

**The Arab Horse Society**  
**Minutes of the Council meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2012 at Windsor House Ramsbury**

**Present:** Joanne Lowe (JL)(Chairman), Natalie Meredith (NM), Sally Wrigglesworth (SW), Jayne Armstrong (JA), Sue Bundy (SB), Val Cridge (VC), Madeleine Sutherland (MS) Diana Whittome (DW) item 5 onwards.

**1.0 Apologies for absence:**

Apologies for absence were received from, Annette Dixon (AD) Alastair McLeod (AM), Teresa Sheward (TS) and Jean-Mary Crozier (JMC).

**2.0 To approve the Minutes of the Council Meeting 27 June 2012**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting were approved as a correct record, JA proposed and NM seconded.

**3.0 Financial Reports & Budgets**

3.1 TS had circulated Q2 accounts and there were no matters arising. JA advised that although the final accounts were not yet complete for Malvern it is hoped it will just about break even, which is an excellent result.

NM advised that to reduce costs fewer mare returns had been issued and a downloadable version placed on the website.

DW joined the meeting.

**4.0 Committee Reports**

4.1 S & E

The minutes of 9<sup>th</sup> August were reviewed and approved.

A discussion took place around the cancellation of the Wessex Show; the primary reason for this being their inability to identify which stables they could utilise at a time to suit them prior to the event. Council agreed that this is a premier venue and stabling not really an issue.

DW had written to S & E to express her concern when judging at the NPS/ Midland Festival where she witnessed “the unedifying spectacle of horses being chased round with whips, plastic bags in the collecting ring, upsetting other exhibits, prior to entering the ring.” She was dismayed nothing was being done about it and told that the show was run under ECAHO rules and nothing could be done. Checking the Blue Book showed DCs are powerless at ECAHO shows because unlike the AHS, ECAHO has no rule on outside interference and the use of the word 'excessive', is open to interpretation, making the rule on cruelty meaningless. DW suggested that if ECAHO is serious about stamping out cruelty it should revise the current rule on cruelty, removing the word 'excessive' altogether. It would also help if ECAHO introduced the rule on outside interference that the AHS already has. S & E to review this suggestion.

BACS takes place 8<sup>th</sup> September and so far the response is excellent with extra stables ordered. It is hoped that the show will break even. Equine Market Watch a

local welfare charity has been invited to have a stand for the duration of the show.

The Society has been offered Maiad, a previous HOYS class winner, for the HOYS stand. Volunteers are required to help run the stand.

It was agreed that Malvern had been very successful and the show team were to be congratulated.

- Everyone approved of the new ring layout and that this should continue.
- The trade stands need to be brought closer and the gold car park moved behind them.
- A disabled viewing access would be arranged.
- The Friday timetable required a little adjustment.
- Any exhibitors entering an unregistered horse anticipating completion of registration prior to the last closing date will be made aware that should the registration not be completed they will receive a refund of their entry less a 10% administration fee. This would be made clear in the schedule for 2013.

**ECAHO EGM:** An EGM has been called (26<sup>th</sup> August) to vote on structural changes to the current format with the abolition of all Commissions and the continuation of an expanded Executive Committee increasing membership to 14 from ten.

JL informed Council of the existing ECAHO structure i.e. an Executive Committee with ten elected members which is supported by three Commissions – Shows, Sports and Studbook although the latter does not meet regularly. The Show Commission has representatives from all ECAHO member countries (26+) and progressing anything is a challenge with many inconsistent representatives slowing any progress on matters. Anything that does go forward as a proposal often is declined by the EC.

There is an issue with the way the new structure is being proposed – very little information has been given and therefore members cannot make an informed decision. It is probably appropriate that a change is made but further work needs to be undertaken so it can be established how working parties will be derived and run through the EC. In addition there are clear conflicts of interest appearing with Executive Committee members also being involved in the separately run AHO.

JL & AD are representing the Society and it was agreed that our vote would be no based on the information provided but; it was agreed change is required.

#### 4.2 PR & M

The minutes of the meeting 27<sup>th</sup> June were reviewed and agreed

SW and JA highlighted that two versions of the membership form have always been on the website with gift aid forms attached. In addition payment can already be made via Paypal. However it should be noted that all membership forms were required to be signed to confirm members agreed to the AHS objectives.

Malvern – 16 new members were signed up and promotions went well. The Regional Groups Meeting clarified that groups generally just run a show and struggle to run other events. They would like to continue with an annual meeting but extend it to be more of a show debate.

Dubai Race Day – Maggie Court and Tracy Phizacklea will attend with promotional material and host a small stand.

#### 4.3 SB &R

The minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> July were reviewed and approved.

The policy of withholding covering certificates continues to work well.

AASB Volume 17 – NM to investigate via Weatherbys how this might be on a disk and the cost of doing so, this can then be sold on the website. Going forward stud books are likely to be in disk format and work to investigate an online database will be undertaken to enable members secure access for a fee.

**Central Equine Database (CED):** Despite DEFRA receiving several tenders they have decided not to award the contract. The PIOs believe a CED is necessary. Currently not submitting data will save about £1K per annum. Further news on the way forward is expected in due course at the present time there is no further action.

#### 5.0 **Welfare**

5.1 SB discussed ways in which to promote and raise funds to benefit Welfare cases; with this in mind a raffle will be organised and promoted in time for Malvern 2013.

5.2 The Welfare fund stands at £4463 and SB asked that £250 been donated towards the keep of two Arabian Horses at Equine Market Watch – one a mare 30years + and her 14 year old gelding. The mare was rescued in May and is recovering but will remain at the centre for life. In addition SB asked that another publicised case of 11 rescued Arabs receive our support with a £500 donation. The Arabs will reside at Hillside Sanctuary in Norfolk they have all been vaccinated, four castrated and assistance is required to obtain passports. SB has been working with the Charity on the case and liaising with SB &R. It was agreed that these funds should be donated for use for these specific cases and details placed on the website.

#### 6.0 **Windsor House (WH)**

6.1 Over the past few months JL, NM & SW have worked on a review of WH. JL presented a paper which précised a history of WH from purchase, in 1988, through to the current position, covenants, maintenance, running costs and requirements to make it fit for purpose and bring it up to a satisfactory state of repair in the short to medium term (3-5 years).

The paper covered the options and viability of selling the property and the best method and status of doing this i.e. as a residential property – recommended as a result of a full survey, previously agreed to by Council, in full compliance of the Charities Act 2011 Part 7 s119-14 and taking into the requirements to be met under Trustee Act 2000 and Trusts of Land and Appointment of Trustees Act 1996 (TLAT 1996).

A review of the purchase or rental of future offices was undertaken, the long term viability and implications for staff taking into account the Society obligations under employment law; this was balanced against investing the sale of WH funds for both growth and income through the purchase of rental properties and other monetary investment options. Other opportunities such as developing the residential part of WH to rent were reviewed. Timescales were considered for all options along with the impact on membership.

The conclusion was that it is currently not a viable option to sell WH, reinvest and or rent another premises. WH needs to be brought into an appropriate state of repair

and made fit for purpose especially in the SB & R area. The initial Council discussion agreed and concluded that a phased approach needs to be adopted. A review of the floor plan layout downstairs needs to be undertaken by a professional draughtsman (engineering calculations maybe required if load bearing walls are altered) to assess how this can best be utilised along with the work and potential costs involved. Then further estimates are required to undertake repairs as detailed in the paper.

## **7.0 Computer Equipment**

7.1 NM presented a paper on the current position relating to hardware and software. For some time the work at Windsor House has been slowed by the server struggling to cope with the amount of data being added; it is nearing its capacity and which in turn slows the programmes running causing freezing and crashes which in turn means that the work is taking longer. There are three options:

- Install an additional server running Microsoft SBS 2011 Server; one running the bulk of the software and the other would then support the database only. This would allow the use of existing database more effectively as there would be more capacity to run it.
- Install a single larger capacity server running Microsoft SBS 2011. Upgrade the Sybase database and Weatherbys to upgrade the database. Data testing would be required across studbook, membership and shows programs.
- To upgrade our systems to allow on line processing registration, covering certificates, payments etc. and bring us completely up to date. Weatherbys has systems to be reviewed and a site visit is planned to review the capability and whether in reality this is something we wish to pursue.

In addition the office PCs need replacing as these are also out of date.

It was agreed that installing the additional server was the initial way forward, but a further estimate is required. A review of the software available at Weatherbys should take place with further recommendations to be brought to Council in due course. In addition the Office PCs should be renewed but it was considered the Server was the key priority at this time.

## **8.0 Social Media**

8.1 A discussion took place around the use of public networking sites such as Facebook and the potential they have to cause upset and adverse media. On the pro side they are a great way to advertise and can generate a good deal of positive feedback. A recent thread on Facebook had been highlighted to Council but self-regulation had already dealt with the situation, with a judge having a judging appointment rescinded due to their involvement with this thread.

However the Society recognises that Judges do need to be respectful of their fellow judges, exhibitors and uphold the AHS's reputation. SW has submitted the following rule to S & E for consideration to go into a "rules for judges" section. The rule has been developed based on her experience of Social Media Policies already in the workplace.

"Judges should be aware that social networking websites are a public forum and should not assume that their entries on any website will remain private and take care about what they post on such sites. Judges should:

- Conduct themselves through social networking in a way that is not detrimental to the AHS;
- Ensure interaction on social networking sites is not defamatory or abusive to

judges, exhibitors or members of the AHS; and

- Ensure their behaviour and language do not constitute harassment or bullying.

Any conduct whilst using social networking sites which could result in damage to the AHS's reputation, any defamatory/abusive statements or harassment/bullying made by judges, exhibitors or AHS members will be dealt with and may result in judges removal from the judging panel."

It was agreed by Council that this rule should be progressed and S & E give consideration to writing to the three judges involved in the Facebook thread.