

HODGEMOOR RIDING ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Association, 19 November 2018

Amanda Goodship gave a short talk on Equine Pilates. She got all 25 present to do warm up exercises recommended before riding – or at any time. She then showed the importance of correct posture with the core on Marcus and Susie. Amanda's contact details are: amandagoodship.pilates@gmail.com tel 07824 665980

1. **Welcome by Chairman.** Positive reflections on a coherent association in satisfactory cruise mode. 2017 AGM minutes approved without reading them through, they having been on the web site since last year.

2. **Election of Officers and Committee.** Jane Braithwaite had resigned.

The current Committee below was re-elected.

Marcus Bicknell (Chairman)
Susie Bicknell (Secretary)

Geoff Gudgion (Treasurer)
Shona Fraser

Sarah Fisher
Miranda Thomas

3. **Approval of Accounts.** Income for the year was £4,873.23 (including £1,130 events and cross-country rental) with negligible outgoings. Funds currently stand at £16,553.13. Geoff Gudgion, the new Treasurer, pointed out that membership was down by 50. Jodie Theakstone had recently made a generous donation of £50.

3. **Membership subscription.**

As membership numbers are down 10% on last year, it was decided:

- To round up riders in wood that are not members. Fiona Minchell suggested badges for members. Susie said the Association had often thought about it but decided it would be difficult to manage successfully (lost badges, people swapping, etc and actual policing).
- Sarah Fisher, Sara Caley and Diana Bunyan would check members on their yards (Chalfont Equestrian, Grove Farm and Highclere). Shona Fraser would double check Oldefields and Liza Faircloth Manor Farm. Committee to identify a rep for each of the yards and ask them to do the follow-up, putting up posters, asking yard manager to tell rider of their obligation and checking on individuals.
- Francesca Jones said posters and membership packages at yard were a great help to yard owner/managers. Susie would provide.
- Nadia Whitley said there should be more membership signs in the wood. Susie would put up posters.
- Julie Treacey asked what sanctions there were for riders were not members. Marcus said that riding in the woods on permissive trails without membership is trespass and the Forestry Commission would ban them.

5. **Report on Events and funds raised last financial year.**

Only riding event was the TREC on 8 September which raised £1045. The Curry night at Miltons Restaurant on 8 November raised £513: the meeting applauded and thanked Francesca Jones for organising such a successful event that was so well supported by Widmer, Chalfont Equestrian, Highclere and Waylands livery yards.

Suggestions and comments on organising events:

- Emma Baker said organising more events would heighten profile of the Association and encourage higher membership, as would improving the quality of the XC course. Susie said organising XC events had to be low key because of expense of getting in St John's Ambulance for big events which would absorb all profits.
- Sarah Fisher would see if Julia Tilley at Chalfont would think again about a sponsored ride through local farmland, now that the HS2 issue there was resolved.
- Sarah Fisher suggested some quite different kind of event using social media: a "Selfie Ride" or one involving taking photos.
- Shona Fraser suggested approaching Waylands and asking for a reduced rental fee for organising an indoor winter dressage, as the Association used to do. Susie to ask.
- Geoff Gudgion said TREC and dressage were the events members most appreciated.

- Susie would ask Rob Waine and Ben Franklyn if they would do a demo.
- Liza Faircloth suggested quiz nights and indoor tack sales: as usual, it was finding volunteers to organise them!
- Sarah Fisher proposed that 2 events outside the TREC be organised in 2019. 2 had been organised in 2017 (Grove and Widmer) but none in 2018. This was agreed by the meeting.

6. **Trail Repairs: On Going discussion with the Forestry Commission**

- Proposed resurfacing this summer was for 290 metres plus repair to culvert on Spring Link. Agriwork's estimate was £11 600, excluding culvert repair.
- FC informed us that new protocol meant using their approved contractors whose approval was done on a 4 yearly cycle so too late to get Agriwork approved.
- Their contractors' estimates were more than twice as much.
- Currently FC is offering 8K. We have 16K and by next April maybe 17K.

After some discussion, the resolution below was agreed and voted, in brief, that the Association would coordinate with the FC if they were prepared to pay half the cost of renovating the trails 50/50. Otherwise trails will further deteriorate and riders could eventually be prevented from using the permissive trails. But it was very sad that, as the CEO of the FC Simon Hodgson himself said, the quotes were not "vfm" (value for money).

Resolution

Members of the Hodgemoor Riding Association were briefed on the issue of contractors for repairs to the trails in the woods and discussed the options at length.

- Members expressed their disappointment that the association had not been informed in time of the new Forestry Commission contractor approval process which has led to the delay of works till after winter 2018/2019 and some potentially very muddy trails in the meantime.
- Members expressed their dismay that the Forestry Commission's contractor approval process appears to give approved contractors the opportunity to quote about twice the going rate and get away with it. Members questioned the corporate governance of the Forestry Commission and how this could exist. Several members, speaking as tax-payers, members of the public and stakeholders in the woods, Forestry Commission and the local environment, deplored the apparent senselessness of the approval process and urged the Forestry Commission to abandon the process and make each job available to contractors who can show the proven quality of their work in recent related jobs.
- The meeting agreed however NOT seek media attention for this state of affairs.
- Members proposed and then voted a motion delegating to the chairman and secretary the mandate to work with the Forestry Commission and one of their approved contractors in this instance if, ideally, the Forestry Commission shares equally the overall cost ex-VAT.

7. **Issues from last year.**

- Cyclists in Hodgemoor : No complaints received recently. Sara Caley thought cyclists should be approached directly and encouraged to join.
- Simplified sign for cyclists had not been done.
- Road Crossings over A355. Sarah Fisher said cost of getting signs was huge so Highways Authority very reluctant. Renata Lee said she had succeeded in getting signs up in Rickmansworth.
- Trailer and Horse Box Parking. Stockings Farm or in Hales Wood. No progress
- Information via Email newsletter and Facebook. Sending more emails out for those who don't use facebook. Marcus reported that the Hodgemoor Facebook page had a very good reach.
- **NOT REPORTED AT AGM.** As a result of Julie Thomson's idea at the last AGM, a successful outing with the Seer Green Scouts took place in summer. They cut back and dug out ditches.

11. **Any Other Business.**

Sara Caley asked if more sponsored rides could be organised either across to Penn and locally, or even further afield with transport.

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