

Chair's Report to the Society Members

Dear Members,

It is my privilege to present this Chair's Report as we approach our Annual General Meeting (AGM). As many of you may know, I was co-opted onto the Council in late November and subsequently took over the role of Chair in late February, succeeding Liz Worthy. On behalf of the Council, I would like to extend our sincere thanks to Liz for her dedicated efforts and contributions during her tenure.

As we move forward, I am grateful to work alongside a group of enthusiastic volunteers who have dedicated much of their time and energy to the Society. Their passion for the Cleveland Bay horse and commitment to the Society's mission is something I truly appreciate. However, I must also report that there is a significant deficit in our volunteer numbers, which is impacting our ability to function at full capacity. We are currently unable to carry out some of the vital activities, including fundraising, as efficiently or timely as we would like.

This shortage of volunteers has meant that we are unable to take on many of the additional tasks and initiatives we have planned. There are many things we would love to do, but the reality is that we need more hands to make these ideas a reality. I strongly encourage any members who may be interested in supporting the Society in a more active capacity to come forward. The need is real, and without additional help, we will continue to face limitations in what we can achieve.

The Society's financial position is another area of concern. While we are not in a desperate state, the current trajectory is one of deterioration. In light of this, I have undertaken a thorough financial analysis of the Society's accounts, and activities. A full report with recommendations will be made available to the new Council, and I believe these recommendations will be essential in securing the long-term financial sustainability of the Society.

A topic that has generated some interest from members is the status of our patronage. I can confirm that I have written to the Royal Household twice this year regarding this matter, and my predecessors have also made similar inquiries. Unfortunately, to date, we have not received any response. While this is disappointing, we continue to hope for a positive outcome in the future.

As always, our focus remains on the Cleveland Bay horse. We strive to be a welcoming Society, and we hope to see you at the upcoming Annual General Meeting. If you are unable to attend in person, please feel free to contact me directly with any questions or thoughts you may have.

Thank you once again for your continued support. Together, we can continue to work towards a brighter future for the Society and for the Cleveland Bay breed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M. Stonehouse', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Matthew Stonehouse
Chair, Cleveland Bay Horse Society