

Pony Action Group Meeting Minutes

5 June 2013

High Moorland Office, Princetown

Present:

Mary Alford (DHPA), Dru Butterfield (DPHT), Ann Came (DHPA), Charlotte Faulkner (DHPA), James Gillespie (Friends of DHP), Graham Goddard (DHPA), Andy Guy (NE), Lynda Herriott (DaCC), Jane Marchand (DNPA Archaeologist), Sue Martin (DPS), Steve Scoffin (DNPA MTMTE Project Officer), Claire Stanton (DPHT), Rob Steemson (DNPA), Rosalind Waite (Dartmoor Pony Moorland scheme) Robyn Petrie-Richie

Apologies:

Naomi Brookes (NE), Viv Brown, Ian Mercer (DaCC), Elisabeth Newbolt-Young (DPS), Helen Radmore (Independent), Kerry Smith (Independent), Alona Stratton (DPHT), Tom Stratton (Duchy of Cornwall),

		Action
1	Welcome and Round Table Introductions Rob Steemson opened the meeting and noted apologies.	
2	Moor Than Meets the Eye Steve Scoffin spoke about the MTMTE Project, which includes an element for Ponies, Pounds and Drift ways. He is currently working on the round 2 funding bid submission, which has to be completed by January 2014. Although the project is in a very defined area, work done on ponies could be used as a pilot scheme for roll out across the DNP if future funding allows. Part of the bid includes an element for funding to restore 4 drift lanes and 6 pounds. It was felt that those currently in use should be a higher priority than those disused but in the public eye. Those present were given an opportunity to mark any additional pounds or drift ways on the map supplied. It was also felt that there should be input from the wider users through the Commoners Council and that all pony based projects going forward to the MTME needed to be supported by members of the PAG.	DaCC
3	Minutes of last meeting and matters arising Pony action plan previously circulated with agenda.	
4	Update on Project to Develop a Pony Database DaCC have been leading on this task and have in turn asked the DHPA to undertake a project to produce a standardised electronic record of all ponies on the moor, which could extend to those in newtakes. Work has already started although some commons	

	<p>associations still have to supply information. It was originally thought that a bid could be made to Dartmoor Sustainable Development Fund to take the project forward, however as it grows in scale it was felt that a larger bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund would be more appropriate. Members of the group were asked to think about additional information that could be recorded to make a more complete record, and were asked to support the project moving forward.</p> <p>The DPHT backed by others in the room thought that they could not support a piece of work that might cost 30k without the PAG seeing the full spec etc before it went to any potential funding stream.</p> <p>Rob Steemson and Alison Kohler would circulate further information about the funding bid.</p>	RS
5	<p>Update from Dartmoor Commoners Council DaCC is working with other bodies to retain option for hot branding. Sue Martin spoke about DPS concern regarding multiple brands. DPHT use branding, and will take a request for support to the Trustees. Commons Act requires visible means of identification, and where micro chips are used there is no requirement for registration of owner.</p>	
6	<p>Update from Dartmoor Pony Society The passport system is under scrutiny following the horsemeat scandal. The market for pony meat has dried up because of the cost of testing for bute.</p>	
7	<p>Update from Natural England The Rural Development scheme ends in 2013. No new scheme is on offer. No new HLS agreements will be drawn up after December 2013. Transition arrangements have yet to be established.</p>	
8	<p>Update from Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust Reported that a herd is to be culled due to lower funding than cattle under HLS agreement. Although 3 species grazing is allowed, farmers need to consider business requirements. Believer will reach maximum grazing by end of June. Education programme delivering although sales very quiet.</p> <p>DPHT reported that they had been approached by local parties interested in the supply of pony meat. We investigated with a number of pony keepers to ascertain their views, but in fact the investigations made by these potential suppliers made them conclude that it was not worth doing for the following reasons: (a) local butchers and abattoirs not prepared to handle due to the adverse publicity and strict rules re carcass management following the recent contamination issues; (b) there would be insufficient supply year round of suitable carcasses; (c) cost of processing v. revenue; (d) marketing challenge Supply of pony meat to high end users has been considered but local butchers are not willing to accept, the contamination issue is currently too sensitive.</p>	

9	<p>Update from Dartmoor Pony Moorland Scheme Currently have 20 in breeding newtake, and 20 in non-breeding newtake.</p>	
10	<p>Update from Dartmoor Hill Pony Association Sale posters circulated. Contraceptive programme in second stage. Mare numbers continuing to fall, and 2 areas (Walkhampton and Yennadon) now stallion free. Report of 2 deformed live born foals.</p>	
11	<p>Update from Dartmoor National Park Authority Litter and fly tipping issues are being addressed through promotional activities and awareness. Organised events were reminded not to leave litter behind. Messages on information boards could be strengthened. A small number of dog attacks on horses have been reported. South Hams are currently consulting on consistent dog control orders across the whole council area. Professional dog walkers are a concern as there is no restriction on numbers of animals being walked at any one time. This could be tackled through any revision of the Dartmoor Commons Act byelaws particularly under being a commercial activity.</p>	
12	<p>A O B Robyn Petrie-Richie is undertaking a master's degree reported back on her research into pony management across the country. She is still seeking opinions from farmers, particularly into the effects of contraception on ponies.</p>	
13	<p>Date and venue for next meeting Wednesday 6 November, 13.30pm, Princetown</p>	