



## **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 29<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

**Present:** Colin Thomas, Sharon Charlton, Gwyn Jones, Elgan Evans, Geraint Davies, Wyn Jones,

**Via laptop/pc**

**Via mobile phone or landline**

Roger Davies, Debbie Jones, Dilwyn Roberts, Daniel Morgan

**Welcome and Apologies:** Brian Foster, John Welsh, Liz Hampson (to join at 11pm), CR Davies

**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 everybody present to the meeting and thanked them for continuing to take part in this way. (09.40)

### **Declarations.**

Chair of Finance

Declaration to follow chairs report

### **Any other business**

A trustee noted that trustees were not receiving the minutes correctly in paper form 7 days in advance of the meeting. The Company secretary confirmed the minutes were sent as PDF electronic copies, these were sent a day after the previous meeting and only one person requested a paper copy. Company secretary is happy to provide paper copies to everyone.

### **Corrections to Minutes 24<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

Page 8 – should be an o on the first line

Page 9 – plaques should be produced incorrect phrase used.

Page 11 – top paragraph second line from bottom spelling corrections

Page 14 - 3<sup>rd</sup> line down the chair thought

### **Matters arising**

Page 4 – The removal of the dead tree at Bronaeron. Due to the urgency the successful quote would be approved by the Chair of Finance.

Member of staff appointment. This does not mention that we had such strong applicant pool and strong candidates. Twenty-one applicants were received and twenty were within the county of Ceredigion. The Company secretary noted that this would be shared with the membership.

**Proposed and Seconded All in favour**

### **The Journal terms of reference and journal review**

It was asked if the new terms of reference conform with our editorial policy. The Company secretary said that he would cross reference the two. It was noted that all of the Terms of reference for committees to be updated on our society website as this is critical to Society business.

**The Thelma Carter plaque.** This is in process and the Welsh wording has been approved.

**The World Online Fun show.** The Chair congratulated the Office manager and the staff for the online fun show, people have been pleased to receive the rosettes and there have been positive Social media posts. The Society wished to thank the judges and President and his wife for generously sponsoring the Supreme and the Championships.

**Section X** A Previous Chair had noted that we cannot refuse a registration from two pure bred registered animals. ESA have been contacted to provide clarity. The previous belief was that it was used as an area for animals with too much white. It is also used for stock by Welsh breed stallions who do not have a licence. The Chair read out the section X wording within the stud book. The question was asked if animals can then come out of section X once they have gone in as this has limited several animals who were placed there due to what was believed to be excessive white markings. This topic should be part of a bigger discussion once leaving the EU to establish what we could offer as a Society.

### **Office Telephone lines.**

A trustee has been trying to contact the office and had difficulty in getting through on the phone. The Company secretary and Office manager noted that the volume of calls received are very large, and the Office only has one dedicated person answering to enable others to process the other Office practices. The problem has been raised by the Company secretary with IT provider about calls being dropped. Say there is no problem. The alternative is we just have an answer phone service. The IT provider have confirmed there is no issue. The Company secretary asked the trustees to offer an alternative. Does the Society need to appoint a second receptionist? Trustees asked if they could be provided with statistics on the number of calls in a day. [REDACTED] has started in her temporary casual staff role and is now busy checking registration documents. The Company secretary offered that the Office could explore providing two lines for people to call; one to leave a message and the other to speak to someone. The volume of calls does not fall depending on the time of year. A culture is being created where people cannot get through to the office, they are then contacting the Company secretary directly and this is then putting more pressure on him. The Company secretary noted that all staff want to shift the backlog and wish that people would stop complaining about the Office on Facebook. The situation at the end of the year will illustrate how effective in part the tiered system has been however the impact of COVID and the reduction of staff physically processing during June, July and August will also have to be factored in.

The Chair asked for the phone situation to be monitored for a fortnight to see how the issue progresses. It was noted by a trustee that Cattle registrations were sent online and returned within 2 weeks. The Company secretary asked what level of detail and what data is given to the Cattle societies and what is checked? Was it the tag number only? Or the full pedigrees and markings. The trustee was unsure of this level of detail. This again is all done online.

The Company secretary noted that the level of registration applications are at the same level as Weatherbys (Thoroughbreds) received, but the WPCS only have half the registration staff, but register the same amount. Thoroughbred breeders input online. The Company secretary noted that when Trustees can come back into the office he would like to walk everyone through the registration process including binding and dispatch to show the time etc taken to do this and to provide a better understanding of what the Office actually does.

Once all the 2020 passporting is done, the office will then look to sort the DNA records and data-basemares . The Company secretary confirmed that the aim was to start sending out the DNA profiles in late January 2021 and stickers for those mares already profiled in the spring of 2021.

The issue of the importance of members using their unique membership number was raised by the Company secretary. This is something which helps the administration side of the Office output a great deal.

It was asked whether the outstanding sums of monies for the AGM dinner has been refunded. All those who have asked for a refund have been processed. This was widely promoted on the Society FB page and website.

#### **The Chipping of stock over the age of 20 years old**

It was asked whether the Welsh Government had responded to the Company secretary's proposal. As yet – no feedback from government. The Chair asked for this to be put forward at the next meeting with Welsh Government again on the grounds of welfare.

The Company secretary noted that it was the intention to take the lorry tomorrow for MOT. An invoice from the RAC was received last week. It was asked if the Society should remove the overseas cover as unlikely to go overseas at present. Should the exhibition unit be housed over winter? A member has kindly offered a storage barn for the vehicle. A trustee offered to collect the lorry with trade plates and move it and then it would be put on SORN.

It was proposed that the minutes were a true and accurate reflection of the meeting

#### **Proposed and Seconded All in favour**

#### ***Confidential Minutes***

*Corrections Confidential Minutes 24<sup>th</sup> August 2020*

The Chair requested for suspension of standing orders

#### **Proposed and Seconded All in favour**

A trustee raised concerns with the Chair regarding the charter and some things he would like to be included. It was noted by the Company secretary that this was the second draft which was amended after the Councils comments on the first. This draft was taken to the International meeting for their Societies comments as they are the ones signing up to it. The Company secretary felt it would save time if there were elements they did not agree to. Now this has come back to council for final

amendments before being shared with the daughter societies to sign. The Company secretary noted that it was an opportunity to share views and receive comments on something that the International societies had no jurisdiction over and was time sensitive. By the time of the next international meeting Brexit would be completed and the daughter societies would have had no opportunity to contribute to the discussion. He noted that there does not seem to be any Terms of reference for the international meeting. The Company secretary was asked to investigate this and bring a structure for discussion at the next Council meeting.

The Company secretary noted that the object of the proposed Charter is to establish the importance and standing of the WPCS as the mother and original studbook for the Welsh breeds within Europe protecting the WPCS and the position of its daughter societies.

The Chair asked for the feelings on the Charter from the trustees. Trustee feels that a discussion is required around this to re word some of the bullet points. A discussion was had around the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft charter. A trustee suggested that the fourth bullet point should read 'The Welsh Pony and Cob society acts as the mother society for all WPCS societies daughter societies and associations around the world.

Clarification was needed of the office location as per the Society's Articles of association.

Counties and countries to be amended to just countries.

It was asked if this should go to both the daughter societies and the associations? The trustee felt it would be good for them to all be included. We could invite all associations to sign up to the Charter as well. This could be brought up at the next area association meeting.

#### **Proposed and Seconded All in favour**

It was also discussed how the International judges were chosen for the next show in Germany. It was decided that the Company secretary look into how this should be run and the process outlined. A clear procedure to be devised going forward and shared with all. The 2007 minutes to be referred to if possible.

#### **Chairman/Vice Chair's report**

August / September has been a busy month for the Society.

As you are all aware the pandemic is causing havoc for countries across the world. Because of this, I am disappointed that we won't be able to return to face to face meetings until further restrictions are lifted – let's hope that the pandemic will ease in the near future for the sake of everyone.

The Office managers Passport graph that I sent you a week ago, explains the high input and output of work that travels through the office. Due to this and the extended hours that the Company secretary is working, Chair of Finance and Vice Chair and I have met online with the Company secretary and Office manager to discuss the urgency of employing another temporary member of staff. I am pleased that we have been successful with this and by also allowing other assistance as well, we are confident that this will ease the overload of work that presently exists.

As you will see from the agenda the Committees have been busy as well and I sincerely thank every chair for assisting with objectives and Governance of the Society in these unprecedented times.

Unfortunately, I have to raise breaches of confidentiality once again in my report and it is also an item on the agenda.

A trustee has resigned for personal reasons and I would like to thank him on behalf of myself and Council.

Thanks to the staff and trustees once again for their support.  
The Chair also noted that the Insolvency Act has been extended regarding the AGM until December 30<sup>th</sup> 2020.

### **Company Secretary report.**

The Company secretary noted that it was extremely busy at the office and he has been working every Friday as well as his normal longer days and also at the weekend. The Online Sales have taken time due to the volume of entries. The Tree issue at Bronaeron is now awaiting a date for felling. The boiler work is awaiting parts.

Casual staff member has returned as a 'checker' for registration and is already effective. The Company secretary noted that he felt we should offer the Hill ponies meeting as an online meeting. He also outlined that both he and Office manager were looking at potential Online registrations - which Weatherbys currently operate and Grassroots has the capability to provide. The database was finally being transferred to the new server today as it had been halted during lockdown to avoid all risks should there have been a problem. The CEO at Weatherbys has been very open in sharing experience and information with us and the Company secretary outlined the need to build a relationship and continue the dialogue here.

The Company secretary explained briefly the COVID plan he and the Office manager had created should there be another lockdown. Three of the Society staff reside in Carmarthenshire and the rest in Ceredigion. The withdrawal of the office plan would involve a purchase of laptops and headsets. Practices are worked out in principal and the possibility of leap frogging 1 week in office 1 week at home has been looked at to share the workload evenly.

The Company secretary flagged a concern, because the CED is currently not being updated on a daily basis, until the anomalies and the glitches from the old WPCS data-base have been sorted; the office is being contacted daily by equine owners who have correctly informed the Society of their microchip updates, only to find that the CED does not reflect this. The microchip form we have produced is working well. Horse owners are checking on the CED and have realised the government are starting to look at ownerships etc and a few requests have come from members asking for lists of animals in their ownership at this time. A form has been designed for people to then confirm the animals they own as a self-declaration rather than the Society having to do all the work and providing a list. This would be an elective process for those that wanted to take part. The Company secretary asked Trustees for their view. Trustees thought this an excellent idea.

It was shared that we currently still have some journals left over and it is expected to have a number left at the end of the year. The Company secretary asked for feelings on what we should do with these? There is a possibility of giving them to schools in Ceredigion. The Trustees were happy for this to be done.

The Chair thanked the Company secretary for all the hard work he is doing.

September meetings of Sub committees

- **Education and Welfare**

Discussion took place regarding arranging dates next year for the postponed 'Producers meeting' and the 'Registration and Colour Workshop'. The society's relationship with the Welsh Government is working well. The Welfare concern re the seizure of some 90 Welsh Mountain ponies at a Gwynedd location was discussed. Discussion took place about these difficult times for breeders and to reiterate that we are here for breeders to listen and

offer advice. The Company secretary felt it prudent to draw the Trustees attention to a recent court case at an Abattoir where a lot of horses and ponies are despatched.

- **Members Service**

Chair reported that it was a productive meeting with twenty-two new prefixes approved. Discussion took place on the need to try and enable the staging of 2021 shows. Volume 98 of the studbook is almost ready for printing. Discussion on the July registration fees window had raised the issue that some breeders had difficulty noting the exact markings by that time. The Company secretary requested that we review the whole tiered pricing after the first year to assess its effectiveness.

- **Judging and Showing**

The Chair raised Covid-19 and the shows/ liabilities of affiliated shows. The Society's position is that Government guidelines should always be followed. The asterisk list and awarding of, for 2021 was discussed and a list of those who will have gained an asterisk will be supplied to shows with the handbook. The website listing for the Judges can be amended accordingly. The committee had looked at suitable times to invite people to apply. Forms inviting judges to apply will go out in January 2021.

Assessors to be chosen after the closing date for the assessment.

A selection of show reports have been requested from those who have run shows under Covid-19 guidelines. Some new Rosette shows have been approved. A trustee stated that he had not received this email. One issue raised was the Judges conduct when co-judging Supremes. This to be discussed at the next judges conference. The committee asked if performance medals can be awarded after the event rather than on the day as some are being issued to ineligible competitors.

- **Promotions**

The Committee had discussed the calendar and using old images to form this for 2021 to celebrate 120 years of the Society. Website discussions took place and selling merchandise via this. Sponsorship *opportunities* were also looked at for attending any future shows to keep costs down. The use of any image of young members must have release forms from parents. The popularity and effectiveness of the Performance awards and how we could promote people more to become members as part of this was also mooted. Discussion around developing the use of Instagram took place. The potential of creating a 'Showing member' or 'Competing Member' was discussed for those who just compete. The revamp of the Museum was discussed.

- **Finance and HR Report**

Chair reported that following the 14<sup>th</sup> September meeting no update was available on the Society's' accounts and finances as no financial report has been provided by the Finance Officer. The Auditor had suggested that the first quarter should be available by the October meeting. In the last 10 years, investments have increased the Society's finances by 91%.

Two grants have been received from Ceredigion and Powys County Councils.

## Online Sales

The second Online sale currently has 127 entries. 3 have withdrawn but have three that we could potentially fill these places.

31<sup>st</sup> October and 21<sup>st</sup> November are the next two sale dates. Chair of sales thanked the Company secretary for all the work he had done on the Online Sales.

- **Journal Committee**

The Journal chair reported on a very productive meeting with lots of good articles coming in. If anyone has any articles or knows of someone who could write for the publication could they please put their names forward to the committee for consideration. Roles and responsibilities have been assigned. A trustee was asked if he could prepare something on driving as the original article will not be provided due to ill health. In the newsletter the journal announcement should highlight the free advertorial page when advertising.

- **International Committee**

Twenty-three people attended which is encouraging, with participants from Australia, South Africa, Europe and New Zealand. The delegates gave a very positive response to the meeting. Brexit was discussed, and the cost of over stamping. A lot of experiences shared. If there is a 'no deal' scenario, we could lobby the EU directly for Mother status. Judges were chosen for the International show to be held in Germany by voting in a democratic way. The Chair of the Australian Society gave a report on the last International show and thanked everybody for their support.

The Company secretary took the opportunity to refer to J1 balances and the effect of this and how some Office practices worked.

### **Confidential Staff matters**

*In Confidential minutes*

### **RSPCA operation Gwynedd**

This was dealt with earlier in the meeting under Education and Welfare

### **AGM meeting report/ Constitutional Changes**

No response to date had been received from Society solicitors. The Company secretary has prepared a statement which all trustees have seen but the Society ideally needs the indemnity of the legal team to share this. The prepared statement was read by the Company secretary to the trustees. The Charity commission response was also read out and the advice from the Society solicitors.

Since the latest e-mails from the Society solicitors, the extension of the date has been pushed back to the 30<sup>th</sup> December.

The advice was that there is no provision in the articles to have an online AGM or to announce the result of a ballot outside an AGM.

The Chair made a recommendation to await legal advice and then meet to decide.

Discussion ensued noting that the feeling of Council was that they wished the oncoming Trustees to have full three-year terms not a curtailed version due to cancellations.

It was also suggested to make an announcement to say the Governments extension has been approved to the end of December and that we are guided by the advice given.

The Chair proposed that Council wait for the legal advice supports the statement it can be shared with the members. If the statement needs amending following the advice, then Council will re-convene a meeting to discuss.

**Proposed and Seconded All in favour**

### **Licensing of Livery yards**

A discussion was had on the topic and there was a split opinion with some feeling the cost would be pushed on to the general horse owner. Would it be a better proposal to offer a status to rubber stamp those doing a good job as in a Gold standard producer The Company secretary noted the previous NPS Scheme for approved premises. Further discussions are to be had on this and opinions to be sought, but no action at present.

**Proposed and Seconded All in favour.**

### **Over stamping passports**

The price has been increased. This was raised in the recent International meeting as if a 'no deal' scenario we could then over stamp to show that we recognise their passport and pedigree in the UK. There would be potential income for the Society to offset the loss of registration revenue from those European breeders who register their stock with the WPCS directly.

### **AHT insolvency / DNA records**

The delays in processing from laboratory was discussed briefly. There are twenty currently in process and eighty awaiting processing. This figure changes daily depending on the traffic from the breeders.

### **Price increase - BOYNS**

The Company secretary suggested that we ask the IT company to justify the cost increases and why they have gone up over the years noting how their service to the Society has developed and changed.

### **Transfers and Registrations report**

The Chair thanked the Office manager for providing the report. Hopefully with the new member of staff now supporting, these numbers will now start to come down.

### **Thelma Carter legacy plans / Final account**

It was suggested that this money should be invested. Following the Investec advice, it can be discussed.

### **Government Covid 19 guidelines for WPCS affiliated shows**

The Chair requested that all affiliated shows be notified that they must abide by government Covid guidelines. It is best to deal with the show organiser rather than make a public statement.

### **Enrolment of new members + renewal of memberships**

Both Chair and Vice-chair could see no issues with the names and proposed that they be accepted as members.

**Proposed and Seconded.**

**Prefixes** – This has not been used for some time and a request has been made via the Central Prefix Register for a Shetland breeder to use the prefix. As the Prefix is registered to an individual "and sons" it could feasibly be used in future years. However due to it being registered to him and sons it could quite feasibly be reactivated in future years. It was decided to refuse the release of the prefix,

**Proposed and Seconded All in favour.**

### **Correspondence**

Halloween spectacular bronze rosette **Approved.**



A member had informed the Company secretary of a proposed new Association the 'Chiltern association' with a request that they are planning a show. The Company secretary asked Trustees if there is any approval process for new Associations. The process to be checked for setting up an Association.

#### **War Memorial for the fallen animals**

The member who kindly sponsors this annually has been contacted. The Company secretary had contacted the organiser and this has been cancelled for 2020 and they are hoping to mark this online. A thank you letter to be sent to the sponsor confirming the cancellation once all details are known.

BHS Wales are hoping to set up a forum with the Welsh Government. They have notified us and would be inviting the Society to join them at any meetings.

A member complained that Society charged £15.50 to amend her passport from C to D. She saw this as a 'one-letter' change. The process was explained that it involved creating a completely new passport, but she had requested that the Company secretary bring it to the attention of council. The explanation was noted by Council.

A member, who is a strong advocate for part bred is requesting that all breeding known is listed in the passport pedigree. If we have the details this is possible but currently done on request at point of registration. If the details are not in our system, it can take three times longer to register as we have to create a profile for each non-Welsh animal listed, this has always been the case. Member Service Committee to look at this issue. It was agreed to be added to that agenda.

#### **Late Registrations**

The letters received from the breeder were read to the meeting. From the post log - record at the Society they were first received in June 2020. The Company secretary will prepare a letter to ask the outstanding questions and establish the answers from the breeder.

#### **AOB**

##### ***Confidential matter***

A trustee asked about the prices of Microchips. The Company secretary noted that the Society is currently negotiating a range of deals with the supplier to afford members a greater choice and savings.

With no further business the Chair thanked everyone present for their contribution and closed the meeting at 18.52 pm

*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.*







