

## **Pony Action Group Meeting**

**Friday 12 August 2016**

**10:30 above Princetown Information Centre**

### **Present**

Ann Came	Dartmoor Hill Pony Association (DHPA)
Naomi Oakley	Natural England (NE)
Tom Stratton	Duchy of Cornwall
Elizabeth Newbould Young	Dartmoor Pony Society
Sue Martin	Dartmoor Pony Society (DPS)
Mary Alford	Dartmoor Hill Pony Association & Commoners Council
Marion Saunders	Dartmoor Livestock Protection Society (DLPS)
Helen Radmore	Independent
Sue Hutchings	Independent
Claire Stanton	Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust (DPHT)
Dru Butterfield	Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust (DPHT)
Rob Steemson	Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA)

Minutes taken by Sue Bishop (DNPA)

### **1 Apologies**

John Waldon, Judy Fawcett, Viv Brown, Karla McKechnie, Charlotte Faulkner.

### **2 Minutes of the last meeting & matters arising**

M Alford noted that contrary to her understanding the reference to conservation meat had been omitted from the objectives. While it was agreed that the wording "markets" covered all markets for ponies and that the front page should remain generic, additional wording was agreed for objective 2 (continue the development of conservation meat and promoting its supply).

All groups have scope within framework to develop market options, new markets should be backed up with facts and figures.

Action: Amendment to be made to action plan, and revised copy to go on DNP website.

### **3 Commoners Council report**

Not previously circulated, so M Alford read report supplied by J Waldon.

The literature review was completed in April 2016.

Concern has been expressed over equine ID and the impact on semi feral ponies on Dartmoor.

Moves to remove unmarked ponies from the commons continue.

A date and venue for the next Stallion Accreditation Scheme will be agreed at the next Council meeting

### **4 Dartmoor Pony Society report**

Nothing to report beyond work to understand changes in passport legislation.

### **5 Natural England report**

The new Director leading on upland scheme post Brexit is supportive of pony grazing, and it is possible that funding further evidence gathering to show the value of pony grazing may not be necessary. The Director will be invited to a drift (possibly Whitchurch).

NE is open to any discussion about adding ponies to the stocking calendars of

existing agreements where there is an environmental benefit. NE cannot be part of the internal negotiations of the agreement or the financial arrangements.

**6 Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust report**

Report was circulated with agenda, no resulting questions.

**7 Moorland Pony Scheme report**

2 active breeding newtakes have produced 15 foals.

There is currently a strong market for ponies for conservation grazing due to the lack of cattle available for grazing due to TB restrictions.

**8 Dartmoor Hill Pony Association**

Currently have an exhibition at Powdermills.

Chagford sale will be on 13 October.

Supply of conservation meat to Tavistock market is continuing, through a private company sourcing supplies from DHPA members only.

D Butterfield is concerned that selling pony meat reduces the perceived value of ponies and asked for detail on numbers of ponies involved. This information was not available.

M Alford clarified that the Friends of Dartmoor Hill Pony are a separate organisation leading on the contraception project.

Action: R Steemson will formally invite representative of FDHP to attend and report on the contraceptive project.

**9 Dartmoor Livestock Protection Society**

Report was circulated with agenda.

Perception is that stock is using lower slopes near roads due to difficulty of grazing on higher ground.

M Saunders would like to see the Cadover road closed to lorries to try and reduce the sheep casualties, and asked if PAG as a group could write to Highways.

There is also frustration regarding the current lack of replacement speed visors. It has been indicated that larger permanent units would not be granted planning permission. M Saunders wants replacement temporary units as soon as possible.

Action: R Steemson will discuss with A Watson.

M Saunders requested that PAG minutes are not put in public domain on website, however group as a whole wanted to be open and transparent, and were happy for the minutes to be shared once agreed.

**10 Dartmoor National Park Authority**

Report was circulated with agenda.

**11 Equine ID & Semi Feral Equines on Dartmoor**

The correspondence to the Commons Council from DEFRA was discussed. There is confusion over the requirement for silhouettes in addition to microchips for 2016 sales although legislation would not apply until 2017 and is still out for consultation. Main concern is that taking additional time to complete silhouette would add to stress for ponies.

Action: PAG and individual groups to comment on consultation on implementation of new regulations.

**12 Communication protocol**

Messages should be agreed by all, respecting different views of each organisation.

Press releases should be shared in advance, so that other groups can prepare response if asked by public or media.

The collective reputation of each organisation and the group as a whole should be respected.

All pony management is part of a bigger picture and all farmers can decide how to rear their ponies and for what purpose.

It would be helpful if auctioneers “talked up” pony values rather than dismissing as worthless.

Action: R Steemson, D Butterfield and N Oakley to meet and draft standard answers to FAQ, these will be circulated for agreement before putting on all PAG members websites.

Action: PAG reps will share messages with their members to ensure a consistent response from all pony keepers.

### 13 **Moor Than Meets The Eye**

The pony herd identification project is not going ahead, PAG members are asked if there are other pony related projects that could be considered for funding.

Suggestions were an event to promote all pony types or a PAG website which could show all herds and locations for people interested in seeing ponies on Dartmoor.

#### **Date and venue of next meeting**

10.30 on 28 October at Princetown