

**Minutes of the Cross Party Assembly Group for the Horse  
Held in Conference Room 21 Ty Hywel  
On Tuesday 4 March 2014 at 6pm**

Present:

Angela Burns AM (Chairman)  
Stuart Burns (Support Staff Angela Burns)  
Mark Alexander (Deputy Head Agriculture/Rural Affairs WG)  
Lee Hackett (BHS Director of Equine Policy)  
Jenny MacGregor (SWHP)  
Sian Lloyd (SWHP)  
Rachel Evans (Director Wales CA)  
Tony Evans (WHW)  
Alan Pearce (WPCS)  
Phillip York (Equine Welfare Consultant)  
Steve Carter (Director RSPCA Wales)  
William Jenkins (NFU Cymru)  
Huw Thomas (NFU Cymru)  
Elaine Griffiths (BHS Welfare Wales)  
Jan Roche (BHS/Cross Party Secretariat)  
Colin Thomas (Hill Pony Imp Society)

Apologies:

Janet Finch-Saunders AM (Vice Chairman)  
William Powell AM  
Llyr Huws Gruffydd AM  
Nic De Brauwere (Redwings/NEWC)  
Janet Williams (BDS Wales)  
Mark Weston (BHS Director of Access)  
Graham Capper (Equine Consultant)  
Maureen Lloyd (STAGBI)  
Brian Peachey (STAGBI)  
Helen Manns BHS Cymru Vice Chair)

1. Angela Burns welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. AGM - The formal procedure of appointing the Chair and Secretariat took place:  
Angela Burns was proposed as Chair by Alan Pearce and seconded by Rachel Evans.  
Jan Roche was proposed as secretariat by Phillip York and seconded by Jenny MacGregor. As there are no finances or financial records as a result there is no report required.
3. Apologies were received and noted.

4. Minutes of the last meeting were noted.

#### 5. Control of Horses (Wales) Bill.

Angela Burns thanked all those who had contributed to the process as the Group had been very instrumental in advising on this. The Action Plan for the Bill had also been very well received. It appears that this Cross Party Group is the only one to have attained such an outcome. MP's in England were now taking notice of this action in Wales – Huw Thomas said their London office wanted more details. Lee Hackett said that work was now ongoing with DEFRA to look at similar legislation. The Bill needed to be used successfully in Wales now to highlight and endorse it.

There were still concerns about the non-statutory status of the Bill.

William Jenkins pointed out that any carcass left following flygrazing was the landowner's responsibility to dispose of unless it was near a watercourse.

Steve Carter said there would be resource problems for many local authorities. Angela Burns said there would be the opportunity however to take LA assistance requests to the Minister.

#### 6. Indigenous Pony Inquiry

Angela Burns had been asked by the Minister Alan Davies to head up an independent inquiry into this subject – to cover all issues and areas and with support from this Group. Phillip York is working with Angela on this issue.

There seemed to be two elements involved the first being to establish if there is an indigenous population and if so where it exists and how to preserve it as part of the Welsh heritage.

The second element was to look at the other pony population on the commons and similar areas that may have been dumped and were now contributing to the overbreeding and welfare issues on-going.

A consultation document will be drawn up and distributed to all interested parties for response.

Phillip York said that there were many factors to be taken into account. It involved a considerable amount of work and definition to proceed in the correct manner.

For instance the Exmoor breed – there are round ups twice a year and the genetic breeding is carefully monitored to keep the bloodlines clean and pure.

With regard to the Commons in Wales some of the Commoners Associations would work with LAs to solve problems of abandoned equines on the commons but not in all areas.

Jenny MacGregor said it was difficult to get commoners to meet to try and work together. Commoners rights varied from place to place.

There were many welfare implications which led to overbreeding and equine deaths.

Colin Thomas said that where HPIS were involved he believed there was proper control.

There was a discussion on the terms of feral and semi feral and what they implied.

The Carneddau Ponies were also discussed – they were hoping to be listed as a rare breed. Angela Burns intended to visit that area and also Exmoor as part of a case study evaluation.

The conclusion was that non managed ponies were the major problem.

Natural Resources Wales have 2 herds on conservation grazing projects. It was agreed to have a working group and Alan Pearce, Colin Thomas, Rachel Evans, Tony Evans and Jenny MacGregor agreed to work alongside Angela and Phillip on this.

## 7. AOB.

There was an issue in the Penclawdd and surrounding area on the marsh and estuary regarding the welfare and safety of equines grazing there. Angela Burns was now fully aware of this and intended to visit to evaluate fully.

For the next meeting Lee Hackett agreed to do a presentation on passports and enforcement in light of recent DEFRA discussions.

The Group also considered additional members – Colin Thomas suggested we have a commons representative again and Jan Roche would contact John Staley to see if he would attend as before. Following that the unanimous decision was that the amount of expertise currently on the group covered all angles so at the present time no further members were necessary.

Colin Thomas raised the issue of an article in Gwlad recently involving feeding beet nuts on commons. Mark Alexander said he would take this back to the Agriculture Department.

The meeting closed at 7.55pm