

NOTES ON THE OPEN FORUM WITH WPCS COUNCIL

MEMBERS

Exeter Court Hotel, Kennford, Exeter, Devon
Saturday 20th February 2016

The Trustees present were Mrs Ann Bigley, Mr John Kirk and Mr Stewart Franklin who acted as facilitator. A summary of subjects discussed follows:

1. **Exhibition Unit.** The present HGV lorry was being sold as it was too expensive to run (£15,000 pa), drivers required an HGV licence and had outlived its usefulness. Smaller units could be purchased at 3.5t which could be driven on an ordinary licence. A working group had been set up to investigate costings etc. It was suggested that non-WPCS goods were not necessary and it was confirmed they would be discontinued. Sponsorship was being sought as well.

2. **Office at Bronaeron.** An HR firm had been hired to recommend changes in the office to better reflect the present situation where income was falling and this was not only from registrations. Restructuring was therefore in progress with 4 staff members leaving and the present Secretary had resigned. New job descriptions were being written to reflect the new structure and meant staff would work at inter-related jobs and therefore be more flexible. The HR firm is on a retainer and will undertake any re-training necessary. Staff will be down to 9. Tenders were being asked for to construct a new website. Staff were working on the Journal and magazine at present.

3. **Pavilion.** It had been the intention to rebuild the pavilion but the cost had grown enormously and it was not value for money for a short lease from the Royal Welsh. Negotiations were now under way with the prospect of a 99 year lease so, for the next 3-5 years, whilst the best way forward for the future of the Society was considered, the present pavilion would have a face lift including a new roof. The new equine facility being constructed at the RW meant the area behind the pavilion had been levelled and now came nearly to the back door!

4. **Online registrations.** It was hoped to be able to introduce this next year perhaps making use of the programme Brightwells had initiated for the sales.

5. **Section C and D judging.** The question was asked whether now the breed description for these Sections was the same except for the height, surely judges after assessment could go on the judging panels for both at the same time. It was pointed out that the pony character of the Section C was not given enough emphasis and there should be a separate breed description.

6. **Passport Issuing Organisations.** There had been no further action by DEFRA on the suggestion there should only be one or two PIOs. The WPCS was in a strong position and Council continued to have meetings with Welsh Ministers and DEFRA to maintain a presence in the decision making process. The outcome of the in/out referendum on the EU will make a great difference. The WPCS was working on achieving DNA testing for all mares eventually.

7. **Allergic reaction to microchip insertion.** SWA had written to WPCS and raised this issue following the AGM last autumn. Response was that this was a matter for DEFRA and the vet should raise it with them.

8. **Medals.** As part of the opening up of shows awarding bronze medals, a review of the geographical spread of silver medals had taken place and some shows had had them removed where entries were not considered sufficient. Area Associations could apply to have them for their 25th and 50th anniversaries. The new procedures will be trialled over 5 years with a review at 2 years, and silver medals every year. The next time medals have to be ordered they will have a ring at the top and be of better quality. Many people had liked the bronze medal rosette and a cone rosette was being considered which would be for sale.

9. **The Society.** It was generally agreed that things had improved with the Society in that it was felt to be more approachable and listened more to the membership. The recent successful Judges Conference had been thoroughly evaluated and acted upon.

10. **Legal costs.** The Council had been dealing with some outstanding issues which needed settling. Changes to procedures have a cost.

11. **Judging and Showing Handbook.** Some new rules had been made which are reflected in the new Judging and Showing Handbook including that judges could make complaints without having to pay a deposit. A system of fines was also being drawn up taking into consideration rules used by BSPS and CHAPS.

12. **White markings.** This had been covered at the Judges Conference and explained more fully. The office could request photos of any animal they thought did not meet the description of what was acceptable and a judge can always, after judging an animal, ring the office and say it doesn't look right. Breeders should be very careful about repeating a mating if it has already given rise to excessive white markings.

13. **Reduced fees for Associations.** The question was asked if reduced charges for affiliation fees and medals could be considered for Associations and this was taken on board.