

HODGEMOOR RIDING ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 29 November 2017

Fiona Minchell gave an excellent short talk about the Masterson Method of integrated Equine Performance Bodywork which helps horses release tension. She handed out vouchers for those attending the meeting to have a session at a reduced rate. For more information go to www.mastersonmethod.com and www.facebook.com/fionaminchellmastersonmethod/

1. **Welcome by Chairman** welcomed to the meeting Jo Haywood, one of the rangers for this area from the Forestry Commission. The 2016 AGM minutes were approved.
2. **Election of Officers and Committee.** Marcus reported that Richard Hill was standing down as Treasurer after many years in the role despite having moved out of the area. The Association was very grateful for all his help. Geoff Gudgion had very kindly volunteered to take over. Miranda Thomas and Jane Braithwaite would really like to stand down, but were willing to stay on until we could find more volunteers. Marcus welcomed Sarah Fisher (BHS Byways co-ordinator) to the Committee. There was a block vote to approve the election of the Committee. Apologies for their absence from Richard Hill, Jane Braithwaite, and Miranda Thomas.

Marcus Bicknell (Chairman)
Susie Bicknell (Secretary)
Richard Hill (Treasurer)
Jane Braithwaite

Francesca Burfitt
Sarah Fisher
Shona Fraser
Geoff Gudgion

Miranda Thomas
Angela Stallard

3. **Approval of Accounts.** In Richard's absence, Marcus reported that funds stood at just below £12 000. He said that, unlike a Riding Club, the Association had no need to hold a reserve, so nearly all funds could be spent.
4. **Membership subscription.** Susie reported that there were just about 200 paid up subs currently, with 108 paypal, 85 standing orders. There were 38 new members with a flush of new walker members (6) after Marcus got an article published in Bucks Free Press in July. Susie said how important it was for yard managers/owners to let new liveryes know they needed to join. **She would distribute leaflets to yards showing how easy it was to join via the new website.**
5. **Report on Events and funds raised : Calendar years rather than April to April**

	2016		2015		2017
TREC	£625	TREC 10 April	700	TREC 15 April	730
Eventers Challenge	£205	Widmer Quiz 23 April	974	TREC 1 Oct	305
		Rob Waine Dressage	200	(Grove Farm)	
		Clever Dogs Agility	119		
		Waylands Dressage Nov360			
	TOTAL £830	TOTAL	£2353	TOTAL	£1035

Susie said she wished more yards would organise some kind of event for Hodgemoor: Grove Farm had done so well organising their TREC event in October. She said it did not need to be a big event; even organising a small fund event within the yard would help remind liveryes why they had subscriptions. Other suggestions for events were:

- Social Events: **Francesca said she would organise a quiz night.**
- Association itself (1 or 2 events pa: TREC and Eventers Challenge)
- Group hacks. Shona Fraser suggested doing these round woods. She thought many members probably still didn't know their way. Or an introductory hack for new members. Susie said they could start doing rides over to Coleshill again. Tessa Bayliss said "Yes, with a stopover at a pub!" The meeting voted in favour.

Marcus told Sarah that the Association only had an informal arrangement with the Penn Bridleways Association to very occasionally use Common Wood (for which a permit is required). However, the Association hadn't organised an official ride over there for years

6. **Suggestions for Work needed in woods and alternative use of funds**

Susie pointed out that the cost in 2015 had been £40 per metre (2 metre width plus some drainage) to do 408 metres for £16,848.. With funds approaching £16000 (including 2018 subs), work can be done in 2018. Agriwork has confirmed cost would still be £40. So in theory could do 300 metres of repairs and/or new trail.

Suggestions for repairs were:

- About 100 metre section at bottom of Susie's Loop
- Pot holes in both Yellow Brick Road and the Old Bridleway

Shona asked if Highfields and The Beeches could have surfaces but Marcus explained that these trails had too many roots and were just too boggy to be feasible.

Marcus said Agriwork would be reminded to put a good camber on any new surfacing, as he hadn't done so well on doing a camber last time. Drains would also be added as they had helped so much the previous time.

Ruth Beddow that for urgent trail clearance, why not organise more working parties: the one she had been to in Hodgemoor had been good fun!

- 7. Report on any plans to upgrade footpaths to bridleways and new permissive trails in Hodgemoor.** Susie said that a request for new trail in Hales Wood turned down by the Forestry Commission, although Jo Haywood confirmed that this wasn't an absolute definitive "no": there was just too much work on for the Commission at the moment.
- 8. Making Road Crossings and Bends Safer.** Sara Caley asked if the crossing over the A355 at the pub could be made safer. Susie said Kim Dudko had tried fairly recently but had given up when told that the Highways Authority would only do something once there was a serious incident. She had not actually got into contact with the Authority. Sarah Kane wondered if something could be done about the double bend in New Barn Lane. Diana Bunyan said how hard they'd tried to get speed limit down to 30 mph from 40 mph on this road (as had been achieved on the Jordans Road). **Sarah Fisher volunteered to work on road crossings and getting signs.**
- 8. Cyclists in Hodgemoor :** Members felt that although cyclists were on the whole respectful of horse riders, many just didn't realise that good warning needed to be given from behind. Marcus read out "Cyclists Code of Conduct" signs now up in the wood, where this is clearly stated. Lisa Mayhew said this Code was too wordy: cyclists felt that they had always been using the wood freely and rather resented these new rules, not realising that the increase in numbers of both horse riders and cyclists made these rules necessary nowadays. Susie reported on a letter from Simon White to both the Association and the FC that reflected just this feeling. Jo Haywood said communicating to cyclists was always a problem on Forestry Commission land as they were addressing individuals rather than groups. **Lisa would submit a simple design on advance warning by cyclists.**
- 9. HS2.** Ruth Beddow had read somewhere that there was HS2 compensation money to be had. Sarah Fisher described how Chalfont Equestrian would be disrupted and a new arena. Lisa Mayhew suggested basing our claim on fact that work on the HS2 would increase local traffic and therefore more off-road networks should be found for horse riders. **Ruth would try and find out more how this money could be applied for.**
- 10. Trailer/horsebox Parking.** Sara Caley asked if there was anywhere – apart from Susie and Marcus's drive – where members could park. Sarah Fisher suggested Stockings Farm (on Bottrells Lane to the north of the woods) might allow parking. **Jo Haywood would ask if the Forestry Commission might consider parking in the now surfaced area just by the electricity transformer just in from the main entrance to Hales Wood.**
- 11.. Website & Facebook page.** Marcus reported that the new website up since the summer was working well, making it much clearer on how to become a member, whether rider, cyclist or walker. PayPal was a great help even if the Association lost a small percentage on each transaction. new website up since the summer.

11. **Information via Email newsletter and Facebook.** From the response to an email sent in September asking if members were happy with information via the Hodgemoor facebook page or if they preferred the email newsletter, Susie reported that out of 200 emailed (?), 40 got news via facebook but 20 did not use Facebook and preferred email. SB will try to email everyone whenever a more important fb posting is made. Kirsty Wright had suggested telling members to change to "Show first" on their newsfeed to be certain to see Hodgemoor notifications.

12. **Hodgemoor Merchandising.** As another way of raising funds and awareness of the Association, Shona Fraser suggested having items such as Hodgemoor Christmas cards, a (maybe naughty!) calendar, mugs with photos of bluebells in the woods, which could be sold from the website, and, eg, from Chalfont St Giles email newsletter. It was agreed that this was a nice idea, but would require quite a lot of work to put into practice.

13. **Other Uses of Hodgemoor Funds.** Marcus suggested that as the Association's financial position was currently quite secure, perhaps some funds could be used for another charitable cause. This could improve the Association's status in the community. **Julie Thomson suggested helping scouts and girl guides could be a possibility for this. Marcus said that in the past scouts and girl guides had helped to do clearing in the woods. Lisa Mayhew would provide Susie with current scout contact details.**

14.. **Purchase of XC jumps** Francesca had suggested the Association could buy one or two of South Bucks Riding Clubs very well constructed XC jumps for the Hodgemoor XC field. She now thought they had been all sold and the meeting agreed that at their sale price of around £250 each, it would have been a long time before the Association could recoup the investment from renting out the XC field. Francesca – who had bought some for Widmer – very kindly offered rental of her XC course for a special price of £10 to all those attending the meeting.

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