

**Minutes of the Cross Party Assembly Group for the Horse  
Held in Conference Room 21 Ty Hywel  
On Tuesday 15 October 2013 at 6pm**

Present:

Angela Burns AM (Chairman)  
Janet Finch-Saunders AM (Vice Chairman)  
Alan Davies AM Minister for Natural Resources and Food  
Andrew RT Davies AM (Leader Welsh Conservatives)  
Antoinette Sandbach AM  
Byron Davies AM  
Llyr Huws Gruffydd AM  
Osian Jones (Support Staff Llyr Huws Gruffydd)  
William Powell AM  
Alex Phillips (Support staff William Powell AM)  
Gary Haggaty Welsh Government (Head of Agriculture)  
Fiona Leadbitter Welsh Government (Agriculture Department)  
Nic De Brauwere (Redwings/NEWC)  
Lee Hackett BHS Director of Equine Policy  
Jenny MacGregor (SWHP)  
Sian Lloyd (SWHP)  
William Jenkins (NFU Cymru)  
Lee Jones (Bridgend CBC)  
Jan Roche (BHS Secretariat)

Apologies:

Steve Carter (RSPCA)  
Phillip York (Bransby)  
Bethan Jenkins AM  
Simon Thomas AM

1. Angela Burns welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. Apologies were received and noted.
3. Minutes of the last meeting were noted.
4. The main item for the meeting was a briefing on the Control of Horses (Wales) Bill by the Minister for Natural Resources and Food Alan Davies.  
The Minister outlined the details of the Bill which had been introduced the previous day 14 October 2013:

This Bill takes steps towards our vision for a fly grazing free Wales.

It will provide local authorities with the powers to:

- seize and impound horses which are on land without consent
- sell the horses or dispose of them, including destruction by humane means if appropriate
- recover costs reasonably incurred from the owners of horses in such circumstances.

The Minister had also issued the following written statement:

Today I am pleased to introduce the Control of Horses (Wales) Bill.

The Control of Horses (Wales) Bill gives effect to the Welsh Government's vision for a fly grazing free Wales.

In March of this year, the Welsh Government published a consultation seeking views on an appropriate all Wales legislative solution to the problem of 'so called' fly grazing across Wales. The consultation closed on 29 April 2013.

In July the Welsh Government published a summary of the 604 responses to that consultation which showed that the vast majority of those who had responded were in favour of improved legislation to deal with this problem.

This Bill provides all local authorities in Wales with the same legal powers to seize, impound, sell, dispose of and destroy where appropriate horses by humane means after certain notifications and time limits are met, when horses are on land without lawful authority or occupier consent.

I would like to see the practice of local authorities working in partnership continue. Only by working together can we eradicate the problem of fly grazing. I believe the Control of Horses (Wales) Bill will provide them with the relevant new tools to deal with the problem and protect the public and the environment from the nuisance caused by the practice of fly grazing.

Following this briefing the following points were raised:

Costs – Advice would be available for Local Authorities, consideration was being given to this issue

Passports and European Legislation – discussions were ongoing with DEFRA

Horses put on land illegally - is the landowner still liable as it was felt advice and guidance was needed. Assurance was given that this will be addressed.

What was the assessment for potential future issues regarding similar issues – the previous channels of communication would remain open.

The unanimous feeling was that this legislation would give the LAs the unified power to tackle issues and provide a good collaborative approach.

The Control of Horses (Wales) Bill would now pass through the Assembly stages with amendments allowed to be put forward until the end of November.

Angela Burns thanked the Minister for his attendance and attention on this matter.

The meeting closed at 7.15pm