



Cumann Lucht Capaillíní Chonamara
Connemara Pony Breeders' Society

MINUTES OF THE 97TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CONNEMARA PONY BREEDERS' SOCIETY

AT GULLANES HOTEL, BALLINASLOE, CO GALWAY ON SUNDAY, 13TH DECEMBER 2020 @ 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, 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, Ms Barbara Hoffman, Ms Joanne Hunter, Mrs Phyllis Jones, Ms Clare Oakes, Mr Henry O'Toole, Mr Daragh Kevin Ó Tuairisg.

SOCIETY MEMBERS PRESENT (ONLINE): Mr John F Brady, Mr Noel Brett, Mr John Burke, Ms Rachael Byrne, Ms Pauline Casey, Mr Anthony Casserly, Ms Pam Clingan, Ms Jo-Anne Coleman, Mr Patrick Conneely, Mr Mark Connolly, Mr Kevin Connolly, Ms Kitty Cotter, Mr Liam Cotter, Mr Conor Coyne, Ms Eleanor Curran, Ms Amy Curran, Mr Patrick Curran, Ms Talitha Diamond, Mr Cathal Dunne, Ms Patricia Dunphy, Mr Alexander Evans, Mr Paddy Feeney, Ms Esther Feeney, Ms Rose Fitzgerald, Mr Kieran Flanagan, Mr Enda Gavaghan, Mr Pdraig Geoghegan, Ms Deirdre Geoghegan, Ms Aine Geoghegan, Ms Triona Gorham, Mr Tomás Grimes, Ms Yvonne Halpin, Mr Pdraic Heanue, Mr P J Hegarty, Mr Kieran Higgins, Mr Cathal Higgins, Ms Joan Hinchliffe, Mr Paul Hussey, Mr Michael Igoe, Ms Grainne Kearns, Ms Deirdre Keegan, Mr Aidan Larkin, Ms Caroline Lydon, Mr Peadar Lydon, Ms Marcella Matthews, Mr Sean McAleer, Fr Christy Mc Cormack, Mr Michael McCormack, Mr Dean McGrath, Mr Lyndon McGrath, Mr Kieran McGrath, Ms. Emer McNamara, Ms Laura McWeeney, Mr Donal Mitchell, Mr Fergus Moloney, Mr Philip Morgan, Ms Finola Mulholland, Mr Brian Mullen, Ms Gemma Mulligan, Ms Emer Murphy, Ms Francesca Murray, Mr Noel Nee, Mr Ronan Nee, Ms Finola Nic An Iomaire, Mr Val Noone, Ms Denise Norton, Ms Casey O Connor, Mr Ger Ó Riain, Mr Andrew O'Donoghue, Mr Bertie O'Halloran, Mr Peter J. O'Malley, Ms Caoilfhinn O'Malley, Ms Bridget O'Sullivan Lee, Ms Karen Parker, Mr Dermot Power, Ms Ann Reade, Mr Micheal Reaney, Mr John Riordan, Mr Michael Ryan, Ms Amy Smyth, Mr Eamon Spain, Ms Cathy Stuffle, Ms Cliona Wallace.

APOLOGIES: Mr Jim Mullaney, Mrs Nicola Musgrave, Mr Hugh Musgrave, Mrs Cathriona O Toole, Mr Pat O'Toole.

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms Carol O'Connor (Secretary) Mr Declan Mannion (Auditor) Mr Shane Hartigan (IMS Media)

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: Ms O'Connor read the notice of the meeting.

1. ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2019:

Ms Conroy welcomed all present and stated that this meeting is being recorded.

Mr John Riordan proposed and Mr Fergus Maloney seconded the 2019 AGM minutes.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES:

Mr Noel Brett asked Ms Conroy to confirm that no fraud was detected in the year 2017 as stated in the annual report.

Ms Conroy confirmed this was correct.

Mr Brett referred to signed receipts on which he stated his name was forged.

Ms Conroy stated this is a civil matter.

Ms Conroy advised Mr Brett to put the matter in writing to the CPBS HR officer.

Ms Finola Mulholland referred to the eradication of ponies with HWSD asking how much progress has been made in the interim.

Ms Conroy stated the matter will be addressed later in the meeting in the President's address and Ms O'Connor will have statistics in her report.

There were no more matters arising.

3. ADOPTION OF THE SOCIETY'S FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2019:

Ms Conroy moved to the consideration of the Society's accounts for the year ended the 31st December 2019 and Auditor's report. Ms Conroy handed the meeting over to Mr Declan Mannion, Auditor, to address the meeting.

Mr Mannion introduced himself and gave a brief introduction to the audit of the company Cumann Lucht Capaillíní Chonamara, CLG., a company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital so there is no share owners as it were, so you are all members, one person one vote. Mr Mannion stated this is a typical structure used by societies such as CPBS whereby it is a large number of members all for a common purpose, that is relation to all things for the promotion of the Connemara breed.

Mr Mannion went through the year ended 31st December 2019.

Mr Mannion referred to the audit report, which was circulated to members. Mr Mannion read the salient paragraph:

"We have audited the financial statements of Cumann Lucht Capaillíní Chonamara CLG, the company, for the financial year until the 31st December 2019, which comprises the income and expenditure, the balance sheet, the reconciliation of member's funds, our related notes the financial statements included, and the summary significant accounting policies set out in Note 2. The financial reporting framework as has been applied is Irish law and therefore as in FRS 102 the financial reporting standards as applicable to the UK and the Republic of Ireland. In our opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view of the assets and liabilities and financial position of the company as at the 31st December 2019, and of its surplus for the financial year then ended and have been properly prepared in accordance with FRS 102 the financial reporting standards as applicable to the UK and the Republic of Ireland and have been properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2019."

Mr Mannion stated that in the Director's Report: *"We have obtained all the information and explanations we have considered necessary for the purpose of our audit. In our opinion the accounting records of the*

company were sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited and the financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records.”

Mr Mannion thanked Ms O’Connor, Mrs Grimes and Ms Conroy for their assistance in helping prepare the financial report for the members.

Mr Mannion welcomed any questions on the audited financial statements or the legal structure or framework of the company or anything in relation to the audited financial statements.

Ms Conroy thanked Mr Mannion for his report. There were no questions for the auditor.

Mrs Grimes (CPBS Finance Officer) addressed the meeting and gave a finance report and welcomed questions.

Ms Denise Norton referred to page 19 of the accounts and the heading for “Council and Society Meetings” stating there is a huge difference between 2018 and 2019.

Mrs Grimes made reference to the extra council meetings, the election and audit committee. Mrs Grimes detailed the costs/projects incurred in 2019 that the CPBS did not have in 2018.

Ms Norton thanked Mrs Grimes.

Ms Patricia Dunphy stated that the auditor mentioned outstanding debts to the Society at the end of the year. Ms Dunphy asked what they consisted of and if they would have been paid since then.

Mr Mannion addressed Ms Dunphy question in detail.

Ms Dunphy thanked Mr Mannion.

Mr Fergus Maloney asked Mrs. Grimes if she expected the same or similar expenses for the upcoming year.

Mrs Grimes addressed Mr Maloney question and referred to areas that the CPBS would consider to reduce and areas that cannot be forecasted.

Mr Noel Brett asked for a breakdown of how the €3,000 was spent on the Audit Review committee.

Mrs Grimes addressed the full cost of €3,051.

Mr Brett asked when did the company become so solvent that travelling expenses could be paid because that didn’t exist in 2017 and 2018?

Mrs Grimes referred to the procedure for claiming out of pocket expenses.

Ms Finola Mulholland referred to the use of technology going forward, to cut the costs of meetings.

Ms Conroy referred to the special allowance for companies to carry out meetings via zoom.

Mr John Riordan asked when was it introduced that council members would be paid travel expenses for going to and coming from council meetings.

Mrs Grimes explained that directors are not paid travel expenses to go to standard council meetings. Mrs. Grimes stated they are following the current financial procedures.

Mr Riordan asked if past council members could claim expenses retrospectively?

Ms Conroy stated the financial procedures and the CPBS constitution was revised in 2015 and that is the procedures we are currently following.

Mr Riordan stated he was happy once it is accordance with the Society's rules and regulations.

This concluded the questions from the floor. Ms Conroy asked for a proposer and seconder for the accounts year ended 31st December 2019.

Ms. Esther Feeney proposed and Ms Bridget O'Sullivan-Lee seconded the approval of the accounts.

4. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR:

Ms O'Connor informed the meeting of two quotes for the appointment of auditors for 2020.

Richard Grogan Chartered Accountant, 4 High Street, Galway and his quote for the audit was €3,900 plus VAT.

The second quote is from our current auditors, Mannion Lochrin & Co Market Street, Clifden and his quote was €2,750 plus VAT.

Mrs Grimes stated it is the CPBS recommendation that we continue with our current auditor, that is Mannion Lochrin and asked for a proposer and seconder.

Mr Ray Halpin proposed and Mrs Phyllis Jones seconded Mannion Lochrin & Co as the CPBS auditor for 2020.

5. MOTIONS:

Ms Conroy confirmed we have no motions for consideration by the AGM today.

6. ELECTION TO FILL VACANCIES ON THE CPBS COUNCIL:

Ms O'Connor informed the meeting that the election ballot count result took place on Saturday, 31st October in Claregalway Community Centre and the candidates were facilitated to log in via Zoom to watch the count. The elected council directors for the year 2020/21 are as follows:

Munster:	Ms Eimear Coleman	– Seat M2
Ulster:	Ms Joanne Hunter	– Seat U2
Leinster:	Mr Pat Geoghegan	– Seat L2
Connacht:	Mr Sean Carey	– Seat C7
Connacht:	Mr Martin Coyne;	– Seat C5
Connacht:	Mr Gearoid Curran	– Seat C6
Connacht:	Mr Henry O'Toole	– Seat C8

7. **PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS:**

Ms Conroy addressed the meeting as President of the CPBS.

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you all for joining us here today at our 2020 AGM. I am honoured to be addressing this meeting today as your President. I am very passionate about the Connemara Pony and I believe our pony has a bright future and I believe our pony is up there amongst the best equines in the world. To say 2020 has been a turbulent year would be an understatement, it has been very difficult for individuals, for families, businesses and organisations around the world, not just here in Ireland. During this pandemic I assure you our members and our breeders have been to the forefront of our business in these challenging times. We have managed with the assistance of our HR officer, Mr Ray Halpin, and our fantastic staff on site in Clifden to provide you, the members and breeders with a full office service behind closed doors during this turbulent time. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 situation we have had to cancel all our events, which included our Spring weekend, our Show Festival in August and our Christmas Festival which should be taking place this month. We can only look forward to a bigger and better 2021.

Ms. Conroy spoke about the CPBS inspections, Connemara ponies competing worldwide and HWSD.

Ms. Conroy thanked the breeders and members for their dedication for striving to improve the produce the best.

Ms. Conroy thanked the CPBS executive, sub-committees and the office staff. Ms. Conroy extended a warm welcome to the newly elected council members - Eimear Coleman, Joanne Hunter, Gearoid Curran and Henry O'Toole and to Martin Coyne, Seán Carey and Pat Geoghegan re-elected to council for another term.

Ms. Conroy thanked the outgoing directors, Mr Joe Gaughan, Mr Philip Morgan, Mr Andy O'Donoghue and Mr Michael Naughton.

Ms. Conroy thank the Department of Agriculture for their continued support, both financially and to be there to help and assist the CPBS in any matters.

Ms. Conroy extended the CPBS sympathies to the families and friends of the dearly departed throughout the year and expressed her condolences.

Ms. Conroy stated as a council we look forward to 2021.

8. **SECRETARY'S REPORT:**

Ms O'Connor presented the projects funded under the Department of Agriculture Equine Technical Scheme for 2020.

Ms O'Connor stated they are grateful to the DAFM for funding us for the HWSD test in older ponies, encouraging our breeders and members to get their older ponies tested.

Ms O'Connor presented a power point presentation on the HWSD statistics for foals born in 2020.

Ms O'Connor stated the CPBS with the support of the DAFM are making a lot of headway in encouraging our breeders to test and hopefully the funding will be there next year for your older ponies.

Ms O'Connor stated that while there was not a lot of competition taking place this year, the SJI Starfinder was able to take place a few months – the Connemara Pony Breeders' Society sponsored the highest

placed Connemara Pony and this year this was awarded to Cillian's Canal, ridden by Zuwena Barrett and owned by Kate O'Sullivan Co. Cork and bred by Cillian Carey, Co Clare and extended our congratulations to them.

Ms. O'Connor informed the members of the staff currently working in the office and thanked the breeders and members for their patience this year for how the office has had to adjust and how Weatherby's Scientific have had to adjust to the changes in relation to Covid.

Ms O'Connor encouraged members to use the online facility to pay their annual membership subscription

Ms O'Connor referred to projects undertaken by the office during lockdown which included, stallion adverts in the Irish Field – *we ran a project with them where our stallion owner could run a promotional advert for their stallion in the Irish Field. We joined forces with Teagasc to run an Equine Seminar – Lets Talk Equine Webinars – and we were very lucky to have Denise Norton and Grace Maxwell-Murphy as our speakers. Ms O'Connor stated they spoke on breeding and producing Connemara Ponies for today's market and for anyone that missed this it can be viewed on YouTube.*

Ms O'Connor encouraged anyone who has not submitted an application for the online stallion directory to do so before the Christmas. It is a continuous project that we want to improve and grow and we want more people to send in their stallion details for inclusion.

This concluded the secretaries report.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Fr Christy McCormack asked how many daughter societies we now have, stating that he is raising this question following an article in the Irish Farmers Supplement on the 24th November in relation to overseas societies, and particularly the UK which will now be outside the EU. How will CPBS be treating England as a daughter society?

Ms O'Connor informed Fr. McCormack that we have 17 daughter societies and as recently as last week we got notification from the Department that it is possible that we will still be able to conduct business as usual with the UK but could not comment any further on it because we had received no more detail at this stage.

Ms Ann Reade referred to the position of the HWSD stamp on the CPBS passport and could the CPBS look at putting it somewhere in the passport next to the identity of the pony.

Ms Conroy stated it was an issue that they have been working on that the DAFM have cleared them to print the HWSD result on the front of the passport beside the name going forward.

Ms Dunphy stated she was delighted to hear that the hoof wall status is going to be put on the front page of the passport and suggested some short explanatory note on safe and unsafe crosses, especially on breeding stock, might be a very good idea.

Mr John Burke recommended putting the HWSD status up on the boards at the sale when selling ponies.

Ms Conroy stated that the CPBS can make that recommendation to the sales but again that is out of our control, however agreed it would be very helpful if it was on their display board.

Mr Riordan asked in the event of a no-deal Brexit which is now looking more likely than ever, has the Department of Agriculture given any indication as to what the consequences may be as to the export of ponies to the UK, be they veterinary or otherwise.

Ms O'Connor stated the last meeting they had in October with the Department of Agriculture that the information that they were giving us at that stage wasn't confirmed and confirmation has only come through as late as last week and could not comment until she had spoken further to the Department representatives.

Ms Finola Mulholland referred to the issue of passport fraud and the removal of the last page of the passport and proposed printing the DNA profiles of the pony in the passport along with the markings and laminating it. Ms O'Connor referred to the EU legislation regarding the layout of equine passports and requesting approval for the addition of the HWSD stamp.

Ms Mulholland referred to the sharing of information with other PIOs for facilitating part bred registrations. Ms O'Connor stated we do work with other PIO where we share the marking and DNA profile in cases where only a sire or dam is confirmed with the CPBS. Ms O'Connor stated upon request they do share DNA profiles, however it is outside the remit of the CPBS to facilitate part bred passports for breeders from with another PIO.

Ms Mulholland stated she was glad to hear that there is some review of the constitution going ahead, stating currently among the aims of the society is the preservation and promotion of the breed so this may be an opportune time to add very important aims of health and welfare also.

Ms Conroy stated that it is something that we can get our committee on the Articles of Association to include and was sure that there wouldn't be a problem in taking that into consideration.

Ms Patricia Dunphy asked, as CPBS are reviewing the Articles and the Constitution, would it be possible to organise some part of the Constitution that will allow the CPBS to have further remote meetings. She stated it would save a lot of expense and a lot of logistical problems for people down the road.

Ms Conroy confirmed that is something that the Council are already discussing that have to consider going forward.

Mr Kevin Bolger addressed the meeting and presented a proposal put together by himself and Ms. Priscilla Diamond. Mr Bolger stated they are looking for a formula to have a place for the performance pony in the stud book.

Ms Conroy thanked Mr Bolger and clarified that if members wanted to comment they could email the office for the attention of the council.

Ms Denise Norton stated *that with regard to performance ponies, you should include - with Clifden pony competitions - high performance and green hunter, they are not what a lot of people would consider performance, because when you say performance now you are talking show jumping mostly. These are all for young ponies and ponies that are out there working hunter, and that is giving them somewhere to go.*

Second point, introducing a little bit of blood – if our pony is already a little light of bone, and a little light of their middle, they are geared more towards the performance type. She didn't understand the reason for bringing back blood for that side of it. She stated that breeders really need to concentrate on keeping our type because once lost it is lost forever. She stated it might be a good idea for the performance committee or the council to run bursaries for young riders and performance ponies. She was not too sure about their not having a place in the stud book, maybe also introducing for the fillies that they be loose jumped at inspection – provided that they don't have a foal at foot themselves or not in foal, or too old or whatever - really to work with what you have got rather than change things too much.

Mr Bolger stated in answer to Ms Norton's question *that they were proposing that all fillies be three years old for inspection and when a three-year-old filly would be included in the sports section she would be jumped as part of her inspection. Also, currently if you look up the Society's website the performance committee only has loose jumping – that is all it has under its remit.*

Ms Norton stated when she was on the performance committee the green hunter was a big part of performance as well. *The last year I was there we were helping with the high performance, I know that is run by the Show committee, but it is performance. Also with your filly being jumped I wholeheartedly agree – but if there is loose jumping for fillies at inspection there is actually no need to put her in a sports or performance pony section – she is judged on what she produces on the day.*

Ms Norton stated, *You said in your speech that it is harder to find a Connemara Type pony now than a blood pony and like I say once you lose type, you lose type forever, you don't get it back too easily.*

Mr Bolger felt that *the problem we have is that the two of them are together at the moment and at the moment we are not protecting the type. Mr Bolger stated that if you split the studbook in two you can 100% protect your type, you can breed back into each other, you can cross performance and type back into each other but you have the basis to protect your type.*

Ms Norton stated that is happening anyway.

Mr Fergus Maloney stated his concerns would be starting to introduce outside blood again.

Mr Darragh Ó Tuairisg stated *we have seen this in other studbooks where traditional breed standards are competing with other perceived performance equines. The breeding committee is preparing a proposal for project funding for 2021. A part of that funding will come under the conservation of genetic resources for food and agricultural grant aid programmes.*

Ms Casey O'Connor addressed the meeting. She stated that she *just found it interesting about introducing the blood into the studbook. What she was wondering is, are you just talking thoroughbred or if you look at the show jumping classes on the continent. If you were to open up another studbook as your sports pony studbook or whatever you may call it, is it just open to the thoroughbred or are you going to try and breed the scope back into the Connemara pony. For bigger level jumping it takes a very special Connemara pony to jump around the 130 mark abroad. The Connemara pony once dominated the top-level show jumping and now she didn't know if there is even 2% jumping the big level abroad. Is just the thoroughbred or is it open to all types of blood if it does run.*

Mr Bolger stated *that was why they mentioned the blood. Very few Connemara's are doing 120s. For them to go that little bit further we need to inject that little bit of blood. we go away from foreign blood, whatever it may be, he will do a metre or a 110 but he is never going to be at the top.*

Ms Casey O'Connor stated she thought it a very good idea to give them an injection of blood just to produce them and help them over the line. *The ISH did not just stick to the draught and the thoroughbred, they incorporated the foreign horse as well to get what we have today. If we inject a little bit of it into the Connemara just for the performance and the future progeny that are jumping, and that it will be a great idea in the long run for show jumping and the Connemara pony itself. It will get the Connemara pony up the line.*

Ms Finola Mulholland stated *this has been a very long running debate and would like to remind people that long ago the Irish horses that were jumping were second to none. But look at what has happened them, they have gone away from that standard - your seed corn of a proper Irish Draught, where would*

you find that now? She doesn't want to see that happening to the Connemara pony. You have got that type and substance, and also versatility there – they mightn't be absolute superstars but people have fun with them and they enjoy their character and their good temperament.

Ms Conroy thanked Mr Bolger for his proposal and the meeting for the discussion.

Ms. Conroy thanked everyone for their participation in the meeting. Ms. Conroy stated they had a very constructive AGM and wished everyone a very happy Christmas and a peaceful and happy New Year. Ms. Conroy thanked IMS for providing the facilities for us today behind the scenes and thanked the hotel for hosting the AGM.

This concluded the business of the meeting