forward? This would need to be discussed with the Society's solicitors.

President felt that it would be irresponsible to allow the board and members to attend a meeting in the current pandemic situation. He felt that the Society should write this year off and move forward as long as those nominated are willing to stand next year. He also felt that having 10 new trustees become Council members in one instance would make Society vulnerable.

Chair agreed noting that there could be a lack of experience on the new board. A trustee agreed with this statement.

The Society solicitors responded by email at this point and the Company secretary read this out to the trustees. The recommendation was to write to the Charities commission under Section 105 Act 2011.

AGM Awards

If the AGM is cancelled, we need to cancel all awards. The Company secretary has written to Brightwell's Company secretary regarding their awards and is awaiting a response.

Confidential matter

Judging and Showing Committee

The response to the 2020 Judging and Showing handbook were discussed.

2021 Judges assessment. In January 2021 new applications will be invited to add to those already lodged. The return of Judges self-declaration forms due to Covid-19 has been extended to 1st August 2020.

The Covid-19 guidance for shows was discussed, and as before the Society felt that the best advice was to follow government guidance.

It needs to be made clear to judges regarding the asterisk that it has been an odd year this year, but some will now have hit their 5 years qualification and will be eligible for consideration. Discussion ensued regarding the raising again of the awards of asterisks under AOB at the last meeting and the re-visiting of the criteria to become a panel member. There was a strong feeling that this need not be discussed again as it had been

decided rather than go over old ground. The Company secretary read the section of the minutes under AOB for the Trustees information.

Members Services Committee

Chair reported on the committee's activity

Stickers for the DNA mares was discussed and as noted previously by the Company secretary – due to the workload in the Office this is not a priority but will get done in time. A profile certificate will be produced for any new ones.

Prefix applications and extensions were discussed and accepted except for one which was rejected as it duplicated one already in existence. The second choice for that prefix was accepted.

Proposed and Seconded All in favour.

The Autumn mailing forms for nominations (if required this year) were discussed and have been amended. They are to be circulated to the committee.

The 2021 journal was discussed and is discussed later in the meeting under the agenda item.

Promotions

In the absence of the Chair the Vice chair reported.

National Welsh Show was discussed. The Champion Young Handler from the 2019 RWAS Show was to have featured in the WPCS advert for the schedule; this is camera ready and will now go into next year's Schedule and catalogue.

Merchandise lines for Christmas were discussed. As well as ideas going forward for selling via the revised website.

The Calendar for 2021 was discussed with a vintage theme with momentous pictures from the society history – one image for each decade. It was suggested that trustees take 10 each to sell and that the associations be approached.

It was noted that a full HOYS budget to attend in 2021 should be created to ascertain the various models of viability. This to be an ongoing discussion.

Video production from shows to be discussed in October and TV companies approached for tender.

The Promotion vehicle was discussed regarding the driving experience. The possibility of having a 'Promotional Think tank' of how we can promote the society long term is to be held in the autumn if possible.

An Inventory of content is to be done when the museum is tidied up with digital images taken. We are looking to re-launch the Museum in July 2021 to celebrate when the first meeting proper of the WPCS took place in 1901.

President suggested that retired Publicity Officer be asked if he would meet to discuss the wealth of knowledge he has for the breed and that it be recorded if possible.

A trustee noted that there are others whom the Society should also record for posterity, for example Vice Chair about Coed Coch.

Educational and welfare Committee

Chair led the trustees through his report.

The Company secretary has agreed to prepare a detailed report based on the DNA working group, this will be shared with the trustees.

DNA Tenders – It was proposed that the Company secretary be given authority once the current total of 500 samples with Weatherby's Scientific is reached to be able to extend this and negotiate another short-term deal prior to the proposed tender for DNA.

Proposed and Seconded All in favour

The Company secretary outlined the scope and basis of the tender. Weatherby's have been asked to provide us with a mirror image of the (AHT and Weatherby's Scientific) database so that we hold all our data.

The Producers evening. It is still intended to hold this evening during the early part of next year along with the Registration and Colour workshop in the autumn.

Stallion Licenses – it was noted that all Stallion licence kits are unique to that one animal and have the name registration numbers and are in numbered tamper proof bags for security.

The Honorary vet had also advised that we should revert to a previous Society practice where a vet is nominated by the owner when applying for a stallion kit to prevent a vet not approving a license and then just travelling around to other vets until they eventually get approved. **All in favour.**

It had been suggested that the Society speak with the WAG regarding the creation of a 'Producers license' this was discussed at some length but the issues and costs of policing such a scheme would be prohibitive, and was not felt that this was the time to move forward with this.

It was suggested that we re-post the 'hardship and support offer' of help from a trained counsellor (who has volunteered her services) for any members who need support due to the current pandemic.

DNA committee

The Company secretary outlined why the meeting was asked for by the office as we there were some reoccurring themes regarding registrations and DNA issues, which needed a sounding board to establish a policy so that continuity and fairness was ensured.

The committee was re-named as 'The Registrations committee' to bring forward and include all issues regarding registrations.

The committee is to meet at least once per year, and as and when required.

The Company secretary gave details on the issues discussed and the number of stallions discussed during the meeting.

It was proposed that in the case of a stallion licence application where the sire is blood typed only (these sires would be very old and are being offered free DNA kits so that future applications will be able to be DNA'd) that a license be granted,

Proposed and Seconded All in agreement.

The 'Old stallion – free DNA kits' message to be put in the newsletter and the Journal as a way of capturing as many as possible as it avoids problem in future years for the Society.

Confidential matters

From January 2021, DNA kits can only be purchased from the WPCS and processed by the selected laboratory, and only WPCS microchips to be used from next year, this will be and included in the newsletter and journal.

A number have Sabino roan animal has been brought to the Society's attention, the original registration application forms have been checked and are as marked so they must remain registered.

The Chair requested that all minutes of the sub committee meetings reported on, be shared with the board of trustees.

Welsh government

This meeting was discussed in the Chair and Company secretary's reports.

Sales Committee.

The Chair reported on the activity of the Sales Committee.

The unavoidable decision to postpone the first sale was taken due to lack of entries. This may have been down to the tight turnaround for taking photographs and videos. The inaugural sale will now take place on the 29th August. There were lots of enquiries but a feeling that the entry fee was too high. This has now been amended following discussion from £40 + Vat to £30 + vat.

At this point there are only 7 entered with 6 more potential entries.

The Chair thanked the Company secretary and the committee for their work on establishing the sale

CONFIDENTIAL MATTER

Journal

The Company secretary had spoken to the trustee requesting her attendance at this committee meeting and sent an agenda and term of reference for consideration. It was suggested that we move on with this meeting and share the outcome with the trustees at the next Council meeting in August.

A trustee asked if there was anything stating that a trustee must give apologies if not attending a meeting. This to be investigated further.

Transfers

Transfers are being turned around within 2-3 days and registrations received on the 6th July 2020 are being processed.

Many applications are being returned to the breeder due to errors on the forms.

Online show

Closes on the 10th August and press release has been prepared to go out and we will promote this from the 1st August

Thelma Carter plaque

The Company secretary read out three versions of wording to be considered. A trustee also read one out that he had prepared. The Company secretary to circulate all four in an email with all the statements so that everyone can reply with their preferred choice.

Thelma Carter legacy

The Company secretary will circulate the total figure when it is known.

Enrolment of new members

50 new individuals have applied for membership so far in July. The Company secretary confirmed that he could not see any banned members and the full list was sent to the Chair and Vice chair. It was proposed that all applicants be accepted.

Proposed and Seconded

Correspondence

A letter has been received from the Hon. Maxine Ponsonby's (Lechlade) son to say she has passed away. She was an honorary life member. Her obituary to be included in the journal.

Registration and Colour workshop

The idea was discussed about creating an Educational day for members and non-members with a charge for the day to attend. It was suggested to record the sessions to use them on the Society's website in future. The Society could potentially work alongside the British Palomino society, focusing on breed type, temperament, and confirmation then in the afternoon focusing on colour, markings and filling in a registration form correctly. Identifying colours correctly and the importance of registering birth colour. Buckskin, dun and dilutes would be topics. This would not be about white markings or controversial issues rather an academic look at genetics and simple colour information with specialised speakers invited. This would be seen as an event for public benefit under the charitable status of the Society.

Suggested for September 2021.

Proposed and Seconded Accepted on a majority vote.

Coventry University launch

The Chair explained that he had been in conversation with the Researcher who is researching the Hill ponies and promoting them. He wished to make council aware that they may want to do a photoshoot at the office.

All in agreement.

AOB

Risk register – Vice Chair attended the Auditors webinar which stated that we should be updating this regularly in line with Covid-19 to meet the requirements of people working from home and that trustees should be aware of the register and its content. The Company secretary has started work on this, in the staff handbook there is a reference to a pandemic but this need to be added to the risk register. To be reported on in the next council meeting.

A request from the Belgian daughter Society. They had a youngstock show arranged which has had to be cancelled. They have the printed rosettes, so have decided to run an online show and have asked if the image of the Supreme Champion can be featured in the WPCS journal and if we could provide a rosette for supreme.

This was approved unanimously.

A trustee asked how the sign for Bronaeron donated by the young people was coming along. This is progressing and hopefully will be with us soon.

A trustee asked if 'driving' was still being promoted by the Judging and Showing Committee. This was confirmed

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Meeting closed 16:23

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.