



Cumann Lucht Capaillíní Chonamara

Connemara Pony Breeders' Society

MINUTES OF THE 98TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CONNEMARA PONY BREEDERS' SOCIETY

AT GULLANES HOTEL, BALLINASLOE, CO GALWAY ON 7TH NOVEMBER 2021 @ 2.00 PM – VIRTUAL MEETING

Council Members Present: Ms Ann Marie Conroy (President & Chair), Mr Dave Sheedy (Vice President), Mrs Fiona Grimes (Finance Officer), Mr Ray Halpin (Human Resource Officer), Mr Pat Geoghegan (Company Secretary), Mr Kevin Bolger, Mr Seán Carey, Ms Eimear Coleman, Mrs Ulla Dorothea Connolly, Mr Martin Coyne, Mr Ciaran Curran, Mr Gearoid Curran, Mr Patrick Flanagan, Mrs Barbara Hoffman, Ms Joanne Hunter, Mrs Phyllis Jones, Mrs Clare Oakes, Mr Henry O'Toole, Mr Daragh Kevin Ó Tuairisg.

Society Members Virtually Present: Mr Patrick Blake, Mr Noel Brett, Mr Joe Burke, Mr Joe Burke, Ms Mary Butler, Mr James Byrne, Mr Martin Calvey, Mr Martin Carew, Ms Angela Carleton, Ms Dianne Carroll, Ms Pauline Casey, Mr John Coleman, Ms Eimear Coleman, Ms Majella Collins, Mr Patrick Conneely, Mr Kevin Connolly, Ms Mary Connolly, Mr. Patrick Conneely, Mr Liam Cotter, Mr Kitty Cotter, Mr Conor Coyne, Ms Nicola Crosby, Ms Caroline Crosby, Ms Padrigin J Cunningham, Mr Tom Cunningham. Ms Amy Curran, Ms Eleanor Curran, Ms Joan Dahill, Ms Jane Darragh, Ms Elise de Rouville, Ms Nicola Drake, Ms Patricia Dunphy, Ms Una Marie Egan, Mr Alexander Evans, Ms Esther Feeney, Ms Erin Fergus, Mr George Finnegan, Mr Gerry Finnerty, Mr Kieran Flanagan, Mr Fred Gannon, Mr Enda Gavaghan, Ms Aine Geoghegan, Mr Pdraig Geoghegan, Ms Kathy Geoghegan, Ms Deirdre Geoghegan, Ms Cathriona Goaley, Mr Tomás Grimes, Ms Yvonne Halpin, Mr PJ Hegarty, Ms Clare Heneghan, Ms Barbara Hoffman, Mr Paul Hussey, Mr Michael Igoe, Ms Grainne Kearns, Ms Deirdre Keegan, Mr Seán King, Mr Noel Lane, Mr Aidan Larkin, Ms Denise Leavy, Ms Nonie Leonard, Mr Patrick Lynch, Mr Jerry Mahon, Mr Eugene Matthews, Mr Vincent McDonagh, Mr Joe McNamara, Ms Deborah McCann, Fr. Christy McCormack, Mr Michael McCormack, Mr Kieran McGrath, Ms Pauline McLaren, Mr John McLoone, Mr Donal Mitchell, Mr Philip Morgan, Ms Linda Mullane, Ms Leisa Murphy, Mr Noel Nee, Mr Martin Nee, Mr John Nee, Ms Finola Nic an Iomaire, Mr Val Noone, Ms Denise Norton, Ms Edwina O'Connor, Ms Miriam O'Donnell, Ms Martin v O Grady, Mr Bryan O'Halloran, Mr Patrick O'Shea, Mr Henry O'Toole, Mr Peter O'Toole, Mr Patrick O'Toole, Ms Clare Oakes, Ms Carol O'Connor, Mr Bertie O'Halloran, Ms Eadaoin O'Malley, Mr Dermot Power, Ms Susanne Quinn, Ms Ann Reade, Mr John Riordan, Mr Michael Ryan, Ms Amy Smyth, Mr Eamon Spain, Ms Cathy Stuffle, Mr Ed Sweeney, Ms Áine Uí Fhoghlua, Ms Cliona Wallace.

APOLOGIES: Mrs Nicola Musgrave, Mr. Hugh Musgrave.

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms Carol O'Connor, Secretary; Ms Emer McNamara, Administrator; Mr Declan Mannion, Auditor; Mr Shane Hartigan & Ms Helena M O'Brien (IMS Media).

OPENING: Ms O'Connor read the Annual General Meeting Notice for 2021. The President Ms Ann Marie Conroy declared the meeting open, welcomed all attendees and stated that this meeting was being recorded.

1. ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020:

Ms Conroy asked if there were any matters arising from the 2020 CPBS AGM.

Mr Noel Brett enquired as to the progress of the issues of fraud he had raised at the 2020 AGM and an audit that was undertaken in November 2019. He wanted clarification on what basis the Committee had concluded that no fraud had occurred and if they were condoning fraud and forgery by arriving at their conclusion. He noted that he had sent a written report to the Committee investigating to which he had not received notification or reply. Mr Ray Halpin replied that they hadn't come across evidence of forgery or fraud and if Mr Brett had evidence, he should make a report to him. Mr Brett said he had already done so and also to the Committee and An Garda Síochána. Mr Halpin said he had received no such report. Mr Brett requested that Mr Halpin speak to the four witnesses at the back of the restaurant when the alleged fraud occurred and requested formally that it be noted in today's AGM and that a report on the investigation be forwarded to him without further delay.

Ms Barbara Hoffman – amending the attendance record of the 2020 AGM to include Ms Priscilla Diamond's attendance.

Ms Conroy called for the adoption of the minutes from the 2020 CPBS AGM. The minutes were proposed by Mr Gearóid Curran and seconded by Mr Ray Halpin.

3. ADOPTION OF THE SOCIETY'S FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2020:

Mr Declan Mannion, Mannion Lochrin Accountants & Auditors, Clifden presented the 2020 Auditor's Report. Copies of the Annual Financial Statement had been published and were available online on the CPBS website. Mr Mannion reported that the 2020 Covid Pandemic and shut-downs had affected all aspects of the activities of the Society but despite the restrictions had delivered a substantial part of its programme and the financial accounts reflected this. With increased Government support and reduced expenditure, the accounts show a healthy surplus. Mr Mannion went through the Income & Expenditure of the Society and reported that the Society was in a strong financial and positive position in relation to the financial statements.

Ms Conroy asked the meeting if there were any questions for Mr Mannion in relation to the financial statements and if members had a difficulty getting through to the meeting on Zoom that Mr Mannion would be happy to answer questions by email. Ms Conroy then called for proposer and seconder for the Financial Statements to be adopted by the AGM.

This was proposed by Ms Fiona Grimes and seconded by Mr Dave Sheedy.

4. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR:

Ms Conroy thanked the auditor for the preparation and presentation of the 2020 Financial Statements and recommended that they be retained by the AGM as the Society's ongoing auditors. Ms O'Connor, Secretary, read quotes from two accountants for the position of CPBS Auditor. The firm of Mannion Lochrin & Co was proposed for re-appointment by Ms Fiona Grimes and seconded by Ms Ulla-Dorothea Connolly. Ms Conroy confirmed that Mannion Lochrin & Co will be retained as the Society auditors for the coming year.

Ms Conroy asked Mr Mannion to read a Statement of the CPBS finances from January to July 2021 following a request from the Council for a review of the financial activities. Mr Mannion read the following into the record:

“To the Directors of the Connemara Pony Breeders’ Society

Dear President

Further to the Council’s instructions we have carried out a review of the accounting books and ledgers, general accounting and banking records of the Connemara Pony Breeder’s Society (CPBS) for the period 1st January 2021 to the 14th July 2021 (hereafter the review period).

Our work was to look into the accounting record and supporting documentation and associated banking records for the review period, in light of the company’s financial procedures as approved by the Council on the 16th November 2015 and to form an opinion as to whether there were any irregularities in the accounts which should be brought to the attention of the Council of the CPBS.

We have conducted a review of the accounting and banking records for the review period of the CPBS. This involved an analytical review of the information vis-à-vis 2020. It also involved a review of the individual transactions on the Profit & Loss Account and Bank Account and reconciliations. The pandemic caused a good deal of change to the normal business and the normal information flows and processes had become somewhat disrupted. It does make year-on-year comparisons more difficult as the timing of activities, expenses and income streams are not necessarily in line with previous years. Despite these pandemic related challenges there is nothing in our review of the information for the review period which we feel should be brought to the attention of the Council as being out of the expected range of activity. We did not uncover anything in the business records which would indicate irregularities or a pattern of transactions which would be unusual or would be of a type not normally undertaken by the company in the normal course of its business.

I trust this is in order and if the Council have any further questions on this matter, I am happy to assist as required.

Yours sincerely
Mannion Lochrin & Co”

5. MOTIONS:

Ms Conroy stated that no motions had been put forward for the 2021 Annual General Meeting.

6. ELECTION TO FILL VACANCIES ON THE CPBS COUNCIL:

Ms Conroy called on the Secretary, Ms O’Connor to present the results of the election to fill vacancies that had arisen on the Council in 2021.

Ms O’Connor presented the following report on the Elected Council Directors 2021/2022. As there were equal candidates to the vacant electoral in Munster and Leinster the following candidates were deemed elected:

Munster: Mr Dave Sheedy (Seat M1)

Leinster: Mrs Phyllis Jones (Seat L1)

The allocation of Council seats for the Connacht Region took place on the 6th October 2021 at the Salthill Hotel. Mr Tom Burke, Peace Commissioner carried out the draw. Candidates and one observer were invited to attend. The allocation of elected candidates was as follows:

Mr Johnny Brady (Seat C1); Mrs Fiona Grimes (Seat C2); Mr Peter J. O Malley (Seat C3); Mr Ciarán Curran (Seat C4); Mr Ray Halpin (Seat C7); Mr Vincent Costello (Seat C 11).

Ms Conroy welcomed the new and re-elected members of the Council.

7. PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS:

Ms Conroy welcomed all delegates to this year's AGM which had to be held remotely this year also as a result of the ongoing restrictions in the pandemic. The CPBS had to cancel the scheduled Spring Weekend and Show in 2021 along with other projects throughout the year. Plans were still in place for the 2021 Christmas Show.

Ms Conroy stated that the Council remained proactive during the year and thanked the CPBS office staff for maintaining a full service under difficult circumstances throughout the year. Inspections were conducted throughout the country while promoting the Connemara pony. A stallion register is now available online and the Council also introduced the 3-year-old filly assessments which were a huge success and the Performance Committee are looking to expand that to other age groups. The CPBS continue to provide advice and information to our breeders on the reduction of hoof wall affected foals. Additional funding was obtained from the Department of Agriculture this year for testing older ponies, which the CPBS match-funded up to a maximum of 380 ponies to ensure that there would be no cost to the owners. Ms Conroy thanked all the owners and riders who participated in the competition spheres at home and overseas. The Connemara pony was very much to the fore over the Summer and Autumn in championships that went ahead despite the pandemic. The Pony European Championships in Poland in August saw the Irish Eventing Team of four Connemara ponies taking bronze, the individual silver medal in eventing was also awarded to a Connemara pony finishing on a very decent Dressage score of 30.3 and the Irish Pony Showjumping team with two Connemara ponies, finished fourth of the ten teams competing. In all 27 teams competed and 11 countries across all disciplines in these championships.

In the Netherlands at the FEI Showjumping Finals in September, team Ireland achieved gold, finishing on a score of zero, with two of the ponies being Connemara's. The atmosphere at HOYS in October was electric for Irish bred ponies. Top results in 153 and 143 Working Hunter, the classes that show any ponies true ability on flat and jumping, a third placing in the Supreme In-hand pony class, a winner in the newcomer's championship and the leading Connemara sire of the year award all made fantastic Irish viewing.

The Connemara pony is in high demand at the moment and the market is very strong. This is extremely encouraging for everyone from breeder up to producer. Ms Conroy thanked the breeders and producers for their hard work and commitment on breeding and producing top quality stock. Ms Conroy congratulated Mr Conor Coyne and the team at Kylemore Abbey for negotiating the placement of a Connemara Pony Mare and Foal on the grounds of Áras an Uachtaráin earlier this year and your invitation to the President of the CPBS to attend this presentation.

Ms Conroy thanked the Executive Committee, Mr Dave Sheedy, *Vice-President*, Mr Ray Halpin, *HR Officer* and Mr Pat Geoghegan, *Company Secretary*. Ms Conroy also thanked all the Directors, the sub-committees and all the external members of the committees who give their time so generously.

Ms Conroy thanked the members of the Council who were leaving today, Ms Barbara Hoffman and Mr Seán Carey and welcomed all incoming members. Ms Conroy thanked the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine for their continued support, guidance and advice to the CPBS and acknowledged great credit to the staff of the CPBS office for their work during a difficult year.

Ms Conroy extended the sympathy of the CPBS Council to all those who had lost friends and family members throughout the year.

Ms Conroy stated in closing that it was an honour and privilege to represent the members as President of the CPBS for the past two years and wished every success to the incoming President and the Society going forward.

8. SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Ms O'Connor reported that the Department of Agriculture funding of €179,000 for 2021 was the largest amount received to date – up €30,000 from last year. Due to Covid the CPBS could not avail of as many projects in 2021 but the funding was spread as follows:



Equine Technical Support Schemes 2021

funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Project	Approved
HWSD for first time registrations	€35,824.00
HWSD testing for older ponies	€4,330
DNA testing for first time registrations.	€50,310.00
Inspections within the CPBS Studbook	€36,953.00
Database Projects (5)	€51,590.00
Total	€179,007

Ms. O'Connor referred to the testing of older ponies for HWSD which entailed consent from breeders to use the existing DNA profile. Ms. O'Connor stated the project was 50% funded by the DAFM and 50% funded by the CPBS.

Ms O'Connor stated that in relation to filly inspections it was very positive and encouraging that the numbers for filly inspections had doubled for 2021 in comparison to the last 3 years. Ms O'Connor encouraged owners and breeders to bring their fillies forward for inspection and hoped that in 2022 – when Covid restrictions are eased – the CPBS would be in a position to cater for the Northern breeders.

Ms O'Connor mentioned the development of the online accounts system in our Database development programme – which will enable breeders/owners to log into their own account and transact services, pay membership, place orders, lodgements, apply for inspections, transfers, kits, etc. which is currently in progress.

Ms O'Connor endorsed the President's acknowledgement of the success of Connemara ponies at international championships and also congratulated the CPBS sponsored Carn Verdon Boy's success, who attained the highest placed Connemara at the Dressage Ireland Championships. He took fourth place in the competition competing against twelve warmblood horses. He also placed fourth in the Prix St. George freestyle championship. A remarkable achievement for a Connemara pony and congratulations to all involved.

Ms. O'Connor acknowledged the highest placed Connemara in the SJI Starfinder competition, sponsored by Hive Insurance Services, where Ballyerk Dun and Dusted and rider Emily Maloney, from Co Kilkenny, (bred by Pat Blake) place 3rd overall and the highest placed Connemara pony on the day. Ms. O'Connor stated the CPBS awarded Ballyerk Dusty the €500 sponsorship for the highest placed Connemara in the competition.

Ms O'Connor also thanked the CPBS office staff for their hard work over the year and how they adapted to the circumstances imposed by the Covid restrictions in the workplace.

Ms O'Connor expressed her gratitude to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine for their support, funding and guidance throughout the year. Ms. O'Connor referred to the upcoming Christmas show and thanked Galway County Council for supporting our Christmas Show.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Ms Conroy read out the following 3 questions submitted to the meeting under Any Other Business:

Q1-Nonie Leonard: Are we as a society genuinely intent on the elimination of hoofwall?

Ms Conroy replied that, yes, as custodians of the breed we must be and we endeavour to do so under the constraints of the 2016 EU legislation. Whilst under the legislation we should strive to preserve genetic diversity, the Society must also strive to eliminate genetic defects. With reference to the legislation the only means by which we can do this is education, a programme in which we have been active since 2016 and a full history has been published recently on our website and on our facebook as to what we have been active in since 2016,

Q3-Nonie Leonard: If so, surely the provision of an animal's status at shows/sales entry?

Ms Conroy replied that declaration of status was to be a pre-requisite for show entries from 2020 but the shows did not take place. Hopefully the show will go ahead in 2022 and it is being considered that all entries of breeding status should be required to declare their hoofwall status – this will be a decision for the incoming Show Committee.

With regard to the Sales – Clifden Livestock Sales is a private business and while the CPBS does not have a formal tie, it does have a good working relationship with them. The Sales do ask that the HWSD status of ponies for sales be declared on the application form. They also declare the HWSD status at time of sale. The CPBS are not aware of how they handle non-declarations but the onus is on the buyer to make sure that they familiarise themselves with all aspects of a prospective purchase. If novice the Society is willing to offer guidelines if asked. The CPBS has published guidelines of which potential owners and buyers should familiarise themselves, one of them being the hoof wall official certificate and the official status stamped on the passport.

Q2-Nonie Leonard: If owners wish to promote their stallion on the current stallion list, a true account of their status should be a pre-requisite or should their application be rejected by the Society?

Ms Conroy replied that publication of a pony's name on our online Stallion List requires the declaration of the hoofwall status.

Noel Brett: Dermot Power just sent me a message in relation to the question he was asking the accountant.

Ms Conroy stated that the accountant had now left the meeting and that Mr Mannion had requested that Mr Power email his question and he would him directly.

Noel Brett: I think you yourself would be able to answer the question. It is: How much were directors paid for out-of-pocket expenses? He has already sent this in in writing and it has not been acknowledged – it was ignored he said?

Ms Conroy asked Ms O'Connor about this correspondence.

Ms O'Connor replied that Mr Power's correspondence was acknowledged and replied to and in that correspondence, he was informed of the outcome of his correspondence.

Noel Brett: Just to finish off Dermot Power's point that he has raised here, he says the HSI has all their directors and council members expenses published in the Annual Accounts. Is that something you will think of in the future?

Ms Conroy replied that that was something that they would take on board.

As there were no further matters arising Ms Conroy thanked the Secretary, Carol O'Connor and the IMS Media team that facilitated the meeting and brought the 2021 Annual General Meeting to a close.

This concluded the business of the meeting.