



**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
of THE IRISH DRAUGHT HORSE SOCIETY (GREAT BRITAIN), COMPANY NUMBER 03920946
at Chapel Field Conference Suite, Ash Lane, Whitchurch, Shropshire SY13 4BP
on Sunday 5th December 2021**

PRESENT: Trustees:- Sue Benson (Chairman), Brian Gates (Company Secretary), Heather Chaplin, Julie Cornthwaite, Norma Grubb, James Noblett, Antony Phillips, Carol Rudd, Nigel Wakefield, Ellen Walton, Mary Wilson

Members:- Kay Ainsworth, Mark Ainsworth, Tina Carswell, Graham Chaplin, Victoria Cobham (Vice President), Anna Ernsting, Charlotte Evans, Mark Fitton, Liz Gates, Heather Glendenning, J Lewis, Enid Lord, Gaynor Mitchell. John Newborough (President), Jenny Noblett, P Powley, Chris Rankin, Jill Rankin, K Sanders, G Sandford, Julian Swift, Rachel Swift, Mary Tearney, Ben Watson

ZOOM: Trustees:- Louise Morton (Vice Chair), Alun Davies **Members:-** Jennifer Blenkiron, Margaret Brooks, Diane Cornthwaite, David Grubb, E Jones, J Kemp, Lindsey Millar, Sarah Ramsden, Kerilee Wilson

- 1. Apologies** - Gillian Black, Hazel Bramley, John Brewster, Sarah Bright-Phillips, Peter Crafts, Liz Elliott, Kim Ethell-Davies, Grace Gostelow, Liz Langford, Bruce Langley-McKim, Paul Rackham, Simon Reynolds (Vice President), Tracey Southern, Pam Symonds, Clare Trebble, Carol Malin (Administrator)
- 2. To confirm the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Sunday 19th May 2019 –**
Proposed by Victoria Cobham and seconded by Nigel Wakefield. All agreed
- 3. (a) Chairman's Report –** The Chairman opened the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance.

The Chairman reported that in March 2020 Inspector Training took place in Kilkenny, Ireland where several members were able to complete their course and other Inspectors attended to learn of new improvements to the system.

Due to the pandemic our stallion inspections that were due to be held in April 2020 were postponed. Subsequently the pandemic took hold and we had to make the decision to cancel all our forthcoming events.

During the summer a group of trustees worked on updating the Articles of Association which have been circulated to the members for their comments. We will vote to adopt these articles today.

Julie Cornthwaite's idea of a Christmas Special Virtual Dressage Competition held in December 2020 was so successful it was extended into 2021 for a three months accumulator competition and a further Christmas Special is running this month. Thanks to both Julie and Carol Rudd for organising this.

Earlier this year our new Facebook page was launched and has proved very popular with the Irish Draught community. Thanks to Tony Phillips, Kay Ainsworth and their team.

In May 2021 we were delighted to launch our new website which is currently administered by Carol Rudd. We hope you find the site informative and easy to use.

We were pleased that the three regional shows were able to go ahead this year and thanks go to Dan Ash for the Midlands Show, Carol Rudd, Julie Cornthwaite, Kay Ainsworth, Maureen Graham and Mark Fitton for the North West Irish Draught Show, and to Lindsey Miller and Kelly Weaver for the South West Show.

Thanks go to Annie Holbeche who has retired from doing our passports and will be greatly missed. Pedigree Livestock Services have taken on this role since October. Thanks also go to Louise Morton who is retiring from the role of editor of the yearbook. The Society is also most fortunate that the finances of the Society are in good order due to the careful handling of our Treasurer Brian Gates and the generosity of Trustees and Members.

Finally I would like to give my personal thanks to all the Trustees and Officers for their continued support and loyalty to this Society. No one will ever know how much of yourselves you give on a daily basis to the Irish Draught horse; we all owe you our grateful thanks.

(b) Financial Report – A Report of the Directors and Financial Statements for the years ended 31 December 2019 and 2020 had been circulated to Members with the Notice of the AGM and brief summaries of the accounts were reported by Brian Gates as follows-

2019 – a substantial increase in income with a proportionally smaller increase in expenditure had resulted in a surplus of £6,672 on the year to 31 December. The main areas contributing to the additional revenue were membership subscriptions, registrations including horse passports, over stamps and transfers of ownership, mare inspections, additional income from the Annual Breed Show, contributions from the North West and Midlands regional Shows and Show Affiliation fees.

The ongoing development of the database and associated software provided by Grassroots Systems Ltd enabled strict budgetary controls to be observed as well as facilitating the administrative workload. Reduced costs were also achieved by the voluntary input of the Trustees.

2020 – the restriction of some of the major activities curtailed by the coronavirus pandemic substantially reduced the overall profitable income, namely inspections and shows. The shortfall in membership subscriptions (approximately 20%) can be attributed to those Members who are obliged to subscribe in order to enter pure bred Irish Draught horses in affiliated shows. The increase in registration income is very encouraging. An overall surplus of £264 was an acceptable result in an extremely challenging year.

Brian Gates also commented on the current year's activities to date which have resulted in a substantial excess of income over expenditure for the downsized Annual Breed Show, largely due to the generosity of our Sponsors, and the much increased revenue from the exceptional numbers of Irish Draught mares and stallions forward for inspection, with inspection costs continuing to be subsidised by the voluntary input of Trustees and Members.

(c) Inspection Report – Heather Chaplin, on behalf of the inspection management team thanked everyone who had made inspections possible this year and then went on to give a full report on all the Stallion and Mare Inspections held in 2021.

There were various challenges this year due to the many COVID precautionary requirements. Due to the ongoing pandemic restrictions we were given permission to hold the mare inspections, apart from the one at Moreton Morrell, without an Irish Inspector.

A total of seventy-one mares were inspected at twelve different venues covering Scotland, England and Wales. Fifty-four mares (76%) achieved Class 1 and five of these mares achieved a bronze merit in conformation and movement and one in show jumping. Three Irish Draught Sport Horse mares achieved Supplementary Grade Up status enabling them to potentially breed stock for inclusion in the main studbook. Twelve mares were classified as Class 2.

Once again our grateful thanks go to the Hornby Lonsdale Trust for their continued support. This year sixteen mares with foals at foot by Class 1 or RID stallions were awarded Hornby Premiums. Three of these mares have now become Select mares enabling their progeny by Class 1 or RID stallions to be registered free of charge.

The 2021 stallion inspections were held at Moreton Morrell on the 2nd and 3rd of September. They were well supported due to the Society being unable to hold inspections in 2019, due to lack of entries, and in 2020 due to COVID. Eleven stallions were inspected with six achieving Class 1 and four stallions were classified as Class 2. One sixteen year old sport horse was also accepted onto our register of sport horse stallions.

The British-bred stallion Bell Tower Major Tom received the BLS award, kindly donated by the late Mr Bernard Symonds. Our Chief Inspector Mrs Mary Wilson spoke on the success of the inspection system and went on to thank everyone who helped to organise the stallion inspections this year, including the arena party, all the stewards, Heather, for all her administrative work, and our vet Liam Kearns. Mary went on to thank everyone who had helped at all the various mare inspection venues throughout the country.

(d) Breed Show Report – Sue Benson reported that our Annual Breed Show held on August 21st at Arena UK was a huge success. Due to the pandemic forcing cancellation of all qualifiers there were fewer championships to hold this year, so it was decided to hold a one day show. It was a challenge to fit everything in but all went well. We are hugely grateful to all our generous sponsors who have supported the Annual Breed show both this year and in the past. Many thanks as well to everyone who helped on the day as without you the show could not happen. Next year the show will be at Onley Grounds Equestrian Complex on the 13th and 14th August, with all the usual championship classes. The existing show team are retiring but will work alongside a new team for 2022.

4. Appoint auditors – Mark Fitton proposed that the existing Auditors, ECL Howard Watson Smith LLP be re-appointed for the ensuing year and this was seconded by Victoria Cobham. Unanimous vote in favour.

5. (a) Election of Trustees 2020 – Louise Morton, Antony Phillips and Carol Rudd retired by rotation and offered themselves for re-election. No other nominations were received so it was not necessary to hold an election; Louise Morton, Antony Phillips and Carol Rudd were duly elected for a further 4 year term.

(b) Election of Trustees 2021 – Kay Ainsworth, Julie Cornthwaite, James Noblett, Nigel Wakefield, Ellen Walton and Mary Wilson retired by rotation and all other than Kay Ainsworth offered themselves for re-election. A further nomination was received from Caroline Murphy. As there were six vacancies it was not necessary to hold an election; Julie Cornthwaite, Caroline Murphy, James Noblett, Nigel Wakefield, Ellen Walton and Mary Wilson were duly elected to serve up to 4 years.

6. To adopt the revised Articles of Association – The existing articles had been in place since the Society was incorporated in the year 2000 with just one amendment in 2002. Council had been aware for some time that the articles needed to be brought up to date and took the opportunity during the lock down in 2020 to action a review. A sub group led by Heather Chaplin and including the Chairman and Company Secretary carried out a major review based on the Charity Commission's template and a revised proposal was submitted to Council in November 2000 for consideration. Following a few tweaks a draft document was approved by Council in December 2000 and subsequently circulated to all current members in the Spring of 2021 with a consultation period ending on 31 July 2021. Two members raised concerns which Council reviewed and a final draft was circulated with the AGM Notice to all current members on 1 November 2021.

Chris Rankin questioned why clause 18 (6) permitted directors to be eligible for re-election immediately after completing a four year term, without a forced break which is common in some other Societies. Sue Benson stated that it was historically difficult to recruit new directors with the required expertise to provide continuity which was the reason for not implementing the forced break option.

With reference to clause 22 (4) (b) Chris Rankin asked where the harmonisation agreement could be viewed. Heather Chaplin confirmed that it should be published on the website. **ACTION Carol Rudd to update website**

Victoria Cobham raised a concern regarding the wording of clauses 3 and 4 of the Memorandum of Association. She considered that clause 4 (1) should include "the Irish Draught Horse" as well as "the Irish Draught Sport Horse". It was agreed to seek legal advice as to whether an omission had occurred but that it was not detrimental to the proposed articles and the vote to adopt them could proceed. **ACTION Heather Chaplin to seek advice from the Charity Commission**

A vote was then taken to adopt the revised Articles of Association by a show of hands – Unanimous vote in favour.

7 Any Other Business

Chris Rankin wanted to raise members' awareness of the condition PSSM. There are levels of this condition but as yet there is little evidence to confirm a threat to the breeding herd. The Society's vet Liam Kearns has provided a scientific article from the Equine Veterinary Journal which will be posted on the website. Dr Charlotte Evans, who is an Epidemiologist in Animal Diseases, was present and reiterated the need for awareness but stressed the importance of consulting your vet before administering any self-medication to your horse. **ACTION Carol Rudd to update website**

Ann Adams-Williams had written in asking to know when the Mare Amnesty will end. It was stated that the Society is waiting for a response from HSI and as soon as we have confirmation to the query we will inform the membership.

Chris Rankin asked about the Society's policy regarding dope testing. The subject has been raised by the Showing Council but investigation into the costs and benefits is required.

These minutes were approved unanimously by the full Council, having been proposed by Nigel Wakefield and seconded by Antony Phillips, at their meeting on 30 January 2022 prior to publication on the Society website.