

**Minutes of the Meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group for the Horse
held in Committee Room 19 in the House of Commons, London SW1
on Tuesday, 9th July 2013 at 3.30 p.m.**

Present:

Baroness Mallalieu (Chairman)
Mr Roly Owers (World Horse Welfare)
Ms Jeanette Allen (The Horse Trust)
Dr Harry Greenway
Mr Lee Hackett (The British Horse Society /
NEWC)
Mrs Jan Rogers (BEF)
Brig Paul Jepson (British Equine Veterinary Assn)
Jessica Stark (World Horse Welfare)
Mr David Bowles (RSPCA)
Mr Steve Carter (RSPCA)
Prof. Tim Morris (Defra AWHBE)
Lord Stoddart of Swindon (House of Lords)

Lord Higgins (House of Lords)
Lord Ullswater (House of Lords)
Mr Steven Gauge (PLMR for BHA)
Mr George Haworth (PLMR for BHA)
Mr Roger Williams MP
Mr Neil Parish MP
Mrs Caroline Nokes MP

Apologies: (Shown on last page)

In Attendance:

Miss Karen Irving (Minutes)

The Chairman opened the meeting and then handed the chair to Dr Harry Greenway to conduct the AGM to comply with All Party Parliamentary Group rules.

Annual General Meeting

Miss Karen Irving confirmed that Baroness Mallalieu, Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger, Mr Tony Cunningham, Mr Roger Williams and Baroness Masham of Ilton had agreed to stand again for election. The following officers were elected unanimously:

Chairman	Baroness Ann Mallalieu	Labour	Prop: Neil Parish MP Sec: Roger Williams MP
Vice- Chairmen	Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger MP	Conservative	Prop: Baroness Mallalieu Sec: Neil Parish MP
	Mr Tony Cunningham MP	Labour	Prop: Baroness Mallalieu Sec: Neil Parish MP
Secretary	Mr Roger Williams MP	LibDem	Prop: Baroness Mallalieu Sec: Harry Greenway
Treasurer	Baroness Masham of Ilton	Crossbench	Prop: Baroness Mallalieu Sec: Roger Williams MP

Baroness Mallalieu took back the chair.

The minutes of the last meeting had been circulated and were signed as a true record.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was decided that future minutes of the All Party Parliamentary Group for the Horse should be briefer and should be circulated to the attendees of the meeting prior to distribution to all members.

Membership of this Group

a) Application by the Blue Cross to become full members

The Chairman advised the Group that she had received a letter from the Blue Cross requesting to become full members.

It was decided that the Blue Cross should be allowed to become full members of the APPG for the Horse.

Equine Sector Council (for health and welfare) Update

Ms Allen advised that the last Full Sector Council had been chaired by Brig Paul Jepson and that Dr Peter Webben had agreed to Chair the meeting twice a year going forward. She confirmed that the Sector Council Steering Group was in agreement with the 5 point plan, put forward by the European Commission which stated the need for a mandatory single database and a single Passport Issuing Office (PIO).

Mr Owers advised that it was unlikely that it would be possible for the UK to move to a single PIO as the Breed Society's ability to produce passports was enshrined in law. He stated that the situation in the UK which has multiple PIO's is different to other European states. He said that it may be possible to reduce the number of PIO's but be difficult to move to one single office.

Prof Morris advised that there is a lack of clarity for the British Equine Sector with current EU deliberations. There is a point of confusion as to whether the current iteration (reform of just the EU ID Regulation) is where it will end or if the EU Zootechnical Regulation that currently link passports together so that pedigree and ID of animals is stored will be changed and ID and pedigree separated. He advised that the tightening of passport regulations will have an impact on breed societies.

The group was advised that the members of the European Union states were worried about the 1st of January deadline as they felt it was ambitious.

The group was also advised that the Civil Services of the devolved administrations were keen to work together and with the south of Ireland in order to create a UK approach. Ms Allen stated that Defra had advised the sector council that they had tendered for an organisation to carry out an external audit of the current institutions issuing passports. She stated that the Steering Group had helped Defra redraft new standards to assist with making the current system better. She advised that the Steering Group felt that the most effective method would be for Defra to set the standards required and then give the authorities the opportunity to raise their standards before auditing them.

The group was advised that the intention is for there to be a National Equine Database in each member state. It was also advised that many member states would not accept the need for a single PIO as most of them only had a small number of them and not the current profusion in the UK.

It was suggested that there was a need for a properly organised Defra registered micro-chipping programme. That retrospective micro-chipping could feed into this and that going forward any micro-chipping that took place should feed into this central system.

Lords Higgins, Ullswater and Stoddart together with Baroness Mallalieu left the meeting due to a division in the House of Lords. Baroness Mallalieu handed over the Chair to Harry Greenway.

The group stated that it felt that it would be helpful if the steering group recommended that questions should be asked in both houses.

Mr Parish MP suggested that Defra should move on a central database and look into how this was to be funded.

The group was advised that Prof Morris and the steering group on 10th July would be meeting with the Animal Health and Welfare Board for Equine and that they would report back to the APPG for the Horse on the outcome.

***Action: Equine Sector Council (for Health and Welfare) Steering Group
To report back to the group on their meeting with the Animal Health and Welfare Board
for Equine***

Mr Owers stated that the UK, Irish and French were meeting to discuss amendments of the tripartite agreement. It currently includes all horses but is now going to revert to sport horses, race horses and elite. Want to create a fully traceable high health grouping of FEI horses and provide them with derogations relating to transport.

Prof Morris advised that himself and Mr Owers would be meeting the Chief Executive of the Thoroughbred Breeding Association together with the Chief Veterinary Officers of the UK, Ireland and France and the sector representatives on Thursday 11th July and would report back to the group.

***Action: Prof Morris and Mr Owers
To report back to the group on their meeting with the Chief Executive of the
Thoroughbred Breeding Association and the Chief Veterinary Officers***

Guide Dogs Reception (MP's Comments)

Mr Hackett advised that the Senior Executive of the Safety department of The British Horse Society had attended an MP's reception on Guide Dogs for the Blind. During the reception four MP's had approached her unprompted to complain how badly riders behaved on the roads in their constituencies. Mr Hackett advised that the BHS would continue to educate riders as to how they should behave when riding on the road.

The group suggested that drivers were more likely to make complaints to their Members of Parliament about how riders behaved on the road and that it was important to encourage riders to email complaints about drivers to the MP's.

Update on Hot Branding

The group was advised that Dawn Westcott had collected 13,000 signatures on a petition against hot branding, which had received some press coverage. There had been a lot of attempts to get breed societies which are hot branding on side to produce a code of practice that would restrict the number of ponies that need branding. The group was advised that she

had an unsatisfactory conversation with Defra who would not be legislating against hot branding.

Brig Paul Jepson advised that the production of a code of conduct was moving slowly. Defra had produced an unsatisfactory 1st draft and had been told to produce a better version. Prof Tim Morris advised that the new passport proposals haven't taken derogation away. He advised that there was a specific need for a reduction in the number of ponies being branded in the New Forest, Dartmoor and Exmoor. He advised that Nic de Brauwere had met with the Breed Societies and tried to get them to understand the need for tightening the numbers of ponies that were branded. The Exmoor Society had moved towards the realisation that they had a responsibility to reduce the numbers, however currently the Dartmoor groups were not really engaging.

Neil Parish MP stated that he felt that it was much better for native ponies to be micro-chipped, as in the long-term brands often became hard to read especially when the ponies were old. This could then mean that owners could deny owning them or that they could end up as horsemeat. He would like to see more ponies being micro-chipped and very few hot branded if any. It was felt that the current horsemeat scandal and the central database may be a way to dispense with derogation.

Brig Paul Jepson stated that it was important to consider not only consider hot branding with regard to feral ponies but also in relation to cosmetic branding on certain breeds such as Hanoverian's. He felt that it was unnecessary that their breed society instead upon it for registration. Neil Parish MP advised that Defra were aware of the Hanoverian Society's requirement and had written to them. It was felt that it would potentially be easier to put pressure on them once a code of practice had been produced. It was suggested that there was a practical need for a move to a single brand so that derogation could be removed in the future. It was also suggested that there was a necessity to search for alternatives. It was suggested that a review of alternatives should be included in the Code of Practice.

Prof Morris advised that one of the largest producers of distant readers of electronic ID's was based on Exmoor. They could currently produce equipment to distance read ear tags but not yet micro-chips. It was felt that they may potentially be interested in seeking alternatives due to having a commercial interest in the outcome.

The group was advised that the New Forest Society had agreed to give a demonstration on hot branding which would form part of the next welfare tour of the New Forest in November.

Overbreeding

The group was advised that on the back of the equine crisis World Horse Welfare had introduced a "Need to Breed?" campaign. The campaign uses case examples from World Horse Welfare farms and builds on the work The British Horse Society is doing in this area. World Horse Welfare carried out research in 2012 which concluded that the biggest contribution to overbreeding are those individuals who breed between one and three horses in a lifetime as there are substantial numbers of individuals currently doing this. The campaign debunks myths and asks why individuals are breeding.

Prof Morris advised that thoroughbred breeders are making a concerted effort to bring down the number of horses they are breeding. The group was advised that most breed societies are also reporting 30% less registration of foals.

Associate Parliamentary Group for Animal Welfare – Draft Report on Equine Welfare

Baroness Mallalieu suggested that she agreed with parts of this report, but that some information was not up to date and some was inaccurate. She questioned who it was aimed at it, as it appeared to be aimed at Ministers yet she felt that it should be aimed at a wider audience.

Mr Owers advised that the information contained in this document was produced as a word document and presented to the APGW in November. An update has recently been produced highlighting that the situation is still worsening. This report was intended as a starting point for presentation to Ministers.

Ms Allen was concerned that she felt in order to present a coordinated response to the equine crisis; the document should have been created by the Sector Council, and then presented to the APGW for them to sign up to. She stated that she would not wish the Steering Group to be associated with the report in its current form. She proposed that this should be a coordinated Sector Council report, produced by all the groups.

The group was advised that this report was a draft and that it was up to the group to decide whether they were happy for this to be presented to Ministers. The group felt that the report should be focussed towards Ministers and would present a more powerful case if the information was provided from all the welfare organisations and presented by a wider group than the APGW and APPG for the Horse.

Any Other Business

The need for professionals within the equine industry such as dental technicians, barefoot trimmers to be regulated was discussed. Brig Jepson suggested that barefoot trimmers should be brought under another act.

It was felt that legislative time was so short, it could be easily filled. It was therefore suggested that information could be communicated from the APPG for Horses to barefoot trimmers and dental technicians. They could come under the umbrella of the Animal Welfare Act.

Baroness Mallalieu thanks Annemarie Westwood for her work as Secretary to the group.

Dates of 2013 Meetings

Tuesday, 3rd December 2013 at 4 pm

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The meeting ended at 4.20 pm.

Apologies

Mr Nicolas de Brauwere MRCVS (NEWC)
Baroness Masham of Ilton
Countess Mar
Baroness Miller
Claire Williams – BETA
Mr Andrew Finding (BEF)
Ian Liddell-Grainger MP

Minutes agreed 3-12-2013
signed:
Hany Greenway
President



Secretariat provided by
The British Horse Society