



Cumann Lucht Capailliní Chonamara
Connemara Pony Breeders' Society

MINUTES OF THE 99TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CONNEMARA PONY BREEDERS' SOCIETY

AT THE CLAYTON HOTEL, GALWAY ON SUNDAY, 27TH NOVEMBER 2022 @ 12.00 PM

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Dave Sheedy (President & Chair), Gearóid Curran (Vice President), Fiona Grimes (Finance Officer), Patrick Geoghegan (Company Secretary), Ulla Connolly, Martin Coyne, Ciarán Curran, Daragh Kevin Ó Tuairisg, Kevin Bolger, John F Brady, Clare Oakes, Peter J O'Malley, Pierce O'Malley, Alan Woods.

SOCIETY MEMBERS PRESENT: Roger Brady, Clemerson Braga, Noel Brett, Michael J Burke, John Burke, Sean Carey, John Cashin, Martin Clancy, Sean Cleary, Patrick Collins, Séan Conneely, Kevin Connolly, Ann Marie Conroy, Conor Coyne, John Cryan, Eleanor Curran, Derek Delapp, Priscilla Diamond, Eugene Doyle, Patricia Dunphy, Kieran Egan, Una Marie Egan, Thomas Faherty, Tom Feeney, Esther Feeney, Mary Flaherty, Hubert Flaherty, Patrick Flanagan, Michael Flanagan, Michael Flannery, Joanne M Flynn Hunter, Paraic Folan, Enda Gavaghan, Aine Geoghegan, Kathy Geoghegan, Seamus Geoghegan, Thomas Geraghty, Damien Gill, PJ Hegarty, Cáit Hennessy, Patrick J Heskin, Kieran Higgins, Pdraig Hopkins, Lee Hurney, Paul Hussey, Grainne Kearns, Deirdre Keegan, Seán King, Peadar Lydon, Eddie Madden, Jerry Mahon, Liam McAlinden, Gerard McCormack, Conor McCormack, Christy McCormack, Christopher McCormack, Martha McDermott, Kieran McGrath, Lyndon McGrath, Fiona McGrath, Michael Moran, John Mulligan, Leisa Murphy, Martin Mylotte, James Naan, Finola Nic an Iomaire, Denise Norton, Seán Ó Cualáin, Páid Ó Cualáin, Grainne O'Brien, Matthew O'Dowd, John O'Dwyer, Caoilfhinn O'Malley, Éadaoin O'Malley, John Joe O'Neill, Bridget O'Sullivan Lee, Cathriona O'Toole, Dermot Power, Rónán Reaney, Micheál Reaney, Michael Ryan, Amy Smyth, Eamonn Spain, Brian Tuohy, Tony Walsh, Sharon Walsh.

APOLOGIES: Phyllis Jones, Padraic Heanue, Kathleen Gielty-Cunney, Tom Mullen, Tom King, Eimear Coleman, Una Egan, Robert Egan, Cathy Snow Coyne, Camilla Coyne, Henry O'Toole, Joe McNamara, Sacha Maxwell, Patrick Curran, Ray Halpin, Katie Curran, Amy Curran, Richard Lyttle.

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms Carol O'Connor (Secretary), Emer McNamara (Administrator), Áine Uí Fhoghlua (Administrator).

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: Ms Carol O'Connor read the Annual General Meeting Notice for 2022. Mr Sheedy opened the meeting by welcoming all attendees, stating that the meeting will be recorded and asked to give pause in remembrance of friends who have passed during the year. Mr Sheedy then accepted apologies for absence.

1. ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021:

Mr Sheedy asked if there were any matters arising from the minutes the 2021 AGM meeting (07.11.21). Mr Daragh Ó Tuairisg raised an objection stating that he was recorded as being present at the meeting but he wasn't.

The minutes were subsequently proposed and seconded.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES:

There were no matters arising.

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

The 2021 accounts were published on the CPBS website and were also available by request from the office. Mr Declan Mannion (Mannion Loughrin Accountants & Auditors Clifden) presented an overview of the 2021 accounts. He began by explaining the 'Directors Responsibilities Statement' in the accounts. Directors are required to prepare financial statements each year according to the Companies Act 2014.

Their role as auditors is to evaluate the accounts, controls, procedures, content and so forth to determine if the accounts presented are a fair and true representation. He reported to the meeting that they found this to be a clean audit report and were confident that the financial controls, policies, content had been properly applied for the financial year by the Company.

Covid restrictions still had an impact during 2021 but Government support meant and the return of some activities (such as Inspections) meant that the CPBS had a healthy income. Costs had also risen but that is expected as services resume. The CPBS has a strong healthy position financially going into 2022. Mr Mannion offered to answer any questions from the floor and if he wasn't in a position to answer now but he would follow up by email.

Mr John Joe O'Neill asked about the cost of Inspections. Ms Fiona Grimes gave a breakdown of the costs involved and also noted that in 2021 there were both Spring & Autumn Inspections rather than just one held in 2020 hence the increase in costs. He then asked about payroll, computer costs, directors expenses & inspections again.

Mr Dermot Power asked regarding the 'out of pocket expenses' for directors as he had submitted numerous written requests to view same but was denied under the Freedom of Information Law. He wrote to the Freedom of Information Officer and the reply (which he read out) was that this only applies to public bodies which the CPBS is not. He then contacted the DPC regarding this and the reply was that this is commercial data and GDPR does not apply. He asked what is the council hiding and asked for more transparency. Mr Power asked Mr Sheedy if they have an Audit & Risk Committee. Under the Charities Act there must be a Code of Governance which states that all Directors must be trained. Mr Power asked the Chair if he will allow the expenses for 2021 to be inspected.

Ms Ann Marie Conroy made a statement clarifying that individual expenses is personal data and by publishing this it would be personal data within commercial data and would be subject to GDPR. Without permission by each individual, the CPBS would not legally be in a position to disclose such information.

Mr Kevin Bolger agreed with Mr Power and called for more transparency from the Executive.

Mr Mannion advised that SORB accounting is not mandatory yet but will be implemented in due course.

Mr Power questioned how much progress the CPBS have made with CRA compliance.

Ms Priscilla Diamond asked that her resignation date be corrected to the 12th July. She asked for a breakdown of the show income for 2021 as there was no show held due to covid. Ms Grimes advised that in addition to grants received there were 2 charitable donations included in that figure. Ms Diamond asked for a breakdown of the Council & Society Meetings expenses which Ms Grimes provided.

Mr Jerry Mahon asked the President if the CPBS a Certificate of Compliance. Mr Sheedy responded that he is satisfied that the CPBS is in compliance.

Mr Bolger stated that it was agreed the money raised by Freezepony was for the purpose of erecting a statue of a Connemara Pony in Clifden, not given to the Centenary Committee. Mr Bolger questioned what exactly expenses are? Ms Grimes explained that Directors are not paid expenses for council meetings but would be entitled to for other meetings and then explained how vouched expenses for Inspections work.

Mr Brett asked for the Directors expenses to be open and transparent. Ms Grimes advised that the detailed accounts were visible in the office for anyone to view coming up to the AGM, so they weren't being hidden.

Mr Power asked the President to confirm if he is allowed to view the expenses as requested.

Mr Sean Cleary felt that the questions on expenses were not being handled well and suggested that the expenses be published without the individual directors' names (Director A, Director B and so on).

Mr Daragh Ó Tuairisg referred to last year's AGM minutes regarding HSI publishing Directors expenses and that Ms Conroy said they would take that on board. He asked if this had been done.

Ms Grimes proceeded to give the breakdown of expenses to the meeting (without names) as per Mr Cleary's suggestion.

Proposer for the 2021 Accounts: Ms Fiona Grimes

Seconded by: Ms Ann Marie Conroy

Counter proposed by: Mr Kevin Bolger – as he proposes that any member can go into the office and view the accounts.

Seconded by: Mr John F Brady

Mr Bolger withdrew his counter proposal and the accounts were adopted.

4. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR:

Mr Carol O'Connor read out the quotes from auditors to the room (Four companies were contacted but only two provided quotes). Mr Dermot Power proposed Declan Mannion of Mannion Lochrin as the auditor for the CPBS for the forthcoming year (2022). This was seconded by Fr Christy.

5. ELECTION TO FILL VACANCIES ON THE CPBS COUNCIL:

Ms O'Connor read out the results from the CPBS Council Elections as follows:

Connaught seats were taken by:

Mr Daragh Kevin Ó Tuairisg (C9 – 3 Yrs)

Ms Ann Marie Conroy (C10 – 3 Yrs)

Mr Kevin Bolger (C11 – 3 Yrs)

Mr Pierce O'Malley (C12 – 3 Yrs)

Leinster seats were taken by:

Ms Clare Oakes (L3 – 3 Yrs)

Mr Alan Woods (L1 – 2 Yrs)

Munster seats were taken by:

Mr Andy O'Donoghue (M3 – 3 Yrs)

Ms Ulla Dorothea Connolly (M1 – 2 Yrs)

Ulster seats were taken by:

Mr James Naan (U2 – 2 Yrs)

Ms Nicola Fitzgerald (U1 – 1 Yr)

Congratulations were extended to all concerned.

6. MOTIONS:

Mr Sheedy thanked everyone who had submitted motions to the AGM and remarked that some of the motions were very positive. After reviewing them – in the company of Mr Andrew Coonan (solicitor) and Mr Pat Geoghegan (Company Secretary), some were found to be in contradiction to our Articles & Memorandum of Association so would have to be disallowed. Copies of the 42 motions were handed out to the meeting.

Motion 1: Mr Kieran Higgins – that all council meetings be available to view/listen to by the ordinary members. Disallowed, as in contravention to Article 20(1) (Mr Sheedy read out details of this article). This would require a special resolution (EGM).

Motion 2: Mr Kieran Higgins - that all sub-committee meetings be available to view/listened to by the ordinary members. Disallowed – for same reasons as Motion 1.

Motion 3: Mr Kieran Higgins – that the 2023 and all subsequent AGMs be held in February to facilitate having more recent accounts for review. Disallowed, as this would affect the allocation of seats & rotation of council officers.

Motion 4: Mr Kieran Higgins – that all accounts be published in same year and show individual expenses per director. Disallowed on the grounds that the Society have a responsibility under GDPR to the directors. Mr Higgins withdrew this motion on condition that the director expenses are listed going forward.

Motion 5: Mr Kieran Higgins – that all future AGMs should be held in person plus virtual to allow members to access. Also, Motion 6: that all voting on Motions should be in person plus virtual. Mr Sheedy would like to support these motions but this would have to be passed by way of special resolution at an EGM (2020 & 2021 AGMs were virtual under the Emergency legislation passed due to Covid only). Motion disallowed.

Motion 7: Mr Kieran Higgins – That the CPBS publish weekly metric for passports tracking, kits issued, complete passport applications received, DNA kits with Weatherbys, passports issued, passports exceeding 4 weeks. Ms Carol O'Connor replied that in her report later she will be outlining a new function that will provide a lot of detail that will be beneficial to the breeders, but that Mr Higgins' breakdown on figures was very unfair and that there is a lot more work carried out in the office than just passports. Mr Power stood up to say that the staff are under huge pressure and that the office are under staffed and people need to be realistic about what's possible. Motion was carried.

Motion 8: Mr Noel Brett – Executive of 2021 and 8 council members who invoked Article 13(2)(suspension of tree members) are held responsible for the costs of court cases. Disallowed, matter currently before the High Court.

Motion 9: Mr Noel Brett – the audit review body set up in 2018 re: 2018 AGM not being properly run and also Motion 10: The audit review body in relation to the Rosedale Casper case; refund to the society circa €3,100 as motion passed at 2018 AGM was not adhered to. Disallowed, as members acting on the behalf of the Society a Company limited by Guarantee with Charity status cannot be held personally liable for costs as they are indemnified under our Articles of Association.

Motion 11: Mr Ritchie Rice – Change to Memorandum of Articles be changed. Mr Sheedy began by offering both his and the Society's condolences on Mr Rice on the loss of his son. Mr Pierce O'Malley asked that it be carried on compassionate terms to be discussed later. Motion carried and will be brought to Council.

Motion 12: Ms Priscilla Diamond – That the voting members will select the judges for the 2023 show (all classes), the 10 judges with highest score going into a hat. Also, that the rings are assigned on the morning of the show and not beforehand. Ms Ann Marie Conroy asked if this would be by ballot to which Ms Diamond said yes. Ms Conroy outlined the costs incurred for election ballots to be approx. €3500 to €4000 and estimated this exercise would cost approx. €6000 asked if this were a good use of members money to do this to pick judges?

Ms Patricia Dunphy suggested online voting. Ms Conroy counter proposed based on the costs involved. A vote was taken and the motion was carried.

Motion 13: Ms Priscilla Diamond – An amnesty (for minimum of 24 months) for any CPBS registered pony (not just fillies) with Class 3 parents be eligible to be brought out for inspection. Proposed by Fr Christy, Seconded by Mr Kieran Higgins. Motion carried.

Motion 14: Ms Priscilla Diamond – Currently members are charged €20 for a copy of council meeting minutes - All paid up members should be allowed to have a copy of council minutes free of charge. If printed/posted copies requested then a small fee could be charged. Disallowed, Mr Sheedy explained that the Society is in compliance with the section 216(13) of Companies Act.

Motion 15: Ms Priscilla Diamond – That all stewards & scribes be properly trained following a score sheet being tippexed at the 2022 show. Any amendment to a score be initialled by the judge (no tippex to be used) and the sheets available for viewing after the class. Proposed by Amy Smith, Seconded by Grainne O'Brien. Motion carried.

Motion 16: Ms Priscilla Diamond – the CPBS have a criteria for each class (rider, tack, spurs, etc) and the checklist steward then gives a pass to the rider or handler that they have been passed before entry to the ring or warmup area. Ms Sharon Walsh suggested putting the criteria on the entry forms then this would not be necessary as the judge will decide. Proposed by Mr Noel Brett, Seconded. Motion carried.

Motion 17: Ms Grainne Kearns – Why are the CPBS not allowing breeders to contact Weatherbys in relation to passport delays? Mr Sheedy advised that this is not the case.

Motion 18: Ms Grainne Kearns – Establishment of a Knowledge & Risks Committee made up of non-council members. Disallowed, as this is the authority of the council to appoint committee members. Mr Power stated that every society in the country has a Knowledge & Risks Committee and asked that 5 people be selected today. Mr Sheedy stated that this will not be debated.

Motion 19: Ms Grainne Kearns – Investigative & Disciplinary Committee be reinstated immediately. Mr Sheedy advised there is one in place, it was never removed.

Motion 20: Ms Grainne Kearns – Family membership be introduced, with overall fee and one vote. Disallowed, as article 20(i) does not allow, this would have to be done by way of special resolution to EGM.

Motion 21: Ms Grainne Kearns – Change of ownership of on an animal be dated on the day of receipt of that paperwork in the office, and not on the date it has been actioned. Ms O'Connor went through some of the factors which can complicate matters such as forms received but no fee or passport or EPN and so on. Proposed by Mr Kevin Bolger, Seconded by Mr Noel Brett. Motion carried.

Motion 22: Mr Kevin Bolger – Erect a statue of a Connemara Pony somewhere in Clifden to commemorate our 100th Years, possibly of Canon Ball. Also a plaque in Oughterard where the Society was formed. Mr Sheedy confirmed a plaque has been planned for Oughterard already. Proposed by Mr Pierce O'Malley, Seconded. Motion carried.

Motion 23: Mr Kevin Bolger – the CPBS President to be elected by the members. Disallowed, as per article 20(1) of the Articles of Association. However this could be dealt with by a special resolution via an EGM.

Motion 24: Mr Kevin Bolger – the CPBS Executive should not act as inspectors or take part in inspections during their term in council. Disallowed, Discriminatory.

Motion 25: Mr Kevin Bolger – The showgrounds in Clifden to be opened up for other events and usages during the year. If the Showgrounds are deemed not fit for purpose then sell it and move out of town to more space. Proposed by Ms Priscilla Diamond, Seconded by Ms Denise Norton. Motion carried.

Motion 26: Mr Kevin Bolger – Regarding the judges for Clifden Show, a judge cannot judge again in Clifden for 3 years and he would like it extended to 5 years. Input from the floor clarified that it is 5 years. No votes needed.

Motion 27: Mr Kevin Bolger – Members of the Show Committee should not be allowed to exhibit at the annual Clifden Connemara Pony Show. Disallowed, Mr Sheedy stated that this would be discriminatory.

Motion 28: Mr Kevin Bolger – To review the process of issuing Passports and Kits – if you purchase your DNA kit before 1st July then you receive a €10 discount or incentive. Ms Ulla Connolly felt it unfair to penalise people for foals born after 1st July. Proposed by Mr Damien Gill, Seconded by Ms Joanne Hunter. Counter proposed by Ms Connolly, seconded by Ms Denise Norton. Motion went to vote and was carried.

Motion 29: Mr Kevin Bolger – Vote of No Confidence in current Executive. Disallowed, as this matter is currently before the High Court and therefore cannot be discussed.

Motion 30: Mr Daragh Ó Tuairisg – The minutes made available to all members equally. Disallowed, based on the fact that Society are in compliance with our obligations under Company Law, specifically Section 216(11).

Motion 31: Mr Daragh Ó Tuairisg – The expenses of all individual Directors be published in the Annual Accounts. Disallowed, for reasons discussed earlier during the approval of accounts. However they will be visible as 'Director A', 'Director B' and so on.

Motion 32: Mr Daragh Ó Tuairisg – That an Independent investigation be made into why 2021 ballot papers differed to those in 2022. Proposed by Mr Pierce O'Malley, Seconded by Mr Kieran Higgins. Mr Sheedy asked Mr O Tuairisg did he require an explanation or an investigation. Mr Sheedy then discussed Article 19(v) and that they had no discretion to either correct or incorrect a nomination form. Mr O Tuairisg agreed with Mr Sheedy that they had no option other than to eliminate the candidates. Motion carried.

Motion 33: Mr Daragh Ó Tuairisg – That the Executive officers are subservient to the Council and should have a report and minutes available to the ordinary council members a week before the monthly meeting. Disallowed, this is referenced currently in an affidavit to the High Court so cannot be discussed.

Motion 34: Mr Daragh Ó Tuairisg – The ordinary council members are entitled to copies of all correspondence and recommendations 7 days before Council meeting so as to make informed decisions. Disallowed, as it is in breach of Article 20(1).

Motion 35: Mr Daragh Ó Tuairisg – That elected Council members can liaise with ordinary members regarding all matters. Mr Sheedy advised this was already in place and was not a problem.

Motion 36: Mr Daragh Ó Tuairisg – that the Council and Breeding Committee endeavour to secure funding for the preservation of the smaller 13.2 ponies. Input from the floor asked for this to be amended to read 128 to 138 cm ponies. Motion carried.

Motion 37: Mr Daragh Ó Tuairisg – that the Council and the Inspection & Breeding sub committees endeavour to plan, protect and give due consideration of the conservation of rare and outcross bloodlines within the stud book. And that a plan is formulated and available in advance of next year's AGM for the members of Society to approve. Proposed by Ms Patricia Dunphy, Seconded by Ms Sharon Walsh. Motion carried.

Motion 38: Mr Daragh Ó Tuairisg – That the Cumann Lucht Capailliní liaise with the Dept of Agriculture, Food & Marine for funding to carry out a genetic study on the breed. Proposed by Mr Conor Coyne, Seconded by Mr Johnny Brady. Motion carried.

Motion 39: Mr Daragh Ó Tuairisg – That the Cumann Lucht Capailliní prepares reports and results on the Linear Profile system that has been used for the Classification of ponies into the Studbook. Proposed by Mr Pierce O'Malley, Seconded by Mr Kevin Bolger. Motion carried.

Motion 40: Mr Daragh Ó Tuairisg – that the Cumann Lucht Capailliní ensure that personnel engaged for the role of safety officer will have the necessary qualifications and be competent in the role. Proposed by Mr Kevin Bolger, Seconded by Mr Johnny Brady. Motion carried.

Motion 41: Mr Daragh Ó Tuairisg – that all personnel engaged in Inspections, show preparations or any Society business that involved physical activity are deemed fit by a medical practitioner. Disallowed, Mr Sheedy explained that this would be highly discriminatory.

Motion 42: Mr Daragh Ó Tuairisg – that Cumann Lucht Capailliní & Education Committee will run both Judges and Inspectors courses in 2023. Proposed by Mr John Burke, Seconded by Mr Pierce O'Malley. Motion carried.

That concluded the motions for this meeting.

Mr Conor Coyne commended everyone who had put forward motions for the thought and detail that had gone into them. He went on to say that coming into the Centenary Year we should be looking forward and making a plan of where we want to be in 5, 10, 15 years and putting motions forward that support those goals.

7. SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Ms Carol O'Connor gave her report for the year starting with the grant funding applied for and awarded for 2022. Details were given specifically to the funding awarded by the Dept of Agriculture for the years projects. The volume of transactions processed by the office was outlined, showing the growth up to 2020, slight dip then due to Covid but growth again from 2021 onwards. The number of ponies tested for Hoofwall were listed with the breakdown of how many N/N, N/HW and HW/HW.

Ms O'Connor stated that she recognised services were not as good as they should be during the year but pointed out that this was due to staff shortages, with existing staff also suffering illness over the summer months and some staff members are part time not full time. She also pointed out that the office are responsible for other things such as the annual Four Day Show which is a huge additional workload on the office for months before the event and happens during an extremely busy time of year.

Database upgrades and improvements - Ms O'Connor noted that the functionality to track passports was of particular interest to breeders. A new feature update will allow breeders to apply for their DNA kit, track their passports, complete transfer of ownerships, renew membership, updated GDPR preferences, view animals owned by you, and view your account purchases. Ms O'Connor gave a presentation with screenshots of the new system and went through all the services that will be available.

A cause for concern has been the increase in Repeat samples required by the lab. In 2021 the lab requested 44 repeat samples, so far in 2022 they have requested 122. On speaking with Weatherbys it seems the samples are not good enough to test, and we have updated our sample envelopes to reflect what is required. Weatherbys prefer communication to remain between the CPBS and breeders, rather than their resources being tied up by phone calls from CPBS customers. Going into 2023 we hope to have the office fully staffed and running efficiently. It's also planned that Weatherbys will update/amend their reporting system slightly to integrate with our system more efficiently. It's hoped that the phones and doors to the office will be opened more next year. Looking at quick statistics, from August to November we took in 6900 incoming calls and managed to answer 3874 of them. The office has taken onboard the feedback and hopes to provide a better service to our breeders in 2023.

Lastly Ms O'Connor acknowledged the pony Carn Verdon Boy who passed away this year, as he was an ambassador for the Connemara Pony and excelled in the discipline of Dressage.

Mr Brett asked if the sanction could be lifted so that CPBS customers could speak to Weatherbys and also regarding the amnesty maybe the lab could do a general search to find the parentage for ponies that the parentage was unknown. Ms O'Connor advised that Weatherbys had advised that they are not doing blanket searches, that this is no longer a service offered by them. Ms O'Connor also advised that it wasn't a 'ban' on people speaking to Weatherbys rather an agreement in place, to keep things simpler and streamlined.

Mr John Joe O'Neill asked if a page could be in the passport for the seller & new owner to complete to fulfil the Change of ownership. Ms O'Connor said that this was a possibility and perhaps a committee could look into it.

Mr Matt XX are there many stallions standing at the moment that are Full blown for Hoofwall and if so, why is this allowed? Also if you're late renewing your membership he would like to retain his original number and why is this not possible? Ms O'Connor said they would take the feedback onboard and asked for input from the Breeding Committee for the HW question. Ms Ann Marie Conroy advised that under EU Legislation any full pedigree animal is entitled to breed, and we as a Breed Society cannot stop them.

Mr Jerry Mahon asked for clarification on the ownership of DNA? Mr Sheedy advised they are still awaiting an update from their legal advice.

Ms Grainne Kearns asked if it were possible to have a choice between using Blood or Hair samples for the DNA submitted to the lab. Ms O'Connor stated that this is unlikely as Weatherbys will be moving to a new testing system next year, which will allow both the parentage & HW to be performed together along with other markers that the current system can't provide. Ms O'Connor will however ask Weatherbys if they will accept blood samples.

Mr Kevin Bolger asked if the Society have a representative to attend the Marts around the country to perform Change of Ownerships etc? He asked how are the stables allocated at the Clifden Show? He felt that preference should go to stallions and then to people who have travelled long distances, rather than a local show committee member using up a stable. Also if you have an older pony with no microchip but the passport is lost, and the breeder is very ill, how will that pony get a replacement book if the lab are no longer running blanket searches?

Mr Michael Burke (Kinamara Stud) stated that he purchased a mare called Doe Rose in 2012. No chip, no problem until 2019 when she came back as not the dam of the foal. Ms Emer McNamara did her very best to resolve the issue as the foal was sold to a neighbour who needs the book. Mr Burke stated that he is in contact with Weatherbys every single day and that they told him that 'the CPBS think they own the database, and will not allow them to open the database to get his DNA and issue him with a passport'. Mr Burke claims he has exhausted all possibilities and rang the lady sitting in front who replied 'there's too much time wasted on this mare' and hung up the phone. Mr Burke went on to say that he 'doesn't know what the 6 are doing in that office'. He has spoken to his barrister and his legal team are ready to go, and he's going to go to the law with the CPBS and that he has to sue the person that hung up the phone. Mr Burke stated he is giving 3 weeks notice before he goes to the High Court. Ms O'Connor replied to say that everyone in the office is well aware of his case and she won't have him speak negatively about anyone in the office, when they have gone over and beyond what they can do in this case. She went on to give a brief outline of the extensive investigations taken by the staff and the lab in trying to resolve this. Mr Burke was asked to take a hair sample from Doe Rose, which he did, but it matched a different mare in his herd. Ms O'Connor stated that this was a very complicated case and read out a report from the lab saying they cannot find an exact match for this mare on their database and that the staff have been in constant communication with him and have exhausted all we can do to try and help to resolve this for Mr Burke. Mr Burke wants Ms O'Connor to email the lab and ask them to perform a search on their database for him. Ms O'Connor read out the line from the lab report again stating that the lab cannot find a match on their database. Mr Burke stated that Weatherbys informed him, they can find his DNA, if the CPBS send an email requesting they search for it. Ms O'Connor advised Mr Burke that he himself can request Weatherbys to run a search of the non CPBS ponies to which Mr Burke was adamant that the pony is a registered Connemara. Mr Power stated that the staff are working at 150% and it is extremely unfair to criticize them – he stated that the Executive need to put a proper office structure in place with adequate staff. Mr Sheedy agreed and advised that 2 new members of staff have just started and it had been agreed at the previous council meeting for an external HR company to do a complete audit of the office.

Ms Grainne Kearns asked if anything can be done for Weatherbys to speak with breeders and Ms O'Connor advised that the lab were never told they couldn't, but she would liaise with Ms Kearns directly on this.

Ms Emer McNamara stepped in to the discussion as she is very familiar with the details of Mr Burkes' case. Ms Namara outlined the parentage of Doe Rose, and that Mr Burke had bred foals from Doe Rose that were registered until 2019 when it came back as a dam exclusion, and the same again for the 2021 foal (dam exclusion) which suggests that Doe Rose is not Doe Rose. Two samples were taken by the vet Philip McManus from the two bay mares. The sample submitted for Doe Rose qualified as actually being Tra Chalaigh Bhfuinnse. So the sample taken for Tra Chalaigh Bhfuinnse was sent in but it didn't match Tra Chalaigh Bhfuinnse, it didn't match Doe Rose, it didn't match the sire or dam of Doe Rose. They then ran a search on their database and could not find a match for that pony – they have done that work already, and they have reported that back to the Society in writing. The only way another search would work in the lab is if another pony has been registered since then which is highly unlikely as the mare is still in Mr Burke's ownership. It is clearly a mix up between 2 mares, but who the other mare is remains

unknown. Ms McNamara advised that she personally went through every single mare ever owned by Mr Burke that was Bay, Brown, or Roan and asked the lab to run the search against them but none of these qualified. Ms McNamara advised that the CPBS are at a dead end, Mr Burke is at a dead end and Weatherbys is at a dead end. Running the same search again won't change the outcome.

8. PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS:

Mr Sheedy welcomed everyone to the 2022 AGM. Reflecting on the year gone by he expressed how positive it is that despite the challenges of Covid over the last few years, the Connemara pony trade has remained strong. Centenary celebrations for the CPBS will commence on 12th December and he acknowledged the wisdom & bravery of the founding members who saved the pony from near extinction by establishing the Society – an incredible achievement especially considering the circumstances in this country 100 years ago. The first council meeting of 2023 will be held in Oughterard in the same location as the very first CPBS council meeting.

Mr Sheedy spoke about the Inspections and the introduction of bone measurement for fillies is proving successful and useful. Hoofwall affected ponies are still being bred and he asked for breeders to make more informed decisions when breeding and we must strive to eliminate this disease from our national herd.

A highlight of the year was the induction of two members into the Hall of Fame – Mrs Brigid Snow & Mr Jimmy Donoghue. Our annual show returned this year after two years on hias due to covid and we had our stand at the RDS which was very successful as always. We were delighted to welcome a new daughter society this year – the Czech Republic and the initiative by Conor Coyne of Kylemore Abbey to send a Connemara mare & foal to the Irish National Stud in Kildare was an inspiring initiative.

Mr Sheedy acknowledged the achievements by 2 Connemara ponies Cornafest Fred and Carhu Melody on the Irish Pony Eventing team winning gold at this years European Championships. Congratulations were also extended to Skaardans Delicious Love who was the first Connemara pony to win Supreme Champion (up to & incl 148cm) and then Reserve Champion at HOYS. The CPBS have a huge responsibility to preserve & develop our gene pool to ensure this success continues as top-level competing ponies are being produced from an increasingly reduced gene pool.

One of the largest challenges facing the CPBS presently is the effective stewardship of the organisation. In recent years deep divisions have arisen specifically within council, and these relate to a wide range of core issues many of which are personally driven. It is vital that we find a way to work together so that we have a period of stability for the organisation going forward. The CPBS office has faced challenges during the year but Mr Sheedy was confident that with the employment of additional staff and an evaluation by an external HR company we will see an improvement in services to our members in the coming year. Mr Sheedy thanked Ms Carol O'Connor and the office staff (including Ms Emer McNamara & Ms Áine Ui Fhoghlua who were present) for their hard work during the year. He also thanked members of the council for their hard work, and thanked the Dept of Agriculture for their valued support with funding throughout the year.

Mr Sheedy finalised by wishing that 2023 will continue to see global success for the Connemara pony and as we look forward with hope and excitement to our Centenary Year he wished everyone Health, Wealth & Happiness.

9. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Inspections (Ms Clare Oakes, Inspections Chair) – 46 colts were inspected in Spring with 20 of these gaining Class 1 status. 414 fillies were inspected in Spring with 355 gaining Class 1. A decision was made to measure the bone on all fillies brought out for inspection for 2022 going forward. In Autumn, 27 colts were inspected with 18 gaining

Class 1. 376 fillies were inspected in Autumn with 318 gaining Class 1. Ms Oakes thanked the Inspections team for their hard work.

Performance (Mr Pat Flanagan, Performance Chair) – the Connemara pony has excelled to new heights internationally, the Connemara pony is now represented on various national teams globally. We should be looking at expanding into the Asian countries such as China & Japan as there is a market for them. In 2021 the performance committee setup a scheme to identify performance mares and award merits based on the disciplines they competed in throughout their lifetime (Performance Assessment Indicators). Due to very few entries in 2022 it was no longer viable, but hopefully it can be revisited in 2023.

Annual Show (Mr Pat Geoghegan, Show Chair) – After extensive flood damage in 2019 & covid, the Spring festival was ran this year again in March with special thanks to the Show committee for their extensive work in getting the grounds in pristine condition again. The Spring festival started out with colt inspections, a young breeder’s workshop was held and our annual Stallion Parade was held on the Sunday with 28 immaculately turned-out stallions showcased on the day. Thanks to all involved. The annual show was held during a record-breaking heatwave yet we had 546 entries. Thanks to all for getting the grounds in such pristine condition ahead of the event. A special thank you to all our show sponsors – without their support the show simply couldn’t go ahead and we are hugely grateful. We had some new classes this year so some classes were moved to better spread them out over the days. The Loose Jumping competitions were held on the Tuesday in the newly extended sand arena which proved very successful and the show was opened by Joe Connolly. Mr Mairtin Nee was given an award for his outstanding service and dedication to the show over 64 years and Mr Geoghegan thanked him again for all his work over the years. Some new classes were added this year including mini young handlers, 4-6 Yr old stallions and a new in-hand mare class, working hunter & ridden ponies not exceeding 138cm. Mr Geoghegan thanked all the competitors, committee members and volunteers, and also a huge thanks to the office staff for the weeks and months of work leading up the show and show week. Thanks also to council members who helped and the hard-working grounds & show committee.

Education (Ms Ulla Connolly, Ms Education Chair) – We held a breeder’s workshop at the Spring weekend with a local vet on preparing your mare for the breeding season and also an Inspections section. We then ran a Young Breeders workshop the next day for which was very successful. Early in the year Arena Party training was run with 6 new members now on the team. Refresher inspections training was run over 3 days, with 42 inspectors completed. Posters were designed also for hoofwall (quick guide and buyer beware).

Marketing (Ms Ulla Connolly obo Ms Eimear Coleman, Marketing Chair) - The marketing committee had various projects during 2022 such as bulk text notifications for members, An Capaillin was launched at the Spring weekend, as usual the CPBS had a stand at the RDS which was an excellent marketing opportunity with over 1200 members attending. There is also a 2023 calendar which is now available and will be for sale at various events and from the office.

International (Ms Carol O’Connor obo Ms Phyllis Jones, International Chair) – The CPBS were delighted to accept the Czech Republic as a newly recognised society in 2022 and were presented with a perpetual cup for their annual show. A survey was undertaken of the daughter society’s breeding programmes and the differences were discussed in detail at the ICCPS technical meeting in Clifden in August. Following this, daughter societies were asked to review their programmes as appropriate and where needed amend them to bring them into line with the CPBS’s breeding programme. A review should be taken in a years’ time to check on progress.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Ponies that are measured overheight at inspection, then measured within height - which vet was right? Mr Sheedy responded that the CPBS have full confidence in our vet at inspections but the appeals process allows for a remeasurement and we have no input on that.

Is it true that a stallion (Rosedale Casper) was judged Class 2 at inspection but it was overruled by council and they made him Class 1? Mr Sheedy advised this matter was currently before the High Court so they were unable to make any comment on it.

Amy Smith: Why did the Inspections committee amend the rules so that no colt/stallion shall be presented in another jurisdiction within the same calendar year as the previous inspection? Ms Oakes advised that this was a motion put forward but couldn't recall any further detail. Mr Sheedy advised that there was a lengthy discussion on the topic at the time but he would need to check back the notes for the detail, and he would get back to Ms Smith on the matter.

Kevin Bolger: Why are Directors not getting up to date council minutes? Mr Sheedy advised the CPBS are in compliance with regulations regarding minutes. Mr Bolger asked Mr Sheedy to reconsider his position as President. Mr Bolger also stated there should be a solicitor present at the AGM.

From the floor: Regarding a proposal made by Mr D Ó Tuairisg that Directors be allowed to liaise with ordinary members, that clearly doesn't happen as seen on Facebook – members have asked council members to raise something at a council meeting only to be told they have to contact the Secretary. Mr Sheedy replied that this is absolutely not true and it is one of the duties of being a council member is to represent the people that elected you, any member of council is entitled to act on behalf of an ordinary member. Mr Daragh Ó Tuairisg confirmed that members have approached him from outside of Connaught as they couldn't get help from their local representatives.

Roger Brady: If I pass away can my family use my prefix? Ms O'Connor replied that if he sends a letter or email to the office stating the names of people he would like to have use of the prefix then the office can add them, there is no charge.

Noel Brett: Why is there discrimination in the Society today? Mr Sheedy replied that there is no discrimination in the society.

Note Brett: Why is there no answer to my correspondence? Mr Sheedy replied that any correspondence received gets answers. Ms Amy Smith also stated she has not received an answer from council. Mr Sheedy advised that the matter was fully addressed and closed.

Mr Sheedy then thanked everyone for their attendance and this concluded the 2022 AGM meeting.