

HODGEMOOR RIDING ASSOCIATION

Minutes of Annual General Meeting, 8 November 2022 at 19.00

1 Welcome by Chairman.

Marcus said the Association was doing very well after 20 years and had deserved to celebrate so heartedly with the Hog Roast this summer. He thanked all the members who had contributed so generously towards the gift to Marcus and Susie: the litho of horses galloping by André Brasilier which was on view this evening. He said such a coherent and effective organisation not only existed because of their work but also from the support from members throughout the years. The minutes of the last AGM were adopted and can be seen at <https://hodgemoor.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/agm2021.pdf>

2. Election of Officers and Committee

The current Committee is:

Marcus Bicknell (Chairman)	Shona Fraser	Claire James
Susie Bicknell (Secretary)	Geoff Gudgion (Treasurer)	Francesca Jones (Social)
Dawn Fleming	Kirsti Hummel (Cyclists)	Charlotte Perry

Shona Fraser and Claire James were standing down. Sheila Grimshaw was elected onto the Committee, proposed by Sara Caley and seconded by Monique Goodwin. The remaining members were duly elected as a single group.

3. Approval of Accounts.

Geoff reported that Funds at year end (October) currently stood at £23,326.41. The Treasurer's Report can be found at

https://hodgemoor.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/treasurer_report_2022.pdf

Sara Caley suggested that as expenditure on trail repairs would not happen till 2024 (see point 7), why not invest £20,000 in a One-year fixed rate 4.6% savings account (Investec.com) which could raise £872?

Geoff would look into this. Marcus said members might be interested to know that over 22 years we have had income of over £235,000 and have spent nearly all of that on improvements. The details of income are at https://hodgemoor.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/HodgemoorRidingAssociation_21year_income_deployed.xlsx

4. Membership subscriptions.

Susie reported that there were 363 members 13 cyclist members of which 2 joined this year, and 13 walkers (4 joined this year). There were 39 new horse-rider members. Many thanks to Charlotte Gilham who in May made a £300 donation: she said "I'm somewhat shamefully emailing about a very delayed payment!" She said she never paid for years and wanted to make up for it!

Susie asked if we should get more cyclist members. Some people felt that having more paying cyclist members would mean they would feel they had the right to go everywhere as they'd paid! Bunny and Monique pointed out that the surfaced trails were very nice for cyclists and we were victims of our own success. The meeting was divided: some felt cyclists behaved very well to horse-riders, others didn't. It was decided that a revised text on the notice to cyclists in the woods (which was circulated) would be submitted to Rob Bell, Beat Forester, Forestry England.

5. Reports on Events

Winter Dressage Series. The 7 events held between December 2021 and April 2022 at Waylands, Manor Farm, Austens, Oldefields, Grove Farm, Highclere and Widmer were popular with competitors and raised just over £2000. Susie thanked the yard owners and managers for their cooperation. Riders who might never have thought to compete in dressage came and had a go!

The meeting was in favour of having another series, but to hold only 4 rather than 7 and not have a league. Also yards could decide individually if they wished to keep some of the funds raised or donate all to the association. It was suggested to open it up to non-hackers: if entrants could organise somewhere to park not at the venue, they could come. Susie said 3 yards had already volunteered to hold an event.

TREC 18th April Easter Monday at Homefarm Orchard. Event raised £510. This had worked well thanks to the help of Ann Maisel. Ann (at the meeting) was organising a Trec training at Widmer on 3 December and would be happy to organise any other training sessions at local yards. She offered to help organise again at the next Hodgemoor Trec on Easter Monday in 2023.

Hodgemoor 21st Anniversary Hog Roast. The meeting was unanimous in thanking Francesca Jones for making this a huge success. This event was always intended to be a celebration rather than a fund-raiser, but raised £183 nonetheless. Despite the great effort she had made, Francesca would be happy to organise a similar event, maybe a barn dance instead, in 2024. It would be much easier second time round, she said. Charlotte Perry and Geoff said that if such an event were to be done regularly, then it should be profitable. It was decided to do a Facebook survey on the question.

Francesca suggested organising regular social events, like drinks at a pub. It was decided to have the first on Thursday 8 December at the Magpie pub, Francesca to organise. Thank you.

6. Report on Badger Works and Wickham Bridleway Repairs.

After 4 years, this Bridleway was now safe for horse-riders, with thanks to Phil Fox from Bucks CC. No cost to the Association, but a £200 cost to fill the big holes in the Wickham BW as the Bucks CC contractors were there. The meeting supported donating a small horse statue to Phill Fox of Bucks CC for the huge amount of work beyond the call of duty he did to get this project finalised.

7. Trail Repairs and Relationship with Forestry England:

- 370 metres of trail repairs were done in October 2019 at a total cost was for £29,800 to which the Association contributed £15,300, about half. FE agreed to pay half this time because of new regs imposing on us a contractor which was more expensive than our regular one. You can see a map at http://hodgemoor.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/hodgemoor_trail_works_2019_map.pdf
- With income of about 5,000 p.a., the Association would by 2024 have about £28,000 available with which we could rebuild 350 metres if the rate is still £80/metre (if FE do not contribute). Forestry England would prefer to wait till 2024 and do more metrage as the last works were disruptive.
- With that in mind, the Chairman and Secretary proposed next works in 2024, for economies of scale. The meeting agreed.

8. Speed Limit Review

Diana Bunyan and Sheila Grimshaw had been working on getting a reduction from 40 to 30 or even 20 MPH down Twitchells Lane and round the double bend on Chalfont Road.

- MB road census at Austen's entrance. This proved that cars did keep under the 40 mph speed limit but often crossed the central line.
- Importance of incident reporting via BHS app Horse I or on their website. <https://www.bhs.org.uk/go-riding/report-an-incident/> to provide proof for the speed limit review. Diana Bunyan said it was a Catch22: not many incidents were or could be reported because – apart from Austens Yard riders – no riders dared to venture down Twitchells Lane, even though it was the link to the bridleway through Jordans. The next tactic was to push the new Highway Code emphasis on the new hierarchy of road users.
- Sheila Grimshaw was researching off-routes to avoid Twitchells Lane, and also cutting back the undergrowth to give better visibility. Francesca Jones and Julian Faircloth would try and help with cutting back the hedges.

Susie presented a sample of a new hi-vis tabard and recommended that all riders wear them

<https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/255390193958?hash=item3b76711926:g:gyUAAOSwAEtiDYeq>. This model shows the new Highway Code requirements for motorists to pass horse-riders at 10 mph and 2 metres away: only £9 95



9. Road Signage.

Thanks to Des Payne from the BHS Safety Department and June Lovett, Road Safety Officer at Bucks CC, 5 large "Pass slow and Wide" signs had been installed on Twitchells Lane and New Barn Lane. Vicki Barrass, fairly recently new to the area, found drivers were pretty good in comparison to where she had been round Windsor. Charlotte Perry emphasised the great importance of acknowledging courteous drivers. Susie said it had been embarrassing when Des Payne and June Lovett were putting up the signs, they passed 2 sets of riders who made no gesture of acknowledgement.

10. Collaboration with cyclists. Thanks to Kirsti Hummel who had succeeded in having an article "Passing Horses Safely" included in the May edition of "Breeze Notes", Cycling UK's on-line newsletter. A revised of Code of Conduct notice in the wood would be proposed to Rob Bell, Beat Forester FE.

11. Volunteer Parties.

Marcus thanked those who had helped to clear up after Storm Eunice, but found it difficult to rouse enthusiasm for clearing parties. Geoff Gudgion and Julian Faircloth offered to organise a clear-up on, probably the Seer Green Loop. Susie would walk down it to check it out..

12. Any Other Business.

As a thank you to Marcus and the Association for clearing a dangerous metal rod in Stratton Chase, Richard Jackson (part owner and TV channel QVC Gardening presenter) had donated some **of his** high-quality garden products. As there were no ardent gardeners at the meeting for an auction, Charlotte Perry suggested doing a Facebook auction.

Susie Bicknell, Secretary
Marcus Bicknell, Chairman

Minutes written 12 Nov 2022