



Cleveland Bay Horse Society

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BREED COMMITTEE REPORT TO THE MEMBERS

Annual General Meeting 2026

The Committee

Dan Cracknell stepped down as Chair of the Breed Committee in June, and the Committee would like to thank him for his work in leading the Committee through the first part of the year. Since June, the Chair's responsibilities have been managed jointly by the Committee, and this arrangement will continue until a new Chair is appointed following the AGM.

Registrations and Foal Numbers

2025 foal registrations have now risen to 16. Official 2026 foal registrations to date remain very low, reflecting the wider decline in breeding activity across the equine sector. Members are asked to submit foal registrations promptly, as early and accurate figures are important in preparing the Society's annual HBLB application.

The Committee would also like to remind members that a full-term foal which dies at birth, or shortly before or afterwards, can still be registered and receive the applicable HBLB foal grant, provided that a hair sample is submitted to the Society and a foal registration form is completed.

Stallion Licensing

There has been an encouraging increase in basic licence applications this year, which may prove positive for the future of the breed's male lines. Five basic licence applications and one QA application have been received. Kenley Tuvalu and Bearpaw Boone have both subsequently been awarded a basic licence.

The Society's licensing forms are currently being updated. Jess Odgers has kindly rewritten the veterinary inspection report to help improve consistency between veterinary practices, and a new bone measurement form has been introduced to provide greater clarity around the Society's measurement methodology.

Grants and HBLB

Mare maintenance, stallion maintenance and foal grants have been paid throughout the year from the Society's HBLB award.

The HBLB application cycle has also changed. Previously, the Society applied each February for a grant year commencing in April. Applications are now made in the autumn for the following calendar year. The Committee is currently preparing the application for the January–December 2027 period, which is due to be submitted by 1 October 2026.

Genetics

Following a meeting with Weatherbys Ireland in July, the Committee is considering whether the Society should move from microsatellite parentage testing to SNP genotyping.

SNP testing has the potential to provide additional information, including direct measurement of inbreeding from DNA, identification of previously unknown parentage and, in time, the ability to distinguish Cleveland Bay DNA from that of other breeds. The Committee's approach is to establish the potential benefits, costs and practical implications

before committing the Society to any new testing programme.

There are currently no recorded cases within the Cleveland Bay of the known heritable conditions associated with other breeds. The Committee is therefore also considering whether the Society should support post-mortem examination of foals lost under six months where the cause of death is unclear, together with retaining full SNP profiles. This could provide useful information should patterns emerge in the future. Mandatory founder testing for entrants to the grading register, based on their originating breed, is also being considered.

No decisions have been made on these proposals at this stage.

The Year Ahead

The Committee's priorities for the coming year are to complete the 2027 HBLB application, progress the licensing cases currently in hand, and continue its review of the Society's genetic testing options.

The Committee would like to thank all breeders, owners, veterinary practices, volunteers and members who have supported its work during the year. The continued health, genetic integrity and future breeding of the Cleveland Bay remain at the heart of the Committee's work.

On behalf of the Breed Committee