

Meeting Minutes
Cleveland Bay Horse Society
Council Meeting
Wednesday 23rd April 2025
1930 BST

Present: Matthew Stonehouse (MS), Catherine Lea (CL), Claire O’Connell (CO), Norma Wilson (NW), Daniel Cracknell (DC), Maggie Brown (MB), Elaine Keith (EK), Mary Ann Reay (MAR), Sarah Kirk (SK), Tierney Hill (TH)

Absent: N/A

Apologies: Karen Wylie (KW)

General Business:

MS opened the meeting and declared it quorate. Apologies were received from KW due to internet issues. No conflicts of interest were declared.

Minutes:

Amendments to the previous minutes were discussed, including typographical errors and incorrect names. The Council agreed to vote by email, with responses due by Sunday. MS will recirculate the amended version post-meeting for final approval.

Breed Committee Report:

SPARKS Transition and Grassroots System:

DC and CL reported ongoing integration issues, including login difficulties, syncing failures, and non-intuitive interfaces. The system performs poorly on iOS devices. Only a few members contacted the society directly, despite substantial social media feedback. Council reiterated that issues must be formally submitted by email for resolution.

Linking ownership records—especially for loaned or jointly owned horses—remains problematic. NW and CL reported major operational challenges regarding passport processing and member record access.

SPARKS Access for Non-Members:

MAR queried whether there was a backup method for accessing mating data. CL clarified that although full exports are not available, SPARKS sheets can be provided upon request. Members and non-members alike may request individual horse data from the society.

DNA Preservation and Cloning:

Council noted that a member was considering genetic preservation from a live animal, and had mentioned the potential for future cloning. The Breed Committee will begin discussions, and seek advice before drafting guidelines regarding cloning; with attention to gene pool implications.

Grants and Committee Activities:

Breeding grant forms are now available online. CBHS has been awarded £27,000 for April–December 2025 via the HBLB. Discussions are planned around White Star assessments, HBLB 2026 planning, and colt retention strategies.

Grading and Assessors:

The Council is working to reinstate an Assessor System and initiate succession planning for additional assessors. EK attended a recent Breed Committee meeting in support of this.

Promotions & Publicity (P&P):

CO reported that the annual magazine is nearly complete. A digital release prior to printing was discussed and supported by Council. Obituaries are being prepared for Ellen Walton (pending confirmation). The USA regional report is also being finalised by SK.

Shows Committee:

EK confirmed strong entries for Royal Windsor (17 purebreds, 12 part-breds), including horses entered by HM The King. Former Council members will manage the CBHS stand. CO and EK have coordinated logistics and volunteers.

The "Search for a Star" qualifier received strong interest and resulted in qualification for Your Horse Live. Council agreed this was a valuable platform for the breed and supported future participation.

Sponsorship for Addington is in place through anonymous donors and external sources. Ongoing funding for future years remains under discussion.

Treasurer's Report:

CL noted that £32,000 of the £33,000 HBLB grant has been successfully spent. Recent outlays included passport covers and the Grassroots platform setup. CL reminded Council that the society must contribute 20% of all HBLB spending and emphasised the need for new fundraising efforts.

Fundraising:

MAR proposed running an online fundraising auction using an external platform. Members would donate items or experiences, with auction bids submitted online alongside descriptions and photos. The platform Jumble Bee was suggested based on prior successful use by the Bedale Hunt. Other ideas discussed included reinstating the 100 Club, AGM raffles, and local open days hosted by breeders. Some Council members expressed interest in a coordinated "Ride a Bay Day," possibly integrated with the Cleveland Bay Camp or regional events.

Any Other Business:

Matters Arising:

N/A

Memberships for Approval:

- New Joint Membership: Hannah Lydotes & Dr Cassandra Uricchio
- New Single Membership: Sarah Kelman

MB Proposed, DC Seconded, & approved unanimously.

Electronic Communication:

Council discussed the societies' reliance upon private trustees for video communication subscriptions. It was pointed out that as meetings were primarily carried-out in the form of video conferencing then either a subscription for the society should be purchased or another free alternative sought. Currently Zoom was utilised, however only two Council members had paid subscriptions and a longer-term solution was required. MS to write a report on options available etc and distribute to the Council.

DEFRA Part-bred Registration Update:

The Council acknowledged that there had been some discussion, and up-set on online forums regarding DEFRA's recent communication to breed societies that had been registering part-bred equines in their main studbooks when they are not eligible; with an order to stop immediately. MS and CL noted that this was not applicable to the Society, as all current zoo-technical rules etc. were being followed by the Society. The Society is able to continue to issue part-bred passports in the same manner and format as before the recent DEFRA communication.

Other:

NW confirmed receipt of a donation from the Privy Purse; CL confirmed it appeared in the accounts as a supplementary donation. NW will send a thank-you letter.

EK confirmed The Bridge had been booked for the AGM on Saturday, 18th October 2025.

CL noted that accountancy costs had increased in recent years, and that the Society had not tendered since 2017. CL proposed approaching a few firms to acquire quotes. Unanimously approved.

Council acknowledged ongoing challenges with member communications and encouraged all members to submit feedback through formal channels.

Meeting Adjourned: 21:06 PM

Next Meeting Scheduled: Thursday 5th June 2025 at 19:30 PM