



**Cofnodion Cyfarfod Cyffredinol Cymdeithas y  
Merlod a'r Cobiau Cymreig 2025**

**The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the  
Welsh Pony and Cob Society 2025**

**Held at The Holiday Inn, The Coldra, Newport, NP18  
2YG on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> of April at 1pm.**

Present - The President, Jocelyn Price, trustees of the Welsh Pony and Cob Society Council.  
In total 113 members who signed in.

In attendance – The Company Secretary, Gemma Bassett-Burr, and staff from the office –  
Chris Hodgson, Maryann Garland, Nicola Morgan, Ben Spoor and Jack Goodwin. Bethan  
Walsh from Geldards Solicitors, Ben Thomas and Marnie Asher from Mi-Voice, and Sarah and  
Rachel Lane from EquinePix.

JP – Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to welcome you all to the Welsh Pony & Cob Society  
AGM for 2025. It is good to see so many members here today that are interested in the  
business side and the future of our Society. Without further ado from me, I will hand you over  
to our Chair of Council Mr. Ed. Gummery to conduct the meeting on my behalf. Thank you.

EG – Thank you Jocelyn. Welcome everybody. Croeso. I declare the meeting open. Before  
we begin, I will just run through some housekeeping issues.

[Points out the location of the fire escapes in the room and toilets]

EG - The meeting is being tape recorded – does anyone have any objections to that?  
[None heard from the floor]

EG - If anyone present is intending to tape the meeting, please could they disclose it now.  
[No declarations heard from the floor]

EG - For information the minutes will be taken from the recording of the meeting, so it is a very  
accurate reflection, and that is why it is so important to wait for the microphone before speaking  
and then give your name. Please turn off your mobile phones or place them on silent.

Can I remind everyone present to sign Attendance Books if you have not already done so?  
Members receiving awards are requested to stay behind at the close of the meeting for  
photographs.

There are 2 roving microphones available – please raise your hand and then a member of staff will come to you. Please make sure you clearly say your name before speaking to assist with the minutes preparation later on. Everybody who wishes to speak will be heard.

Some non-members may be present representing Proxy votes or in association with awards – are there any objections?

[No objections heard from the floor]

I would also like to introduce Bethan Walsh from Geldards Solicitors, Ben Thomas and Marnie Asher from Mi-Voice who have taken on the role of Scrutineers and Sarah and Rachel from EquinePix, who will be capturing photos during the proceedings both at the AGM and the start of the dinner this evening. Thank you to them on behalf of the Society.

## **1. Apologies**

EG – If I now go to agenda item one, apologies. So, we have apologies from Martin Waters (Trustee), Gwyn Jones (Fronarth), Fiona Leadbitter (Thornberry), Philippa Owens, (Casob) and Hannah & Eleanor, and Gillian Sells (Priestwood). Are there any other apologies here that would like to be recorded?

Steve Patch - Apologies from Kevin Howdle (Ridgehill) and Chris Carter (Ridgehill).

EG – Thank you.

Clare Willis-Burton – Nigel Burton. Thank you.

EG – Thank you.

Ladies and Gentlemen, sadly, a number of members have passed away since our last AGM in April. The Society extends its sympathy to families and friends of all our departed members. As a sign of respect, I would like to ask members stand if you can and be silent for a minute as a mark of respect to those passed.

[Minutes silence observed]

## **2. Confirmation of the AGM Minutes of 6<sup>th</sup> April 2024**

EG - The verbatim minutes have already been proposed, seconded and approved. We will now go through the **minutes** page by page for **matters arising**.

[Page 1 to page 41 passed without matters arising]

Tanya Baldwin – Thank you. On the second to last page. You have just stated that these minutes have been passed as verbatim, I have an objection as it is incorrect. Where it says that '*The trustees confirm that they believe conflicts of interest were dealt with appropriately...*', you answered that question personally and it should say 'EG' and your answer. It wasn't answered by all of the trustees, so this is incorrect.

EG – We were advised by Geldards in relation to the preparation of those minutes so I can hand you to Geldards to explain the reason why.

TB – OK. I'd like to hear it.

Bethan Walsh – I am not sure I recall that, but we'll have to have a look at that, and go through the papers from that meeting last year and look at that. I don't have that information in front of me so it's not something I can discuss now; it's something I will need to discuss with the trustees.

TB – Well, you’ve just said they are verbatim, and this is completely different to what was said and who said it.

BW – I think it is going to have to be a case of going back through the recording to compare and correct the minutes if there is an issue.

TB – Well there is an issue, so I’d like to state that these minutes are not correct of last year’s AGM and lodge an objection against them.

BW – And that will be noted and minuted, and the trustees will look into that and revisit the recording from last year.

TB – Right. And I’d like, when it is revisited, hear it because I know this to be incorrect.

BW – Yes, absolutely. I’m sure the trustees will make sure a report goes out in the newsletter to confirm the position and to contact you directly about that as well.

TB – Ok. Thank you.

BW – But without the recording to hand, obviously your objection has been noted and that will be looked into but it is not something that can be resolved in this AGM at this moment.

EG – OK. Geldards will make that response to you, and obviously the trustees also.

### **3. Correspondence**

EG - As of the 24<sup>th</sup> of March deadline, no correspondence was received.

### **4. To receive a report on the automatic election of five members standing for five vacancies to serve on Council for the period 2025-2028 as per article 25 V (a) of the Articles of Association of the Society**

EG - As per Article 25 (a) of the Articles of Association for this election there were FIVE candidates for FIVE vacancies and therefore all five candidates in alphabetical order:

Mrs Janine Hadley  
Mrs Tracy Hook  
Mr Philip Lewis  
Mr Peter Rutherford  
Mr Geraint Thomas

are declared duly elected. Congratulations, to all those new trustees and I look forward to working with you.

## **5. Audited Balance Sheets and Accounts for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024**

EG - I would now like to Invite the Vice Chair of Finance, Richard Pittman, to submit the report to Members. Thank you, Richard.

Richard Pittman. Madam President, Vice-President and fellow members. On behalf of council I have the responsibility to present to you the accounts and balance sheets year ending 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2024. Firstly, as our Chair has mentioned previously, Mr. Martin Waters (Chair of Finance) couldn't be with us today due to an emergency hospital appointment and I am sure you will all join me in wishing him a speedy recovery. Martin had already prepared a small speech so I will read out his first, I'll follow with some information and then we'll run through the accounts, ending the session then opening the floor up to any questions.

So, before we go into the figures, I'd like to address some issues which you as members should be made aware of. I have spent the last year or more looking into why we have been in such a mess financially, and I cannot believe that Mr. Colin Thomas, former Chair of Council, and Mr. Wyn Jones former Chair of Finance, did not make it their priority to address such issues during their time on council where they both held senior positions and were very much aware of the financial situation haunting the Society. This is evident by the statement that Mr. Wyn Jones made at the 2023 AGM, and I quote his words, *'I did warn members at the last AGM that we would be facing difficult times during 2022. We ended the year with an operating deficit of £77,973 compared to a surplus of £21,706 in 2021. Having looked back over the previous 7 years we have only made a small surplus during the 2 Covid years apart from then, 2016 made a deficit of £26,903, 2017 made a deficit of £31,344, 2018 made a deficit of £38,298. In 2019, if we take away the effect of the Thelma Carter legacy there was a deficit of £81,410.'*

These were his words. And it was not the members he needed to warn, but the trustees and the management at that time which surrounded him. I ask, what can you, the ordinary member do? On top of this, when he took over as Chair of Finance, the outgoing Chair of Finance warned him of these losses which needed addressing. So I cannot understand, knowing of these financial difficulties, why the then Chair of Finance, Wyn, and the Chair of Council, Colin, recommended to council an extortionate pay rise of 18% to then the office manager which was paid to him over a period of twelve months at a time when we were in lockdown, and at the same time we kept all our hardworking dedicated staff on the minimum wage. There were other disappointing decisions made during this time such as tying the Society up in very poor contracts which has taken Mr. Richard Pittman, myself (Martin Waters) and our new Office Manager twelve months to unpick some of these. Some of these contracts still need work, and others unfortunately cannot be unravelled for some years to come, meaning the Society are going to have to take the burning cost for years to come. It has only been possible to carry this work out with the great support from your Chair of Council Mr. Ed Gummery, Mr. Richard Pittman who has done an excellent job as Vice-Chair, and the backing of such a proactive board of trustees. I must also mention the support of two former trustees, Mr. Cemaes Evans and Mr. Dilwyn Roberts, and all the hard work of our respective staff.

What I will say from myself is that it has been a busy but interesting first year on council and despite the Society suffering from some poor financial decisions in previous years, which before coming on council I had not been privy to. I am not one to dwell on the past and cry

over spilt milk, and I look forward to what the future brings to our Society, and I truly believe you have a board of trustees that have the Society's best interests at heart and are not here in a position for self-gain. I am a big advocate for promotion, and I'll stand here today and apologise for our lack of promotion in 2024. We have a wonderful Breed and a wonderful Society which should be showcased everywhere, but it is like all businesses – you can only spend what money you make, and as Martin has previously stated looking at the past results, apart from the two Covid years which were actually helped by furlough and grant payments, the Society has suffered shortfalls year on year, with a five year average being a loss of £28,359, relying upon investment income to prop up our financial state. The loss in 2019 without the Thelma Carter legacy was actually £101,766 and not the presented figure of £81,410. Living in a volatile world which we have done for a number of years having little to no control over our investments performance we should not be looking to our investment funds to secure the financial position of the Society. It must, and I mean this, it MUST come within our operating profit and loss. The proof is in the pudding that we cannot rely on our investments when our investments in 2021 took a nose-dive losing £228,000 during the pandemic year which no person had predicted. Our investments at this present time are also taking a nose-dive with the Trump effect on tariffs and the stock market losing 23% of its value in one day. Before I run into the accounts I will share the good news that we as a board have decided to pay back the investment fund over a period of time some of the £60,000 that was extracted during 2023 to help keep the Society afloat and avoid us going overdrawn. The funds were taken, and this was advised to the board at the time by the Society's Finance Officer Chris due to the Welsh Pony and Cob Society requiring a monthly float of approximately £40,000. Without the injection of the £60,000 the bank balance would have been as followed: June '23 £4,916, September £2,376, and November £174. Yes, a bank balance of £174 is worrying and more to the point included some of the restricted funds.

The belts during 2024 were well and truly fastened and I am pleased to announce a positive operating result of £69,088 compared to the deficit we suffered in 2023 of £61,586 a swing of around about £100,000 or just over. Despite market fluctuations due to wars, Presidential Elections and U.K. Budgets, our gains on investments were a further £114,431, an annual return net of costs and charges of around about 7%. The market value of our fund year end is £2,197,505. Page eleven of the accounts shows the assets less liability stands at £2,696,438 compared with £2,509,906 in 2023. The Society income was up - £622,295 to £641,603, but expenditure was controlled and fell a staggering £111,366. The bank balances for the Society are looking healthy at £144,563 at the year end which is £54,000 up on 2023 year end. The pavilion income has slightly increased to £14,962 but it is still a cost to the Society and maintenance is required as we all know. Due to the construction and age of the property this is an ongoing issue to us and with a cost of £7,959 gross spent in 2024 on repairs it is a burden. The journal again was a successful publication with some great articles written by members and some photos from the archives of much interest. It showed an increase of advertising from £18,437 in 2023 to £22,537 in 2024. A drop in expense from £26,343 to £18,768. A decision was taken by the board at one of the first meetings following the 2024 AGM to bring the Society's focus back to its core business as being a passporting office for our breed and park the bus on promotional stock such as Christmas baubles, which has seen the promotional goods and stock expenditure fall from £17,000 in 2023 to just £1,110. Stock in trade is £33,508 which includes a new batch of medals which is projected to last us for a number of years. Despite registrations for EquiCymru being up in 2024, registrations and passports are on a continuous trend and again fell in income by a further £3,006 on 2023, to

£22,722. Transfers and other registrations also seen a decline on 2023 of £1,751 and despite some great work by the office staff in offering transferable services at the Royal Welsh and before the Official Sale, we are still seeing an extortionate amount of animals being sold without the ownership being transferred – a challenge which requires some attention. It is a delight to see the legal and professional fees for 2024 at a low: £8,517 was spent which in my opinion is still slightly high, but over the period of five years from 2019 to 2023 an eye-watering £170,698 has been shelled out, and a further £35,000 in 2018 and £13,000 in 2017 – that's the price of 20 acres by me.

Whilst the accounts made for good reading, there are still some tough decisions to be made and there are still an enormous amount of challenges which require tackling, and we cannot become complacent moving forward. We have already faced a substantial increase in relation to minimum wage, National Insurance, pension contributions etcetera which was an unforeseen this time last year, so we have to be well equipped and prudent to what comes. We have an annual membership deteriorating of around 7% annually which every member has a responsibility to help improve. We have contracts which we are tied into for years to come at substantial cost to the Society, we haven't broken into the modern world of technology and lack behind the real world whether it's how we pay, how we communicate, and how we promote, all of which I hope we improve or make headway on during 2025. This reflects in our accounts with an annual postage cost of just over £38,000 – something which could be cut with new processes. With a pleasing turnaround we now have some money to promote our versatile breed, and I will not look to steal the thunder of any trustees but they have some exciting projects ongoing. A new website is about to be launched. We are in talks with the Welsh Government and Saint Fagans to showcase some of the museum. We have been working alongside Cardiff University to bring the Society into the modern world through virtual reality and Minecraft. I speak here on behalf of myself and Martin that producing a positive set of accounts has had its challenges but it has only been possible with an active and supportive board. A special mention to the work of our Company Secretary Gemma Bassett-Burr and Finance Officer Chris Hodgson and all within the office who work extremely hard for us as trustees and members and puts up with an awful lot of unnecessary abuse from customers for the privilege. And my final thanks is to you, our members for the support you show to the Society. We won't get everything right and we will make mistakes, but remember, a man that never made a mistake never made nothing. But with a positive attitude and the willingness to accept change we can create greatness within our breed. And lastly, has everyone got a pen and paper, because any questions here's Martin's number! Seriously – any questions from the floor at all?

Liz Hampson. Hi Richard. Thank you very much for your very informative accounts there, however I have to say, and I certainly know it's not come from you, but Martin and the mudslinging - it is just not on. We shouldn't be doing that. We shouldn't be naming people. At the end of the day everyone who goes on council is a volunteer and we should work together. And different styles, different way that people manage things. By standing up and writing those things, I certainly because I was on council at the time find that really, really offensive – really offensive.

RP – I agree, but as a duty of care to our members – we are handling the members money and I think it is prudent to tell them how it's been spent and used in the past and I take onboard what you say but, what I said in there is without coming on council I haven't been privy to a lot

and we are here to represent our members so why shouldn't our members know what has happened with their money and why the Society was in such a financial mess.

LH – One hundred percent. We are here for the members, and I think that's something that... you know with different styles – some spend to accumulate and certainly the council that I served with that's what our mission was to spend money, promote more things so that we could get the members more involved. Now as a council your way of working is to close down that – you know we've seen very little from council.

RP – No, and like I said in the speech is because you can only spend what money you have and...

LH – But, Richard... let's face it...

RP – Hang on – I've let you speak...

LH – How much is in the bank, Richard?

RP – Now. It is... over £100,000 but £60,000 of that is owed to the investments.

LH – No how much is in the... does the Welsh Pony & Cob...

RP – The bank balances are end of year in 2024 £144,563.

LH – That's the bank balances?

RP – Yes.

LH – Are you sure about that? As a Society, we only have £100,000, is that what you are saying.

RP – That is the bank balance.

LH – Exactly. How much money does the Society own?

RP – Well that is a different question to the one you have just asked me. You just asked me what the bank balance was.

LH – But how much money do we have? We are not a poor Society.

RP – No we are not. But you cannot run a business losing every year.

LH – I absolutely agree with that.

RP – And you need to make money to spend for it to go on and you cannot rely on the investments for it to prop up the Society.

LH – We may have spent a lot of money, but I now think we are getting some of that reward back, because we bought in bulk - and yes we spent a lot of money, but we bought in bulk and so you're not having to buy some of that stuff that we had to buy. So please, let's all work together. This isn't about us all mudslinging – it shouldn't have happened shouldn't that – you should not have named people. Should not have named people. They did what they thought was best for the Society at the time. Thank you.

RP – Thank you.

Elgan Evans – Richard. I agree with Liz what she said. At the time I was on council and Wyn Bach – we call him Wyn Bach – he was the Chair of Finance. He wasn't the Chair of Finance during Colin – you should get your facts right – it was Geraint Davies, and if you are blaming one you should blame the two.

RP – In 2023. Well, I've only read Martin's speech verbatim, so...

EE – You get your facts straight Richard before you speak. You have named them now and that's shame on you.

RP – Well it's not shame on me.

Any other questions?

Clare Willis-Burton – Just regarding the journal cost and postage costs, do those postage costs include the cost of sending the journal out, or are they in the journal costs?

RP – No inclusive.

CWB – They're included?

RP – They're included in all the postage costs.

CWB – Included in the postage...

RP – Yes.

CWB – Ok, thank you. So, shouldn't they be in the journal costs because they are overall included in the cost of sending the journal out?

RP – Erm... do you want to talk on it? I'll ask Chris to answer that because he's more up on the reasons why.

Chris Hodgson – Yes it includes the membership collation costs and the postage out of the journal, so the journal printing is shown separately, but it is departmentalised as well so it will go to department two which is membership.

CWB – Ok. Thank you very much.

EG – Any more questions? No more questions regarding the finance report? No.

Liz, I take your point what you are saying, and the money you are talking about is our assets, our investments, yes. And I think the point Richard was trying to make is robbing Peter to pay Paul, so taking out of our investments which is our members money to prop up bad management on our running accounts is not a good way to run a business. But I take your point that we have £2,000,000 in the bank which is there as investments and from that we take dividends, and it's those dividends - if we take that money out, we get charged for taking those dividends out and we lose money. So, the capital is there for to potentially take out say for a major project. As an example, something to do with a major show we take out £20,000 or something like that we lose a dividend for that. So that investment is in there, the Thelma Carter money and everything, but it shouldn't be propping up our running account.

LH – I just want to question what pay rise was given to the staff this year?

EG – Well... I mean... the actual personnel, to identify one individual is wrong but effectively we have got above Living Wage in line with legal requirements to the law just gone up, and also effectively a 5% raise.

LH – Excellent.

EG – That brings them up to a standard where we can retain and skill.

Lisa Reed – Thank you. It's all very well to make money and we all understand we need money, but we also have the Memorandum to follow of promotional, education, promotion for the members, assessments/seminars – none of those have been held so obviously we do need to follow the Memorandum as well. We can't run a society... that is very important.

RP – I totally agree.

LR – Thank you.

EG – Agreed.

Any more questions considering the accounts? No. OK, thank you Richard.

## **6. To appoint the Society Auditors for 2025**

RP - Following the ongoing tender for the provision of the Society auditors we are currently awaiting the closing date which is set as the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 2025. We will then be reviewing the submissions and will announce to the membership once an appointment has been made. Thank you.

## **7. Chair of Council's Report**

EG – Madam President, President-Elect, Trustees and fellow members. If I was to summarise this year's performance in one headline, it would read – out of the red, massive improvement, still plenty to do.

I think we have had a good year but, regrettably I have to start with an apology for those of you that have not had your journals and those that have gone astray. Normally it is our international members, but this year they have received theirs, but some of our members closer to home have not received delivery, particularly in postcode SY23. This year our publishers arranged distribution straight from print. It would appear that the Royal Mail passed down the contract from our printers to Yodel which was not our choice. Both the Welsh Pony and Cob Society and Geerings (the printers) have escalated complaints with Yodel who are looking into the matter. The Welsh Pony and Cob Society office have been following up the tracking and have tried to rectify deliveries where possible, and in the case of members who have not received a journal we will send replacement copies out. Once we are able to establish the extent of the delivery failures Geering will reprint and issue membership cards where necessary. So, my apologies once again.

Just as I thought the UK might start to enjoy a little financial stability and assist the Welsh Pony and Cob Society in our own recovery, the bottom fell out of our Special Relationship with the United States, and an orange man wearing a red cap and answering to the name of Donald

hit us with some nasty tariffs that will undoubtedly put the UK under the financial pressure and stifle economic growth. How does that affect the Welsh Pony and Cob Society I hear you say? Well for a start it will undoubtedly hit our investments that had started recovering after suffering losses due to Covid, Ukrainian and Middle East Conflicts, and the strain on people's rising living costs will mean that some things will have to be sacrificed or put on hold such as summer projects, support for the sales, travelling to a few less shows, breeding a couple less foals or not running on that colt. The Welsh Pony and Cob Society is indeed a charity, but it is also classed as a small business. Many small businesses have, as predicted, fallen by the wayside over the past few years but I stand before you today knowing that, despite having had a couple of difficult years the council has been able to tackle some underlying housekeeping issues and as Richard has already alluded to return the running business account at the Welsh Pony and Cob Society back into the black as opposed to the red where it has been for a number of years and that gathering momentum could have been catastrophic for the Society.

Two years ago, or so, our outgoings were considerably higher than our income and council was split over what to do. Some trustees wanted to continue and leave things as they were, looking for other potential business streams but they were not guaranteed, whilst others wanted to scrutinise the Society's spend and look at better and more efficient ways to balance the books and restructure our business. The division that came about when the majority voted for the latter was not pleasant and resulted in mass resignation doing nothing for our reputation at the time. However, we weathered the storm and criticism that came with the difficult decisions that had to be made, and we stuck to our guns and followed the recommendations of our business diagnostic. I am glad that we did because I am pleased to report that we returned almost a £100,000 deficit two years ago to a running budget of £61,586 at this AGM which means that we are able to pay back a chunk of money that was taken out of our investments four years ago and that's an accomplishment to be proud of. Our investments have also given better returns whilst fluxion with global markets which means effectively, we are £9,000 up on the £2,169,757 that sit in the accounts for the investments that I explained to Liz a little while ago. I would like to thank all the trustees and staff but particular mention should go to Martin Waters, Richard Pittman, Gemma Bassett-Burr and Chris Hodgson.

Whilst I believe this is extremely good news for the Society, we must not rest on our laurels but continue to employ the same sort of budgetary constraints moving forward bracing ourselves once again for prolonged financial hardships that must surely continue with these tariff announcements. However, I am confident that if we move forward with the same prudence, we will be also able to weather that storm. We must focus on our core business and revenue streams but also look at our *raison d'être* – what is our purpose.

First and foremost we are a Breed Society: not a show Society. All of council recognise the importance of showing and that many of our members have heavily engaged in it providing the showcase for our beloved Welsh Ponies and Cobs. But there is a bigger picture. Now that we have our housekeeping under control we are able to concentrate a little harder on other meaningful things that form the objectives of our Society and the things that our members would like, such as Lisa has mentioned. Council recognises more than ever its strategic role looking to the future whereas before it has been bogged down on operational aspects. This is a task that really should fall to our staff in the office. Council looks to the Articles of Association to steer us along the path by which the Society was formed and its aims, that never really get the time they deserve. Before we can do this and look at the breed, the breeder's education, the welfare, and other matters we must first tackle some outstanding pieces of work before we can move on and hand it over.

We have looked at shows and the medal situation after two years of pilot schemes that weren't really working. At our last AGM I listened to the comments that were made where amongst our members a large proportion wanted to dispense with the medal awards completely believing they were behind the fall in the attendance and camaraderie at the shows. After inviting comments from members, show secretaries and associations we were left with a hybrid solution that would allow us to try to bring value back to the medal by awarding fewer shows and attempting to provide a fair allocation to the geographical areas where our members live, and support associations. County shows will also provide a bigger shop window to the Welsh Breed enthusiasts outside the immediate membership. We also offer an exclusive medal rosette to allow shows some flexibility and other options when affiliating. The rosette is a quality product and helps us to build and establish a new framework that will be closely reviewed as we move forward. I know that some will not be happy with the allocations but this was the compromise reached to preserve a medal reward which should be an achievement to win, and on the ideas that you have provided. The show affiliations thus far under the new system are almost level – just seven percent down on previous years – so I ask you to be supportive. It needs freshening up, and to give it some time.

The next big thing we must do is announce the new judge's assessment process with an assessment planned for 2026. The project team are near to finalising a process that we hope will be a more comprehensive selection process that is long overdue and is likely to be completed with the probation phase after assessment rather than before. We hope to be able to reveal the process and venue in the forthcoming weeks and announce the judges conference for later on in the year.

We continue to keep a close eye on the levels of registrations and transfers which fluctuate but appear to balance out throughout the year without significant decrease which of course is part of our core business. It is the membership numbers that continue to fall that worry me, falling by 130 members this year. The Welsh Pony and Cob Society are not alone and this is a trend across the board – we are in tight economic times and people cannot afford to pay everyday living costs, so something has to give. Keeping ponies has become a luxury item. The sad reality is that many members from the golden age of the Society have simply passed away and children and young people do not have the same interests so we must adapt. We are currently reviewing a number of membership incentives in an attempt to bring in young people and encourage them to become more involved with the Society. We have had some encouraging reports and just recently when our Company Secretary visited the Glamorgan Association to speak about the Performance Awards that will take place in a new format it was encouraging, and that will mean running an extended period including driving and riding from 1<sup>st</sup> of September '24 through to the 30<sup>th</sup> of September '25 with a combined presentation in February '26.

We have also been in some prolonged dialogue with regarding to passporting and overseas certificates post-Brexit in an attempt to bring back some of our overseas members. In collaboration with some of the EU countries we have managed to secure an overseas certificate that in a format akin to a green passport will be able to be issued in a similar way to the green passport, minus the Zootechnic information, to accompany the EU passport issued in their respective countries. What this means effectively is that the pony will have the breeding reference and provenance from our own studbook bringing value to their stock and on a par with U.K. bred animals. We have responded proactively to DNA gathering and profiling processes forced on us by the service providers, not because we are trying to make a profit out of you the members, but because of the service providers changing from a Microsatellite system to a Single Nucleotide Polymorphisms (or SNPs as they are commonly known), and have made various announcements to you in an attempt to soften the blow and we have

allowed some discretion prior to the beginning of the year to get previously unprofiled colts up to date and have lead the field in this approach providing guidance and advice to other Societies.

In the same way we are currently working hard with Welsh Government to deescalate an issue with registration of Welsh Part-Bred animals following a recent communication received from DEFRA. As studbook societies that register part-bred animals into the main section of the studbook with pedigrees, alongside pure-bred animals, have been formally requested to cease registrations pending further instructions and as such the Welsh Pony and Cob Society is regrettably unable to process Welsh Part-Bred registrations or over stamps at the moment. We are not alone as other U.K. studbooks and PIOs are also affected. We are doing everything in our powers to resolve this with other societies who are also in contact with government bodies and we will update you as soon as developments unfold. Further info and guidance can be obtained from the office.

Our staffing currently stands at 7.8 full time equivalents. We have just renewed the Company Secretary's contract and staff levels now sit above the living wage so as to bring them up to an acceptable standard from previous times to be able to skill and aid retention. They have worked extremely hard throughout the year lead by Gemma and have hit all the passport deadlines, service level targets that DEFRA and Welsh Government set, whilst taking on additional website projects, newly combined Performance Awards, and conversion to a new accounting software system Xero, and new integrated operating systems to bring us into this century, in line with recommendations reducing three separate working systems to one, that staff have also designed and built a new website that is already loaded under a new domain and is currently under transfer to go live on Monday. The website has more logical and user-friendly drop-down options where forms can be found and uploaded and competed online. There will be a facility for members only that will be introduced shortly along with the already exclusive access to the Grassroots pedigree. The online shop will also go live under a new format. In order to handle calls more efficiently now that a long-term issue with telephone lines has been recently resolved the website will become more important for members diverted from an Integrated Voice Recognition system on the phones to refer to specific pages on the site. The new promotional video that has been commissioned will also be loaded onto the website.

In furtherance to this, to a meeting Martin Waters and I had with the Welsh Black Cattle Society to promote our Welsh Breeds here and abroad and a vision to have a permanent display at the Museum of Wales, we have met and been in discussion with the curator Ulrika Smalley to secure a spot. There's a huge footfall at Saint Fagans and such a museum spotlight would showcase our cultural heritage and history and promote and educate the visitor all about our Society and the ponies and cobs. To reinforce this, Richard Pittman and Martin Waters have also been following up a virtual reality project with Cardiff University to develop virtual reality programmes and goggles so that vulnerable adults, under-privileged children and those with special needs and the visitor at large can experience riding, driving, grooming, showing a pony in virtual reality, trying to introduce them to our Society and our family. The Welsh Pony and Cob Society has invested in this virtual reality camera equipment to offer this to visitors at the museum and to take this around schools, colleges and assist with training and assessments for the future. Myself and Martin Waters recently met with Rhun ap Iorwerth (Plaid Cymru) at the Senedd who has a portfolio for heritage and cultural education who along with Alun Rees from Labour has endorsed the application process to the Museum of Wales, so we hope to update you with some positive news in the forthcoming weeks.

We are currently reviewing our estates, as there are a number of expensive works to be carried out at the pavilion and Bronaeron. It is important for you to know that whilst the pavilion is

prized by us all and a key asset for the Welsh Pony and Cob Society at the Royal Welsh and other events – we do not own it, and the maintenance costs are high making a loss. We must try and use it more frequently and effectively. However, the diagnostic revealed that the office at Bronaeron is of a dimension that would house two more businesses the size of the Welsh Pony and Cob Society in the building. A great deal of the building is unused and costly to heat and run, and trustees from previous councils at the time of purchasing the building state the original intention was to share and rent out part of the building for that purpose. We have carried out a feasibility of the building and are currently testing the market through an agent to see if there are any prospective tenants such as the NHS or similar that would be suitable to share the building with us. This would generate a good annual income and assist with maintenance and utilities costs – it's not for sale.

Finally, McCartneys will be holding the traditional pony and cob sales as our official auctioneers in the autumn in the last year of the contract on a more traditional lotting format, but a decision has been taken to dispense with the spring sales as they are not so well attended or viable.

I would like to remind you all here that being on council is not an easy job and these people here give up a lot of their time as volunteers and often take a lot of unjustified flack. If you think you could do the job why not give it a go. Sometimes it is even rewarding. Judging by the amount of people applying to become a trustee I think you may already know how difficult it can be. To conclude I would like to thank Madam President and my fellow council members for their support throughout the year, and particularly office staff who take a lot of abuse and have worked really hard going above and beyond to turn this around for you. I look forward to working with the incoming President, President-Elect, and Young Ambassador and wish you the members a good and successful 2025 show and breeding season. Thank you.

## **8. To receive the Society's Members Services Committee report**

EG - I now turn to trustee Angela Kember.

AK – Mrs. President, President Elect, Chairman and Members, it is my pleasure to present to you the Members' Services Report. Looking at our current membership, we have 2,436 Annual Members, and the figure is expected to increase as people continue to join throughout the year. We had a total of 22 Life Members join in 2024, bringing our total to 1360 and the total Society members to 3,922. In addition, there are currently 30 junior members, and we hope that this number will continue to grow with the efforts of our new WPCS Young Ambassador and Ambassador Elect alongside the Society's Trustees and Office Staff. The Committee and Council are also currently looking at options for membership moving forward and reviewing what the Society currently offers, we hope to be able to share further details on this with you in due course.

2024 saw a total of 3980 registrations processed and 4672 transfers, of which 167 were exports.

At the start of the year, the Welsh Pony and Cob Society received news that the Rare Breeds Survival Trust had placed the Welsh Section B on the "At Risk" Register.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2024, coinciding with the anniversary of the coronation, King Charles III stepped up into the role of Patron of the Welsh Pony and Cob Society, following on from his

mother, the Late Queen. Despite his ill health, the King has taken on another 1000 patronage considerations, and the Society is proud to be one of those selected.

Throughout the year, the Council have been making steps forward completing the short and medium objectives set out in the diagnostic report with the below actions effecting the interaction with our membership now being completed or in the latter stages:

- Welsh Pony and Cob Society website – The Society will be launching its new website next week so you will notice a period of time when you will be unable to access it as the transfer takes place. Our new website has been designed inhouse by our office staff. We hope to make the website a more user-friendly option for members and to streamline the judging and showing aspects of the Society. Please take a look towards the end of next week and any feedback is welcomed. The URL is [www.wpcs.uk.com](http://www.wpcs.uk.com) has not changed.

- Work is currently in progress with regards to the telephone lines and the setup of the Interactive Voice Response to signpost customers to the relevant employee to assist with their queries.

- The Society's 5-year Strategy plan and future proofing is underway.

- Review of the office building and looking into ways in which we could potentially lease out part of the building to assist with running costs.

Since the last AGM, there have been a number of key moments:

We were extremely pleased to conduct a very strong round of interviews for the Young Ambassador position and would like to encourage as many of you to apply again this year. If you know someone who would be a great addition to the Society within this role, please direct them to our website or to contact the office directly. Applications close at midnight 29th of August 2025.

Mr. Dewi Evans held his President's Dinner was very well supported. In total, £5,625.40 was raised to be split between his two chosen charities, Wales Air Ambulance and the Auditory Verbal. 2024 saw two celebration events with the first in March to celebrate the achievements of 2023. Following the WPCS Performance Awards moving back to the Welsh Pony and Cob Society umbrella which saw a second celebration take place in December, combining all the awards.

Work has now started to turn to our celebration plans for 2026 to mark the Society being 125 years old. We will mark this occasion with various events. The first being an International Show held in partnership with the NWPCS due to be held in August 2026 where we hope as many of you will join us. We will also be looking to work with shows within the UK to mark the 125<sup>th</sup> year of the Society. The 125-year commemorative calendar is also currently in production, so keep an eye out for this - it will definitely be released for the Royal Welsh Show - as this is sure to become a collector's item with only a limited stock. The Society is also looking at other ways to mark the 125 years milestone and full details will be shared with the membership as and when we are able to.

Our Social media following is continuing to grow, currently standing at 56,940 followers on Facebook, with our biggest number of followers being from the following countries.

United Kingdom - 40,593  
United States - 4,232  
Australia - 3,878  
Germany - 1,084  
Netherlands - 997

Ireland - 953  
France – 782

If you achieve something with a registered Welsh Pony and Cob or Welsh Part bred during 2025, please share this with the Welsh Pony and Cob Society office using our enquiries email address, as we are always keen to promote the breed, but we do need your stories to be able to do this. So please don't assume we know about it, as this isn't always the case. Especially during the busier months, we find it harder to keep up with everyone's achievements.

Work is underway on the next Stud Book, and it is hoped that 106 (2024 registered animals) will be available to purchase at this year's Royal Welsh Show. The trend of purchasing these books is dramatically declining with the introduction of the online pedigree and therefore, these will be strictly limited so please contact the WPCS office to place a deposit to secure your Stud Book.

The start of the 2025 show season has just begun, with our first affiliated show taking place at the end of March. We look forward to seeing who the winners of our new Bronze Medal Rosettes will be and thank those shows who have continued to support us through affiliation in 2025. It has also been great to see the return of some shows who we look forward to working with in the years ahead.

2025 will see us focusing on developing to the museum both on site and possible options further afield, alongside developments in virtual reality, and the service that we offer when attending events such as the Royal Welsh, Sales and HOYS.

As members, if there are things you would like us to discuss or look at as part of the Members Services Committee, please contact the Welsh Pony and Cob Society direct and we can make sure these things are added to our agenda.

Thank you.

EG – Thank you, Angela.

## **9. To propose and consider a special resolution(s) as amendments to the existing Articles of Association as adopted 6th of April 2024.**

EG - The resolution will be voted on by a show of hands and a 75% majority of those present in person or by proxy will be required. Those persons carrying proxy votes will have been informed at registration earlier today. The wording of this proposed special resolution was circulated in the 2025 Spring Newsletter and is detailed on the agenda.

By way of a brief explanation, the reason that council feels this is a necessary step is because the position of the nominations that have come forward – we just haven't been receiving them. And so we are having to take other steps to put in place that position later on in the year and we also believe that some people, might be... some people best for the position are overlooked, but we (council) are aware of those projects that they might be doing behind the scenes and will be suitable for the position but not nominated. And for that reason, to do with mainly the fact that there's nobody being nominated we are getting to the point where we haven't got any, so council thought the resolution should be changed.

So, I am now going to hand over to Bethan Walsh from Geldards who will go through the special resolution procedure. Thank you.

BW – So as most of you are probably aware, a Special Resolution, as Ed has already mentioned as well requires a 75% majority of you to agree or to vote in favour of the resolution, and that's those present in person or by proxy. It's essentially a change to the Articles of Association. It doesn't necessarily need to be formally proposed and seconded in this meeting because it has already been proposed by council but just for the sake of completeness, I will ask shortly for somebody to propose and second that. So, I'll read out the wording of the proposed change. It has already been circulated but I'll read it out, nonetheless.

So its replacing existing article 42, which is on the last page of the articles with the following wording:

*'In each year the Council shall consider and appoint a Member of the Society to be President and President-Elect respectively of the Society for the ensuing year. The means of appointment of President-Elect shall be by such procedure as the Council shall determine.'*

So, you have two cards: a red card and a green card. Red is a vote against accepting this proposed change. Green is obviously in favour of that. So, in due course I'll ask you to hold that up so the scrutineers can count the votes. Sorry, we just have a question, I believe.

Elgan Evans – Sorry I have to bring this up, and I know you want to vote on this, and I don't disagree with it, but you've got to follow the procedures as Ed just mentioned earlier on. You follow the Articles of Association. There's a lot of members up in our part of the country that haven't had the AGM documents at all, and even not had the journal but the journal doesn't matter. We haven't had the... what do you call... and the 28 days for the proxy votes, we were too late to receive them for that as well. So, you did say in your speech Ed that you want to follow the Articles of Association – you know what they are. There's 14 days supposed to be clear notice to every member, of the agenda. That has not been received – can you give me an explanation on that?

BW – I can explain that there are some saving provisions in the Companies Act where an error has taken place which is not due to the trustees or down to the directors. My understanding is this is an administrative error to do with the postal... yes, so Royal Mail have... instructed Yodel to deliver this on...

EE – I know that, but you can't do it by law.

BW – Yes you can.

EE – If you were challenged, you know...

BW – Yes, you can do it by law – the Companies Act does...

EE – Well the Articles of Association don't mean nothing, then?

BW – Of course they mean something...

EE – Well there we are...

BW - ...We are taking a vote.

EE – You should follow them.

EG - [in audible]

EE – The 14 days. Everybody should have had the documents 14 days before the AGM.

BW – And as I said there are saving provisions in the Companies Act to allow the vote to go ahead if there has been an administrative error...

EE – So that's all I can say. So, if this boot was put on the foot eight years ago this wouldn't be taking place. I'll leave it at that.

BW – Could I have somebody to propose the article change please, from council?

Thank you. And someone to second?

Ann Bigley – I am proposing it.

BW – Is there somebody on council who can second that?

Janice Parry – I'll second it.

BW – So if you could hold up green in favour of the change, red against, and if you could just keep holding them up so the scrutineers can count. Thank you.

[Cards are held up and the votes are observed by the scrutineers]

BW – So, it has not passed. What about proxies?

Thank you very much. You can put your hands down. So I understand from the scrutineers that has not passed so that article won't change, and it will remain as it is in the existing articles.

EG – Thank you Bethan, thank you members. Elgan, I take your point, and there were... we appreciate that some of the proxy forms didn't go out as I mentioned about SY23, but there were a lot of people that did receive journals and proxy forms with the newsletter and also it was on the website, but I take your point.

Dewi Evans – Whilst we are on about this, the proposing of the next president. If you want to do something like that, wouldn't it be better to get names from the Associations. Would that be a good idea? It's just a thought.

EG – It's something we can look at without a doubt, yes.

DE – Thanks. It's just something in passing.

EG - Thanks, Dewi.

## **10. To Receive Recommendations from Council for Honorary Life Vice-Presidents and Honorary Life Member Awards**

EG - It gives me great pleasure to share the nomination for the individual who have been awarded Honorary Life Vice-President - in the gift of Council. I would like to invite our President Jocelyn Price to present the certificates.

It gives me great pleasure to present to the Annual General Meeting the appointment of Mr Gwyn Jones of the Fronarth Stud as an Honorary Life Vice-President. Can I please ask Tracy Hook to address the meeting.

TH – Gwyn has been a member of the Society since 1972 and has been fully committed during the last fifty plus years in cultivating, improving and promoting the Welsh Breeds. Gwyn has been a Council member for a total of twenty-two years, with eighteen of those years over a continuous period. During his time with the Society, he has served as Chairman of Members Services and Vice Chairman of Finance. He is a dedicated committee member of Lampeter Stallion Show and has served them as Chairman for three years. Likewise, he is also a committee member of Aberystwyth and Ceredigion County Show and was their Chairman for a three year period.

He took over running the Fronarth stud from his great uncles at a young age and his successes since taking over the reins of the farm and of the stud, have been truly outstanding. He has owned, shown, bred and produced Section C's and D's to achieve the highest honours at the Royal Welsh Show, Royal of England, Lampeter, Glanusk, and most County Shows throughout Wales and England. With twenty-seven Royal Welsh Championships it has meant his Stud has won twenty-seven Gold Medals together with seven Tom and Sprightly awards and a RWAS Supreme Horse Champion. The Stud has bred a HOYS ridden qualifier on two occasions, and they have been awarded Champion horse a Lampeter Stallion Show three times, also another four Champion horse titles at Glanusk. With Gwyn in charge, Fronarth have managed to top the Welsh Cob sale prices on a number of occasions including the 2024 Sales when a fantastic price of £22,000 was achieved. Not only has he judged throughout the UK but has also had the privilege of judging in Australia, South Africa as well as all over Europe.

Gwyn has carried forward beliefs of his great uncle's that if a job is worth doing, then it is worth doing well.

[Dafydd Jones collects the award on Gwyn's behalf]

EG – So, for the second Award It gives me the same pleasure to present to the Annual General Meeting, the appointment of Mr Ronald Williams MRCVS, known affectionately to most as Ron the Vet, as an Honorary Life Member. Can I please ask Tracy Hook to address the meeting.

TH – As Ed has just said, affectionately known as Ron the Vet, he needs little or no introduction to the majority of people within the Society. His work for fifty years has benefitted countless Welsh ponies and cobs; he freely gives sound advice to their owners on improving their welfare. Ron through Equigene UK was one of the first to offer artificial insemination for the Welsh breeds. His work has made a major contribution to the enhancement of the quality of life for many ponies, cobs, part bred and their owners.

[Ron Williams collects his award]

## **11. The Society Awards**

### **Sire Rating Awards**

EG - The first of the Society awards to be presented at the AGM are the In Hand Sire Ratings. These awards go on to recognise those sires whose progeny have been successful during the 2024 season.

The Section A Award goes to Cascob Wild At Heart (84 points) with ten of his offspring contributing towards his success. Can I invite Eirian Wyn Williams to collect the award on behalf of Holly and Graham Roberts.

The Section B Award for a second year goes to Tooravale Houston (140 points) with eight of his offspring contributing towards his success. That's presented to the Heniarth Stud, so can I invite Barbara Green to collect the award on their behalf please.

The Section C Award goes to Moorcroft the Master (126 points) marking his eighth win of the Saltmarsh trophy. With a total of nine offspring contributing towards his success in the ownership of Mr & Mrs Howard. I am not sure we have got anyone to collect the award. Is there anyone here to collect the award on behalf of the Howard's? No. We will notify them.

The Section D Award goes to Llanmorlais Sylvest (94 points) with ten of his offspring contributing to his success. So, is there anybody here to accept this award on behalf of Llanmorlais? Scott – thank you very much.

The final of our in hand sire rating awards goes to the Welsh Part-Bred Greenbarrow Mr Smee (42 points) with three offspring contributing towards his success. Can I ask Mr. Matthew Everitt to come up to collect the award.

### **Sire Rating Breeder Awards**

EG - Our next award is to celebrate those who have bred the 2024 sire rating winners. This is an award which has been sponsored by two individual studs to allow us to also celebrate the breeders of these animals. I would like to invite the sponsors Sharon Charlton of the Joyton stud and Debbie Jones of the Fairywood Stud to please come up and present these awards.

The Section A Breeder award goes to Mrs. Sarah Hamer, but I don't think we have got anybody here collecting that on her behalf.

The Section B Breeder award goes to Miss. Wendy Trimble from Australia, and I believe that Barbara Green is also going to collect that on her behalf.

The Section C Breeder award also goes to Mr. & Mrs. R. Howard. We haven't got anyone nominated to pick up that award.

The Section D Breeder award goes to Mr. M.A. Swistun. Can I ask Scott Woolley to come up and collect that on his behalf please.

And finally, the Welsh Part-Bred Breeder award goes to Mrs. C. M. Duke. Can I ask Stephen Howard to come up and collect the award on her behalf. Thank you.

Thank you, ladies, for presenting that award.

This next award is a recognition award, and it's a recognition award that goes to our Honorary Vet Mr. Roland Michell. This award is in recognition of someone who has given many, many hours of time to the Society over the last twenty years both in person and in an advisory capacity... and sometimes in an adversary capacity because Roland and I are quite forceful when I agree - when I was welfare officer, who should do this and who should do that. The Society council unanimously agreed that this recipient should be recognised for their continued contribution to the Society. Mr Roland Michell of the Senny Stud has been supporting the Society in the roles of both Honorary Vet and more recently Welfare Officer for a number of years now always being on hand to assist or advise the Society, as well as attending the Education and Welfare Committee meetings to contribute and feed in his expertise – I don't think he's missed any. Can you all please join me in giving Roland Michell a round of applause as he makes his way to collect his award. Congratulations Roland. Would you like to say a few words, Roland?

RM – I was made an Honorary Life Member by Rosemary Philipson-Stow, and I thought when they asked me could I attend today, I honestly thought that I'd probably have the Vice-President's... but I didn't! The interesting thing about this award is, I gather is that it can be awarded to an animal... so I stand here as an animal.

But I give grateful thanks to the council for awarding me this. I retired from practice twenty years ago and had time on my hands and I felt I should give something back to the Society that had given me so much pleasure over the years. I enjoyed my little trips to spar with Ed! I am very, very moved. Thank you very much.

### **Miss Brodrick Memorial Trophy 2024**

EG – The next award is perhaps our most prestigious award – the Miss Brodrick Memorial Trophy 2024. This is the highest honour the Society can bestow and is awarded by Council to an individual or animal in recognition of distinguished service to the Society or Breed. There are always many deserving nominations each year both human and equine, however one nomination stood out to receive the award this time. The Brodrick Award this year is awarded to one of the best known of all Welsh Cob breeders of the last fifty years, living outside of Wales. He first joined the Society in 1966 registering under the Berkswell prefix before adopting the Trevallion prefix, now known worldwide.

Previously breeding Appaloosas, Shetlands and Coloureds before a visit to the Royal Welsh Show where Nebo Black Magic caught both his and his late father's eye. Totally being taken aback, the journey began to source and buy the best. Early purchases include Derwen Telynor by Nebo Black Magic, mares by Pentre Eiddwen Comet, followed by Tyhen Comet. Another initial purchase which was to have a great and lasting influence was Tapton Rachael from whom much of the present Trevallion stock today are descended.

The Trevallion stud's show successes are a myriad including being the first exhibitor/breeder to be awarded the coveted George Prince of Wales Cup from outside of Wales, a feat Trevallion has repeated again since. Trevallion stock have developed into an easily recognised Trevallion type, that fellow breeders throughout the world have been keen to obtain, to influence their own breeding.

Always the gentleman, the recipient has been a source of sound advice for many, a popular panel judge and a credit to the breed and Society. It is satisfying to see also that three generations of the family are following in his footsteps and share his passion. Therefore, a worthy winner for his outstanding contribution to the Breed.

It gives me the greatest pleasure to announce the winner of the Brodrick Award for 2024 is Mr Nelson Smith, Trevallion Stud.

Nelson, would you like to say a few words?

NS – Well I'd just like to say thank you to whoever decided to give me this, and to say that Welsh Cobs and Ponies over the years have given me a great deal of pleasure. I have met people all around Europe, England and the World, made friends I never would have ever visited or seen. So thank you very much. And I am very pleased my daughter and grandson took on the mantle of looking at the cobs, showing them, and breeding them. And I had better say thank you to my beautiful wife who's supported me all the way! Thank you.

EG – Thank you. Well done. Congratulations, well deserved.

## **12. To Receive the Society's Publicity Report**

EG – So, I'm going to hand you over to Janice.

Janice Parry – Good afternoon, everybody. Looking back over 2024, it has been a very busy year for the Society; we have been extremely proud to see all the achievements and milestones that you as breeders and members have achieved. I would like to thank each and every one of you for showcasing just how great our breed is.

Our April AGM also saw us welcome our new Welsh Pony and Cob Society President into her role, Mrs Jocelyn Price alongside our new Welsh Pony and Cob Society Young Ambassador, Charlotte Harris. We thank them for their energies and support over the last year.

In May, the Annual Members' Spring Sale took place at Brecon Market, with approximately 70 lots entered. Sarum Rafferty, a ridden Section A Gelding, achieved the top price at £3,300. The NPS Dressage finals also took place where Welsh Section C veteran pony Tireve What's Wanted took the supreme title for the second consecutive year, ridden and owned by Amelia Ward.

July moves us on to the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society Show, where the Welsh animals dominated the main ring for the majority of the show, as well as contending in a number of the performance classes throughout the week. The Royal Welsh is a fantastic show for the Welsh breed and in turn, Gold In Hand and Performance medals are awarded here to a number of the champions, alongside a special platinum medal for the champion young handler.

In Hand Section A - Crumpwell Blue Lucy,  
Section B - Cadlanvalley Masterclass,  
Section C - Abergavenny Rosie O'Neil,  
Section D - Brynithon Cleopatra,  
Welsh Part Bred - Hillocks Moonlight Flit.  
Young Handler overall Champion was Rhys-Tomos Freeman.  
Gelding Champion - Heniarth Brando.  
Ridden Section A - Hoekhorst Example,  
Ridden Section B - Cadlanvalley Masterclass,  
Ridden Section C - Danwood Llewellyn  
Ridden Section D - Trevallion Culhwch.  
Driving Champion – Section C Crossfield Danny Boy.  
The Supreme of Show went to the Section C Stockdale Black Prince who won their driven section, making it a fantastic day for the Welsh Pony and Cob Society.

The Royal International Show clashed with the Royal Welsh Show, but this didn't seem to affect the Ponies, Cobs and Welsh Part-Breds from competing at this six-day event. On Wednesday, the UKP Finals witnessed both the Champion and Reserve Champion come through from the Welsh Breed sections with Thorneyside Royal Command champion and reserve going to Maesyfelin Tara. Late afternoon on the Wednesday saw the BSPS Mini finals take place, with the championship being awarded to Thistledown Princess Letizia. On Thursday, the Junior Championship witnessed Thistledown San-Siro take the top spot. The Friday NPS Working Hunter finals classes also saw Delami Bravado take the Reserve Champion slot.

August was a busy month with the National Welsh Show taking place as well as the Welsh Pony and Cob Society Young Judges competition held at the Three Counties Showground. The Society would like to thank Michelle Spoor and Hazel Galbraith for running the event, along with all competitors, helpers and those who brought ponies forward on the day. It was a

huge success, and we are pleased this year to also add a ridden judges assessment which was well supported with a total of thirty-one in hand competitors and twenty ridden competitors. The In Hand Champion was Pebbles Knibbs and Reserve Champion was Shannon Reed who incidentally is our Young Ambassador for this coming year. Ridden Champion was Imogen Hargreaves and Reserve Champion was Lilly Walker. Congratulations also goes to Severn Valley Welsh Pony and Cob Association team (Ella Edwards, Pebbles Knibbs and Kaitlyn Ames) who won the team bursary.

The Welsh International Show was held at the wonderful Peelbergen Equestrian Centre, Kronenberg, in the Netherlands on the 24th and 25th of August. Sadly, following Brexit and the various issues we face with transportation, there were no British competitors this year, although some were entered. But we were proud to have Society panel judges who had travelled from the UK as well as a large number of breeders and enthusiasts present from the United Kingdom. Several Society trustees were also able to represent the Society there.

The Welsh Breeds have had a hugely successful time at HOYS this year, taking a number of the championship spots as well as supreme champion of show, Derw Dream Boy being a Welsh Part-Bred out of the Section B mare Heniarth Hushabye. Repeating our success in the Working Hunter Pony section with the supreme title this year being taken by Brynithon Poachers Gold.

Our Section Champions were  
Section A – Marsh Walk on By  
Section B - Cadlanvalley Buzz Lightyear  
Section C – Gems Malt Whiskey  
Section D - Tireinon Llew  
Highest Placed WPBR - Rotherwood Fancy That  
Congratulations to everyone on your achievements this year.

The end of October saw the Annual WPCS Official Sale with over 500 entries split over three days. This is an annual staple in many members' diaries, with visitors from all over the world. Our Annual Gelding Show took place on the Friday, judged by the Society President Mrs Jocelyn Price with the Section D champion Llanarth Tywysog going on to take the supreme title. Bidding was good and very competitive on occasions with Cob mare Fronarth Glamour Girl taking the title of top price at this year's sale, selling for £22,000 - bred and consigned by the Fronarth Stud.

November saw our annual support of the Animals in War Remembrance Service held in Hyde Park, where the Society Chairman, Mr. Ed Gummery, proudly lead a talk as part of the service, as well as the annual Winter Fair held at the Royal Welsh showground which saw the following animals succeed in taking the overall championship titles:

Section A – Carylmai Queen of Rock  
Section B - Waxwing Party Personality  
Section C – Blaencila Aroma  
Section D and Supreme Champion – Coedwigddu Princess Rosia  
WPBR and reserve supreme champion – Hatterall Strumble Head

The Society's trustees were also working hard in the background during early 2024 to continue the great work of the Performance Awards, previously run by Jo Filmer and Jane Weller. We are pleased with the response to the competition in 2024, following a period of rest and hope that this will continue to grow and develop over the coming year with lots of exciting things to come.

2024 also saw development with the DNA processing with a move from Microsatellite testing to SNP's (Single Nucleotide Polymorphisms) to enable us to future proof the DNA testing of the Society. Further details on this can be found on the WPCS website. Alongside this, there is also a medal review which will be rolled out for this season as well as the completion of the 105 Stud Book bringing us right up to date.

Looking forward this year, work has started on the 106 Stud Book for animals registered in 2024 and we hope this will be available to purchase later this year. Work will shortly be starting on the 2026 Journal, so please feed through any image or articles that you would like to be considered - please don't leave this to the last minute as it creates a lot of pressure on the office at what is already a busy end of year.

I would like to finish by thanking you all for your support and helping us to showcase our fantastic breed over the last year and look forward to seeing what we achieve this year. Thank you very much.

### **13. Vote of Thanks to Retiring President**

EG - We turn now to a Vote of Thanks to our retiring President Mrs Jocelyn Price. So, I'd like to propose a thanks for her time as President, and turn to Ann Bigley to say a few words please.

AB – Just a very few words on what Jocelyn has taken a lot of time with at the Society over the past two years firstly as President-elect and then as President this year. Jocelyn has been a lifelong member and breeder and supporter of the Welsh Pony and Cob Society. She has been a really conscientious President. I think she – I don't think she missed any meetings at all – I don't know if that's true but in my opinion she seemed to turn up all the time. And where possible she has visited members in all parts of the country. I just hope that she has really enjoyed her year as President and that she has been welcomed everywhere, and we thank her for her gracious contributions and all that she has raised for her charities. So thank you very much Jocelyn for what you have done.

EG – Thank you Jocelyn. Tracy, you are going to second that proposal, yes?

TH – Yes.

EG – I would now like to invite Jocelyn to say a few words.

JP – Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen. I would like to take this opportunity in thanking you all in making my year of being President a wonderful experience and to thank the council members and the office staff for all the help they have given me. Having been involved with this Society nearly all my life it has enabled me to meet so many people and to visit and judge in other countries which I would not have done without being a member of this Society.

I have been invited to many area associations and have enjoyed their hospitality, and enthusiasm for the Welsh Breeds. I am encouraged to see the growing interest in Welsh Part-Breds as evidenced in the increasing number of registrations. They are doing a great job of promoting the breed in all disciplines. The decline in Section Bs is hard to understand and it is strange that they are considered at risk.

You will have heard that registrations and memberships have fallen and consequently the Society has less income. A big congratulations to the Chairman of Finance, his committee, the trustees, and staff over the past year in turning the finances around. It should be welcomed

and appreciated. However, we must not rest on our laurels – we need to keep a tight rein on our expenditure and do all we can to increase the membership numbers. This Society is not alone. There are similar societies and organisations who are experiencing the same. The future of our Society falls in your hands and we must encourage the younger generation to be involved. Because of the pressures of work etcetera in this fast-moving world that we live in, they cannot always spare time to become committee members, but when they do they have wonderful ideas.

Next year we'll celebrate 125 of this wonderful Society. We must help to ensure that it continues for another 125 years. I am sure that our forefathers would have been proud at what has been achieved. Please do not forget we are a Breed Society first and foremost.

I look forward to seeing you tonight at the dinner dance and I would like to thank the sponsors who have kindly donated to the auction. This year it is in aid of the Midlands Air Ambulance and the League of Friends of Bronllys Hospital. Also, it will be a great honour to have Mr. Terry Court to be our auctioneer this evening. Thank you.

## **14. Recommendation of the President for 2025/26**

EG - On behalf of Council, I am pleased to announce the appointment of Miss Sue Hardy of the Briarth Stud as President for 2025/26.

JP – It gives me great pleasure to hand over the Presidency for 2025 to 2026 to Miss Sue Hardy of the Briarth Stud. I know she will make a fantastic President. Congratulations, Sue.

EG – Congratulations.

SH - Thank you very much.

EG – So Sue is going to take the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

SH – First of all, I would like to present Jocelyn the Past-President's badge. Thank you very much for all your hard work.

JP – Thank you very much.

SH – Thank you Ed and thank you very much Jocelyn. I am very honoured to be appointed President of this wonderful Society. I have been a member for nearly fifty years, member of council, Chair of council, and am an Honorary Life Vice-President. With my sister Janet we were humbled to be awarded the Miss Brodrick Memorial trophy a few years ago. At that time, you were allowed to take the trophy home, but we were so terrified and it was such a responsibility that we never had it out on display. The Society has been a part of my life for all these years and membership has brought me many friends. To me Welsh Ponies and Cobs are part of the living culture and heritage of Wales and will always remain so. We have some very talented, enthusiastic and articulate young members who must receive your support and encouragement for the future of the Society.

Janet bought our first Welsh Cob in 1975 following our annual holiday in West Wales and from that purchase developed the Briarth Stud with the emphasis on performance.

I had been working in London and Switzerland, returning to work in London doing customer relations and PR, but I eventually followed the family to Dorset and ended up working for the Ministry of Defence in a very active environment. I also was for thirty-five years chair and then secretary of the South Western Association.

We all live in an ever changing and challenging world, and it is sad when people use social media to air their grievances which then reflects inevitably on the Society as a whole and is unhelpful, especially when such utterances are frequently inaccurate. We need this great Society to prosper, and to keep abreast and adapt to all the changes that come its way, and I appeal to you to support and promote the Society in every way possible. Wouldn't it be great if each one of you could recruit one new member. I shall continue to do my best to ensure that the Society thrives and grows to meet the needs of its members. I look forward to meeting old friends and making new ones in the coming year. Thank you very much.

## **15. To thank the outgoing WPCS Young Ambassador and award the Derwen Harp to Welcome the Young Ambassador for 2025-2026**

EG - We would like to thank Charlotte Harris, the Young Ambassador, for the last year and her mentor Mrs. Janice Parry. Unfortunately, Charlotte is unable to be with us today so can I please invite her Mentor Janice Parry to read out a speech prepared by Charlotte.

JP - *'As my time comes to an end as Young Ambassador all I can express is my heartfelt gratitude to most importantly the young people of our society, the bubbling youth that shines so brightly.*

*Thank you for allowing me to raise funds, and have fun and meet fantastic people along the way, it has simply been an honour.*

*I am deeply saddened that I can't make it today to pass over the reins, all I can say is I'm very sorry but many farmers like me this time of year are hustling and bustling away in the lambing shed meeting the demands of Mother Nature and with it being the busiest and most important time of year in the farming calendar I cannot leave the expectant mothers alone.*

*I hope to see you all very soon.*

*Yours sincerely. Charlotte Harris'*

JP - I now have great pleasure of introducing Shannon Foley-Reed who will take up the office of Young Ambassador for 2025-2026. Can I please invite Shannon to collect the Young Ambassador Harp which is kindly donated by Mr. & Mrs. Ifor Lloyd of the Derwen Stud.

Shannon Foley-Reed - Afternoon. I am very honoured and pleased to be selected as the Welsh Pony & Cob Young Ambassador for 2025-2026, so I thought I would give you a little bit about me but not too much. I was born in Manchester but I moved eleven years ago to Ceredigion – because what better place to live in but the land of the Cobs. I currently work in Ceredigion for the Domestic Abuse Service as the manager for the children's team. We work with young people who have experienced and witnessed domestic abuse. My mother, sister, and I have always been passionate about the Welsh Breeds and recently established our own small stud – Brynloglin. I mainly compete in ridden showing, but also show in hand, and dressage. This included spending six months at Ladybug Ranch in Oklahoma, USA where I competed at the Nationals in Tulsa in 2017 at the age of 17. The Welsh Breeds have been a huge part of my life, and being a part of the Society has helped me develop long-life friendship, incredible memories and amazing achievements.

I hope to give back to the Society during my term as Young Ambassador and to raise funds for the young people's bursary and my chosen charity DPJ Foundation which is a Welsh charity that provides support for those in rural communities and agriculture with mental health problems. Their aim is to reduce the stigma that surrounds poor mental health: educating people with mental health awareness training, providing counselling, and a 24-7 helpline.

My main aim is to gather the voice and opinions of the young people as we are the future of the Society, and our voices deserve to be heard. We have set up the youth panel where young members aged 16 to 25 can join and represent their area in a space where they can gain confidence to voice their opinions and views. Myself and Scott, we will then feed this back to the council. I will be organising meetings throughout the year with different sources of entertainment aimed at our young members - this includes at the Royal Welsh and the Welsh Pony and Cob Society sales. We have also started an association junior of the year award where a team of four or an individual can enter, who have competed in any disciplines – so any kind of competing that young people do they would be eligible to put their result forward. Whether it is affiliated or non-affiliated events, all competitions between the 1<sup>st</sup> of January and the 30<sup>th</sup> of November will count. Competing with Welsh or Welsh Part-Bred animals only. The competitors will need to be Welsh Pony and Cob members to take part in the scheme. The hope is that more young people will join their area associations and become more involved with both the associations and the Society. Another goal of mine is to host educational sessions throughout the country where young people can learn from our Society members at stud visits and talks from people who are able to give a bit of their time to explain and help the young people understand what they are supposed to be looking at in preparation for things such as the young judges competition. One of the main concentrations this year will be on the B's as this is what will be the concentration at the young judges competition. I would be grateful if anyone can offer some time and some wisdom to the young members of our Society. I will also be working with the committee that run the young judges competition to help provide some entertaining activities throughout the day to try and break up the day a little more and make it more engaging for the participants.

I am very excited to take on the role and look forward to working with Scott and the young members of the Society. Thank you.

JP – Thank you, Shannon. When interviewing for the position of young ambassador for 2025-2026 we were impressed with the quality and enthusiasm of all our young members and therefore took the decision to also appoint a Young Ambassador elect for 2025-26 so to work alongside Shannon while she is in post and then to take over the reins in 26-27 as Young Ambassador. Can I please introduce you to Scott Woolley our Young Ambassador Elect.

SW – Good afternoon, everyone. I am going to keep this short and sweet because Shannon has mentioned most of the things we are going to be running over the next year. I'm Scott, I am from North Wales, now living down in Essex. Been breeding and showing all my life – started around five or six and now worked my way all the way up, so A's, C's and D's. I will be looking forward to working with Mr. Attrell in the following year and we just hope we can encourage and improve the experience that the young members have over this time. This is the future, so this is what we need to be pushing for, so we can have more meetings like this over the next years. Thank you very much.

## **16. Appointment of the President Elect for 2025/26**

EG - I am also pleased to confirm the details of the successful candidate for the position of President Elect 2025-26 as Mr. Matt Attrell of the Danaway Stud.

I would like to invite Matt as President-Elect to say a few words and to join us up here on the stage.

MA – Good evening, everybody, or afternoon, sorry. I would like to say thank you for this fantastic honour, and onwards and upwards obviously. Everyone is doing a great job as we can all see and trying their best, and hopefully I can do as much as possible for the Welsh Pony & Cob in the near future. It's a great situation to be in and we can all see how hard everybody's working and how much they are putting into this, and I would just like to say thank you to everyone involved with what they've done for me. Big thank you and look forward to seeing all of you next year.

## **17. Any Other Business**

EG - Items for any other business were requested to be sent to the Welsh Pony and Cob Society Office at Bronaeron by the 24th of March.

One question was received but responded to in advance. It involved an ongoing welfare complaint. No further items for AOB were received.

I would like to open it to the floor and ask if anyone here has any additional items for discussion or questions under AOB.

Yvonne Small – It is a bit of a touchy subject, but I feel compelled to bring it up. I won't mention the name of this individual but he attended a sale, several sales I'm sure but a particular sale of Welsh Ponies and Cobs not so long ago. I was also at that sale. He, to my knowledge purchased in the region of seventy cobs and ponies, paying considerable amounts of money. And as far as I am aware recently, a majority of those animals have been removed from his premises in neglected conditions and I would like to be assured that the Welsh Pony and Cob Society will not allow this individual to purchase any more animals from Welsh Pony and Cob Sales.

EG – Funnily enough that was a similar type of question that had been received. We have a difficulty in discussing it because it is being dealt with by authorities...

YS – I understand that.

EG - ...We have clear rule in relation to how we deal with discipline offences and echo and mirror what may happen down the line. What I can tell that the Welsh Pony and Cob Society have been in touch with the authorities dealing with it. We are assisting with identifying animals, and we are abreast of the situation. Two trustees are looking over that as we speak. And then we will have to wait until it reaches its time, and decisions will be made as it comes back before council.

YS – Ok. So, I appreciate what you are saying, Ed, but will he be allowed to purchase more animals at our sales then?

EG – I can't really say, Yvonne. I don't know. It's in its first stages and we all know that as it goes through the stages... and prosecution, if bans are made etcetera, then obviously that reflects back so...

YS – One hopes he won't.

EG - ...Early stages. Obviously one of our articles is welfare so... and it's something dear to my own heart having been in welfare before.

YS – Thank you, Ed.

Can I just mention one more thing totally unconnected. Several years ago at one of the AGMs, and I think Paul Wilding-Davies was the Chairman... or President at the time, and the Society purchased some rather expensive though lovely badges for all the council members. They cost a lot of money – where are they?

EG – Good question.

YS – Shall I leave it with you?

EG – Yes. Leave it with me.

Anyone else? Nia Roberts.

NR – Good afternoon. This isn't a question it is just an observation. Seven years ago, at the AGM in Llandudno, where some of you currently serving trustees were in attendance, I raised a concern about openness and transparency of council at the time. I raised the question about the morality and the image of current serving trustees proposing and seconding each other for positions on council. The answer I received by the then Vice-Chair was that there was nothing in the rules to prevent this, but that it would be discussed. A number of the members including some of yourselves were in total agreeance, however we find ourselves in the same position once again. I have nothing personal here against any of the candidates, and to be honest I hold them in utmost respect but if we want a total open and transparent Society then surely it is not difficult to just go outside of council to find two members to sign the proposal forms. Thank you.

EG – In response to that, I remember the incident well, and it is still within our rules to... we are not prevented from doing that, I am going to note it now and take it back to the next council meeting in two weeks' time and it will be discussed on the agenda.

Any more questions? No.

I'd like to say a final reminder before we finish. Photographs please. Those award winners could they stay behind and take some photographs with your awards through EquinePix. Newly elected and all current Council members to attend the brief meeting please straight after this meeting.

Diolch yn fawr

And I'd like to say thank you to all, Ladies and Gentlemen for attending and for your contributions today. Gemma has been furiously writing next to me, and I have some notes. Appreciate your comments – we will deal with them and report back to you on those that have been... those issues you have raised.

I look forward to seeing a number of you this evening at 7pm to celebrate with Mrs Jocelyn Price as she mentioned for her dinner and dance.

Just a reminder for those who haven't had journals please let the office know and we will see what we can do to repair that problem. We have got some journals with us if you need and

then we'll obviously look at the membership, and obviously we have got an enquiry, and a complaint raised with the suppliers.

I would just like to thank you again. Safe journey home if you are not coming tonight. At 15:15 declare the meeting closed. Thank you very much.

**END**

WPCS AGM 2025