

THE BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY

Worcestershire County Branch Annual Meeting, October 10th 2007

Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on Wednesday 10th October at The Bell Inn, near Romsley at 7.30 pm.

Present

Worcestershire Committee: Bev Hudson (Chairman), Bobbie Matulja (Secretary), Lauren Barton, Fiona Jeffries, Julian Hunt, Catherine Peters, Louisa Laight, Michelle Burton, Lucy Lowe and Janice Corbett (part).

West Midlands Regional Officers: Amanda Watson (Regional Development Officer).

Members : Mel Bridge, Megan Simmonds, Hannah Jackson, Gillian Skipworth, Tracey Jesson, Rebecca Wassell, Claire Jones, Sarah Shilcof, Anneloes van der Wal, Natasha James, Cathy Collier, Jennifer Burns, Anna J Evans, Tracey Killigrew, Rae Livesey, Anna Neath, Karen Cole, Lisa Randle, Sarah Lawton, K Lougher and Liz Brunt.

Non-members and guests : Michelle Rogers, Graham Rogers, Christy Mosedale, Angela Randall, Summer Taylor-Bird, Melanie Taylor, Andrew Bird and Doreen Witton.

1) **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Heather Lucas (Regional Chairman), Judith Smart, Sonia Lowe. Sarah Warrington, Sue Brennan and Islay Auty.

2) **Minutes of the last Annual Meeting**

No amendments were noted, and it was agreed that the minutes could be signed off as a true and accurate record.

3) **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

4) **Chairman's Report**

- a) Bev Hudson reported that all the events during the last 12 months have been well attended and successful. Since the last annual meeting these included:-
 - Pleasure Treasure Ride in October 2006
 - Heavy Horse Taster Day in April 2007
 - Fashion Show in April
 - Showing Masterclass in May
 - Confidence in the Countryside evening during Access Week
 - Test Your Test Dressage Day in June
 - West Midlands Region Jubilee Ball at Rodbaston on June 29th
 - Cross Country Clinic in SeptemberThe club also organised Riding and Road Safety training and exams during the summer, plus Horse Owners Certificate Level 1 and 2 courses and exams.
- b) All events either broke even or made a small profit with the exception of the Countryside with Confidence evening, which was free to members (and therefore 100% subsidised), and the Cross Country Clinic, where the club subsidised a proportion of the instructors' fees.
- c) The Diamond Jubilee Ball at Rodbaston on June 29th was poorly attended, with only 80 of the 5,000 or so members in the West Midland Region going along, although it was noted 50 of the 80 attendees came from Worcestershire!
- d) Membership in Worcestershire rose by 7.4% during the year to a new high of 1,196 at the end of August. (Amanda Watson advised that Head Office figures show a further increase since then to a new high of 1,216).

- e) Bev Hudson represented BHS volunteers at a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace in June.

5) Riding and Road Safety

- a) Fiona Jeffries conducted 5 Riding and Road Safety exams since the last meeting.
- b) We are very short of resources in the West Midlands region, with only 2 examiners and a handful of trainers (including Lauren here in Worcestershire). Members who are interested in either of these roles were encouraged to put their names forward and talk to Fiona and Lauren about what is involved.
- c) Lauren will be running more Riding and Road Safety Training courses in 2008, and members who have not already taken their tests were encouraged to attend.
- d) Concerns were expressed that there is no provision in the current driving test on how to pass horses safely on the road. Fiona mentioned that there is a feature focusing on this issue on tonight's Inside Out programme on BBC1, which she has taped.
- e) Ways of promoting driver awareness were discussed, and Amanda Watson encouraged members with serious ideas to speak to Sheila Hardy at Head Office.
- f) Fiona Jeffries ended by urging riders to wear hi-viz gear at all times when riding on the road, and to get the fit of their hat checked regularly at their local tack-shop or BETA registered supplier.

6) Welfare

- a) Our new Welfare Officers Julian Hunt, Michelle Burton, Louisa Laight and Jeni Eakins have been involved with a variety of cases throughout the year, liaising with horse owners, farmers and the public to offer advice and reassurance.
- b) Lisa Randle will be joining the Welfare team for 2008, bringing the number of Welfare Officers up to 5 and increasing coverage of the county.
- c) Amanda Watson advised that BHS Head Office is holding a Welfare Conference at Warwickshire College on November 3rd. Anyone interested in attending should speak Charlotte Vanderbrook at Head Office.

7) Treasurer's Report

- a) The current account balance at the end of September 2007 was £1372.70, an increase of £449.43 on last year. During the year, the club had an income of £1261.93 from events and members' capitation fees, and outgoings of £812.50.
- b) The balance in the Investment Account is £9044.27. It has been static for the last 12 months, and excludes the interest due for the current year. All the forms needed to transfer the funds to the central Head Office account have been signed by the Committee. This should give a better rate of interest, and all that remains is to close the existing account and complete the transfer.
Action : Lucy Lowe.
- c) Some of the members queried why there was so much money in the investment account which could potentially be spent here in Worcestershire. Several suggestions were made, including a bursary for the Young Instructor of the Year, a donation to Paul Ingram's charity, or funding a driver awareness campaign to promote consideration for riders on the road.
Action : The committee to consider in more depth how some of this money can be spent in 2008.

8) Access

- a) Bobbie Matulja circulated a 2007 progress report and walked through the highlights and any additional points.
- b) The key event in 2007 has been dealing with the aftermath of 2 bouts of flooding in June and July, and much of the summer was taken up with communicating with riders about temporary closures and reporting flood damage in to Worcestershire County Council.
- c) Bobbie and Judith Smart are seeking a carriage driving representative to join them on the Local Access Forum and or the Rights of Way Liaison Group, as carriage drivers are under represented at the moment. If anyone is interested, they should speak to Bobbie or Judith about what is involved.

- d) Judith would like to establish a Lost Ways Research Group with members drawn from various path user groups, including ramblers and cyclists as well as riders. Members with an interest in historical research were asked to put their names forward.
- e) Bobbie apologised for the cancellation of the Pleasure Treasure Ride in October due to the Foot & Mouth outbreak.
- f) She and Judith would like to look at venues in different parts of the county, although one problem with arranging a Pleasure Treasure Ride is finding somewhere close to a reasonable concentration of bridleways which has sufficient parking for 20-30 lorries and trailers. Members were asked if they had any contacts who could help with this.

9) Regional Development Officer's Report

- a) Amanda prepared a detailed Regional Development Officer's report for circulation at the meeting. In addition, she said that the Jubilee Year in 2007 had been amazing – busy and successful for the BHS nationally and locally,
- b) Head Office will be relocating from Stoneleigh Deer Park back to the main RASE site at Stoneleigh Park within the next 2 years, where it will form part of the British Equestrian Federation (BEF) Centre for Excellence in Equestrianism.
- c) Amanda has been working on the high profile Strangles Awareness Campaign, which is headed by the Princess Royal and jointly funded by the BHS and the Animal Health Trust. She is planning a major fund raising event in the West Midlands Region for 2008 which will involve participation in extreme sports such as abseiling, parachuting and potholing. The aim is to raise £30,000, and anyone with contacts who can help with tuition, venues and equipment (as well as volunteers to try some of the activities) should contact her.

Action : all.

- d) Membership nationally is running at record levels. There are now 67,617 BHS members excluding affiliated riding clubs, the highest number since the disciplines parted company with the BHS 20 years ago. Worcestershire is seen as the flagship county in the West Midlands Region, with membership up to 1,216. as stated in the Chairman's report.
- e) Amanda is working the County Sports Partnership in Birmingham and Emile Faurie's foundation to develop links with schools in Birmingham and the Black Country that will enable children who wouldn't normally have any contact with horses to learn to ride.
- f) The new West Midlands Website, which is currently in development, will go live in about a month's time.
- g) Amanda ended by thanking the following committee members for their long service:- Catherine Peters (8 years), and Bev Hudson, Julian Hunt and Lauren Barton (5 years each).

10) Regional Chairman's Report

In Heather Lucas's absence, no specific report was given, although Bev Hudson covered most items in the Branch Chairman's report (see item 5).

11) Events for 2008

Bev Hudson asked what events the membership would like the committee to put on in 2008, and the following suggestions were made:-

- a) Repeat of the Cross Country Clinic.
- b) Side Saddle Demonstration – possible contacts are Peta Roberts and Jean Smith.
- c) Another Pleasure Treasure Ride – suggestions for a venue were either Clent or Quatt, Bobbie Matulja pointed out that as Quatt is in Shropshire, a ride here would need to be jointly organised with the Shropshire Branch committee.
- d) A different type of Dressage Event – perhaps focusing on judging, which Rebecca Wassell offered to help with.
- e) Lauren Barton will be running more Riding and Road Safety Training Sessions, and she is planning to run Horse Owners Certificate Level 3 for group who completed Levels 1 and 2 this year. She will repeat the Level 1 course again if there is sufficient demand.

Action : the Committee to finalise a programme of events for 2008 and publicise it in the Spring newsletter.

12) Election of Officers

- a) The following members of the committee are standing down at this meeting:- Catherine Peters and Janice Corbett. Bev Hudson thanked them both for their hard work and support.
- b) The rest of the existing committee are all happy to continue for another year.
- c) The following three new committee members were elected en bloc, proposed by Bev Hudson and seconded by Bobbie Matulja:-
Mel Bridge – Press Officer
Lisa Randle – Welfare Officer
Camilla Mascall – Assistant Access Officer
Action : Bev Hudson to make sure the new committee members are included in next year's BHS Yearbook.

13) Any Other Business

- a) Comments were invited about the BHS logo, which may be replaced next year. The consensus at the meeting was that we should stick with the current one, which is recognised by all. Not changing it will also save money which could be better spent elsewhere.
- b) Bev Hudson asked members to comment on The Bell as a venue for next year's annual meeting. Most people were pleased with the location, as it is easily accessible from the motorway network.
- c) It was agreed that a copy of the minutes should be sent to Alison Curtis and made available for members to download from the West Midlands website.
Action : Bobbie Matulja, following approval from the Committee.
- d) Lauren Barton and Amanda Watson presented the Horse Owners Level 1 and 2 certificates to the successful participants.
- e) Liz Brunt thanked the committee on behalf of the members for their hard work in 2007.
- f) In the absence of any other business, the business part of the meeting concluded at 8.40 pm and was followed by a quiz and raffle. It was agreed that the £45 raffle proceeds should be donated to the Strangles Awareness Campaign.
Action : Lucy Lowe.

14) Next Annual Meeting

The next annual meeting will be held at The Bell in October 2008, based on the schedule laid down by Head Office. The date will be confirmed in the Spring newsletter.