

HODGEMOOR RIDING ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting 8 p.m. Tuesday 17th October 2006 Reading Room, Chalfont St Giles MINUTES

Apologies from: Tessa Bayliss, Tim Fountain, Gill Garside, Audrey and Terry Holbrook, and Anna Wilson

1. Welcome to new committee members. The Chairman (Marcus Bicknell) welcomed the new committee members, Jane Braithwaite, Debbie Davies and Richard Hill, who was the new treasurer. Diana "Bunny" Bunyan had volunteered to join the committee. All new members were duly elected. Marcus thanked Heather Black and Tim Taylor, who had resigned, for all their help. The existing committee members, Marcus, Susie, Georgina Blair, Judith Broadley, Audrey and Terry Holbrook were also re-elected. The Secretary (Susie Bicknell) pointed out that the Association had done all but one of the action points noted in minutes from the last AGM: Direct Debit had been introduced, repairs had been done in and outside wood; Bucks CC had been asked for funding which they had given, clearing in the wood had been done with the help of guides and scouts, and a pocket map of route to Penn had been sent out to each member renewing their sub. Only action point not done was to hold a membership push in the wood (lack of volunteers!)

Addition to original agenda sent out with newsletter:

5. Creating new bridleways around Hodgemoor (8) Fund-raising Proposal: Neways

2. Approval of Accounts. Richard Hill had circulated a copy of the accounts to year ending April 5th and these were then approved. They showed a healthy balance of £4,366.96 being carried forward to this year. Richard then commented on the accounts for the current year to date:

2.1 Balance: At this point, halfway through the financial year, our bank balance was £2,070

2.2 Income: Our income for the year to date was £2,197 of which subscriptions made up £945 which compared very favourably with the total for last year of £945. We had six Standing Orders and encouraged members to take up this convenient way of subscribing. Donations account for a further £120 of income.

Events including the Native Pony Dressage, Treasure Hunt, Fun Jump, TREC and the Dressage/ Cross Country evening added a further £960 and hire of the Cross Country course were proving very popular producing £150.

2.3 Expenditure: This year we had spent a total of £4,136 on trail maintenance with a further £357 being spent on general operating costs including costs of running events, BHS fees and newsletter.

Gina Peter's friend asked why DD was an advantage. Richard said because renewal was automatic and much less effort for the subscriber, hence we should in theory keep more members.

3. Fund-Raising Activities. Past and Planned : Susie felt it was appropriate that Georgina Blair should comment on this point, as she had organised most of them! The Association was extremely grateful to her for all she had done this year to innovate new events.

Georgina said HRA had no ambitions to be a riding club, all its activities were to raise money. But in doing this, HRA encouraged riders to use the woods, and as our events were low key, and, this year, innovative, to encourage some members to take part in events they might not normally consider doing. Georgina resumed this year's events so far:

2 Treasure Hunts early in the year: themes were Harry Potter and Charlie and the Choc Factory,

2 XC Fun jumps, one at Easter and one in August: not many people but still raised £50 or so each time.

TREC in August: not many people (12 out of 17 'cos of awful weather) but still raised £100. Georgina pointed out that organising TREC was very labour intensive.

Georgina said her idea for a Native Pony Dressage Day had been a success, despite the dreadful weather, and would be done again, with variations. It had raised £351

The Combined dressage and XC training evening had also been much enjoyed, raising £90. This formula would be tried again.

Planned events:

Sunday 29 Oct. 10-12. "Half Term XC": the plan was to make it competitive this time using same scoringsystem as for Combined training

Nov 9th KC La Pierre. This lecture by the US Equine Podiatrist was proving popular with more than half the 60 tickets sold already

New Years Day Ride, either to Penn again or try new route to Chorleywood.

Feb 2007. Hodgemoor Social and Business Forum. Susie said response had been positive for this idea. It had been too late to organise it for pre-Xmas but would take place in February. It would give a raison d'etre for a social occasion and raise funds at the same time, and hopefully promote local business.

Spring 2007 Natives and Newcomers Dressage Day

Spring 2007 TREC: perhaps to include orienteering section again

Combined Dressage/XC training: Georgina said this might even extend to mini ODE. Susie said it could even become a Pentathlon, including some of the TREC obstacles, and also the Control of Gaits (cantering very slowly and walking very fast down 150 metres).

Susie said she had this year organised two sponsored rides for the BHS raising £800 or so each time. Maybe this could be done for Hodgemoor at Wendover Woods for example. We could perhaps share proceeds with another cause, such as the Brooke Hospital for Horses, to make it more attractive to participants from outside who wouldn't know what Hodgemoor was.

4. Report on Recent Trail Repairs: Susie reported on the successful completion of the “Patch Up and Save Up” policy adopted at last year’s AGM. SB: Bucks CC had offered just over £2000 to do 135 metres, but the hoggin had ran out, so only 83 metres had been done at cost of @ £1400. HRA had spent £4136: 58 metres at each end of Bracken Ride, 32 on Yellow Brick Road, and 130 stretch in The Glade. AGRIFWORK had donated some work on Highfield. They had as usual done a great job.

5. Creating new bridleways around Hodgemoor. Susie said Bucks CC had received 2006 award from the BHS for the county council that had done the most in the country to improve equestrian access. John Clark, the local bridleways officer had renewed vigour that we needed to take advantage of. Susie and Richard were reviving attempt to upgrade footpath leading from Wilton Lane up to Seer Green. Susie would also work on the Narcott Lane/Twitchells Lane link, especially since Cameron Yard had been taken over by Julia Tilley of Chalfont Equestrian.

6. Use of current @ £2000 balance. The AGM approved the proposal that HRA funds should be used on bridleway creation as well as improving trails in Hodgemoor, ie if funds were needed to help with surfacing a new route or putting fencing up or gate. Brenda Wickham said HRA should look out for possible use of section 206 , as she had done for creating the Wickham Way bridleway. Diana Bunyan explained that when planning applications were made for change of use of land, then the applicant had to give something back to the community, eg a new footpath, leisure facility, etc. Georgina said this was less likely round here with the strict green belt restrictions, but nonetheless worth bearing in mind.

7. Maintaining Membership levels and Communication with Liveries

32 new members so far, 27 adults, 3 family, 2 junior, therefore 17 old adult members haven't renewed

	2006	2005	2004	2003
adults	74	59	85	77
Juniors	7	13	6	16
Family	12	12	5	9
Walkers	2	3	5	1

Susie said these figures were not bad for this point in the year, with adult membership already up on last year’s final figures, with still another 6 months to go for this year. She also had not yet chased up members who had not renewed.

There followed a discussion on whether HRA should encourage more cyclists and walkers to join. Marcus said there was no general association for all Hodgemoor users and maybe we should assume this role and rename it “The Hodgemoor Association” and thus attract more members. Diana Bunyan thought it was a good idea in theory to open it up but her experience in Chorleywood with Sustrans (the cyclists main organisation) showed there had been a conflict over surfaces, as cyclists preferred a harder one. Susie pointed out that some of the surfaced tracks in Wendover were too hard and had clearly been conceived as cycle rather than horse tracks. Gina Peters said she had told some cyclists in Hodgemoor that we had done all the work, and they looked as if they might have joined: Gina and Judith Broadley suggested putting up signs something along the lines of “The Horse riding community have raised all the funds to improve the trails that, you, walkers and cyclists, benefit from. HRA would welcome your membership to continue the good work. “. Or quite simply “All non-horseriders welcome as members too”. Marcus said he would work on this: however, the existing signs had been expensive and time-consuming to put up, so changing them all would be quite a job.

Charlotte Perry (members were delighted to see her at the AGM, clearly so active again after her awful riding accident earlier in the year) said having a general association would avoid the conflicts of heirachies. Georgina and Marcus felt that it could lead to more, rather than less conflict: it was better to negotiate with individual groups of cyclists and walkers: it was hard luck if they didn’t happen to have such groups at the moment. It was better to make them, and Bucks CC and Chiltern DC, feel that we were benefiting all user groups. Mrs Ballaam, one of our few walker members, said the Friends of Hodgemoor still existed, but did nothing. Miranda Souter pointed out that walkers and cyclists were naturally not so dedicated to Hodgemoor as they had much more freedom to go to other places for their activities, a good reason why they might not become members. Lesley Cornthwaite said the relationship between user groups had improved dramatically in the last 6 years, and it was important to maintain this.

8. Proposal for fund-raising: Neways. Lesley Cornthwaite had kindly brought along information and product examples from Neways, a company distributing chemical-free products, ranging through shampoos, soaps, creams, nutritional additives, domestic cleaning materials. If HRA were registered for £30, Newways would pay a commission on monthly expenditure. Some members felt the minimum sum to be spent of £40 or so before a commission was paid was quite high. Susie felt there was nothing to lose by registering. Judith felt we should investigate it all much more deeply. Lesley had distributed information for members and give them, and those receiving these minutes a chance to look at the websites www.newaystofundraise.org and www.betterhealthtoday.co.uk . The proposal could then be reviewed more thoroughly at the Hodgemoor Social Business Forum.

9. Election of Officers and Committee: this had been done at the beginning of the meeting

10. Raffle. Members were very generous both in giving prizes (Simon Thornton’s Therapy session and Peter Glowski’s canvas print in particular) and buying tickets! £95 was raised. Many thanks to you all.