

HODGEMOOR RIDING ASSOCIATION
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at
8 p.m. Monday 18th October 2004, Reading Room, Chalfont St Giles

Apologies from: Tim Fountain, Vicky Gregory, Donna Taylor and Tim Taylor. c.40 attendees.

1. **Approval of Accounts:** Robin Richards presented the accounts for the last financial year, and as he was retiring as treasurer, also presented a summary of the accounts since January 2002 (attached). He commented particularly on the great contribution made by Audrey and Terry Holbrook in raising so much money which had been key in inspiring others to give grants. He also commented that general expenses only represented 2.16% of income, which no doubt reflected the generosity of those who did not claim expenses. Marcus Bicknell said Robin had been an exemplary treasurer and thanked him for all his work - even though he was not now a rider! He would be missed.
2. **Progress Reports:**
 - **Amber's Trail.** Susie Bicknell reported that the upgrade from foot to horse trail of the 260 metres in NE corner of wood had been completed successfully. It had cost £7 650 for the trail and £540 for repairing the Spring Link (this repair at half price thanks to contractor AGRIFWORK). Thanks were due to Audrey for organising another sponsored ride, raising nearly £3000. A further £2000 each from Chiltern DC and the Brett Environment Trust had also been received.
 - **Membership.** SB reported that so far this was 2 down on last year overall: the breakdown was as follows

	2003	2004
Adults	77	85
Junior	16	6
Family members	9	5
Walkers	1	5
New members	34	25

She felt association needed to use liveries more to encourage renewals and keep up to date on who'd left, new liveries etc. The situation was not helped by the fact that 6 of the 14 local livery stables (i.e. managers and/or owners) weren't members or hadn't renewed. Jennifer Nolan (?), based at Widmer, said she was not a member and this was due to pure lethargy: she said somehow the Association must be more present at liveries to make people join. Sally Reynders-Messenger agreed that apathy was a big factor. Val Janes felt membership should be compulsory, but as usual the problem of policing this had to be faced.

- Jan Perry suggested having a Saturday or Sunday membership campaign day actually in Hodgemoor.
- Charlotte Perry said Association livery reps should visit at weekends when most people were around: she could even try and arrange meeting time.
- Vivienne Ely suggested using the Hodgemoor signs in the wood more productively to promote the Association.
- A type of corporate membership for liveries was suggested, whereby all livery clients would be obliged to be members. Afterall, the liveries did have a commercial benefit from the improvements made in Hodgemoor. However, Charlotte Perry, manager of Oldefields, felt she could not oblige her liveries to join. She did, however, always give membership forms to new liveries, but felt she needed more: for example photos showing what the trails had been like in their muddy state and what they are like now to convince people how important it was to maintain the trails. Val Janes suggested preparing a pack or brochure to give to new liveries giving value to the

association's activities. The meeting thought this was an excellent idea and the committee would go ahead and prepare one.

3. **Improvement of Access from South to Hodgemoor to avoid roads.** SB reported that the Jordans' Residents' Association had rejected the HRA/Bucks CC proposal for upgrading the Jordans/Seer Green footpath to a bridleway. This was a pity as most of the route was ideal being a cart track, but the last 90 metres was narrow with high hedges, owned by Jordans who feared for walkers and didn't want expense of cutting hedges back even though we had offered to do it for them.
 - At this point, meeting moved on to general discussion of priorities for association. There were just under £3000 left: should we save up for a further big project in wood, should funds be used to encourage upgrading of footpaths to bridleways (as in Jordans example), or should funds be used for general maintenance in wood?
 - Robin Richards felt there were 2 areas in wood that could do with attention. Terry Hobrook felt we should aim towards a bigger amount: maybe we would get further grants.
 - Diana Bunyan felt that if the Association was now going to concentrate on improving the bridleway network, **then a good development plan should be done to present to Bucks CC:** as a Planning and Transportation officer, she knew how important well-presented paperwork was towards getting things done. The safety issues and importance of off-road hacking should be emphasised. She was prepared to help with this plan. The meeting supported her suggestion.
 - Miranda Souter pointed out the difference between an official bridleway, a toll ride and a permissive riding trail. The latter two could be aimed for if an official bridleway seemed too long a process.
 - Diana Bunyan said she would, for example, be happy to pay for permissive rights to ride the fields by Wickham Way.
 - Jan Perry suggested sending out a questionnaire to members asking them which routes they felt should be upgraded.
 - Some members felt that if the scope of activities of the association was going to spread beyond Hodgemoor then the name should be changed. The chairman also mentioned the favour in some quarters for a subtle change of name to the Hodgemoor Bridleways Association which would be more "inclusive" of those walkers and others who might like to join (cf walker membership numbers up on last year)
 - SB said the Association had made recommendations via the BHS to Bucks CC for Rights of Way improvements (maps of these were on display at the AGM). Parish Councils will also have sent in their requests, and Parish Councils have also been asked to do "Village Appraisals". Members should get their villages to bring horse riders into consideration. SB gave the meeting a new Bucks CC number to contact for any problem with rights of way.
 - SB mentioned here that, thanks to Brenda Wickham proposing us, the Association had won the BHS award for "contributing the most to improving equestrian access" nationally. The Association, therefore, now had to live up to its reputation!
4. **Fund-Raising activities:** fun jumps, demos, sponsored rides.

SB said that as described in newsletter, fun jumps were relatively easy to organise, were fun, and raised around £100 the last 2 times (food and drink sales contributed a lot!). Another one was planned on November 28th.

 - The Showjumping demo raised £250 even though not many people came. This was a pity. Perhaps it had been too near summer holidays .
 - TREC: the Association was doing a Trec practice morning on Sunday Nov 7th, as a few members had said they were not interested in jumping but would like to come for something else, for social side, food and drink. SB said she hadn't done any sponsored rides recently. She needed a volunteer to take a "slow" ride, as SB tended

to do "fast" ones which not everyone enjoyed! Georgina Blair said she would try to lead a slow one. It was decided to have Penn Ride on Sunday December 19th.

5. **Stand at Chalfont St Giles Summer Show**, September 4th 2004. The Chairman Marcus Bicknell said having a stand at this well-attended local event had been worthwhile in raising the profile of the Association. There had been some expenditure on a big "Hodgemoor" banner, and enlarging documentation but this material was all reusable.
5. **Continuation of membership tags**. SB reported that she had now run out of the saddle/bridle tags, donated by Forest Enterprise, that had been sent out for the last 2 years to members. After some discussion, members voted against spending funds on a new identification tag, whether it was the same tags, armbands, headbands etc. As membership was not policed, it did not seem worth spending funds for this.
6. **Motorcyclists and Quad bikes in Hodgemoor**. There had been various reports of these throughout the summer. They were very difficult to catch. If caught, some claim they didn't know they weren't allowed. SB reported that Emma Munday of Forest Enterprise will now be put up signs about motorcycling. She had also put up signs with the Amersham Police no (01494 431133). She also said try suggesting they go to Wilton Park on RH side of A40 between Beaconsfield and GX opposite Potkilm road. MB had made the effort during the year to apprehend motorcyclists and is willing to go out into the wood if alerted, to identify the motorcyclists if possible.
7. **Other Points arising**
 - **Road safety**. Several members wished horseriders could be more aware and courteous on the roads. Gina Peters suggested push button lights could be put on crossings such as the Magpie on the A355.
 - **Riders on walkers' trails**. Robin Richards and Sally Reynders Messenger said a few riders were still be straying onto footpaths in the woods.
 - **Stockings Farm**. Val Janes and other members wondered if the shooting that took place on Sunday mornings at this farm was permissible so close to a bridleway. Also there was a planning permission notice up for a recycling plant (European Waste?). SB would check on these points.
 - **Stratton Chase**. Several members wondered if Stratton Chase - often used by horseriders - was an official bridleway. SB confirmed it was not. Brenda Wickham said that if it had been ridden regularly for 20 years, it was possible to get it classified as a bridleway.
8. **Election of Officers and Committee**

The Chairman said that as well as Robin Richards, Georgina Fincham was also retiring from the Committee. He thanked her for her help during the last year. Tim Taylor had volunteered to be treasurer. He was proposed by MB and seconded by Richard Hill. The following committee was elected:

Chairman:	Marcus Bicknell
Treasurer:	Tim Taylor
Secretary:	Susie Bicknell
Members:	Heather Black, Georgina Blair, Judith Broadley, Audrey Holbrook, Terry Holbrook