

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Suffolk Horse Society  
held at 2.00pm on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2023  
Heath Court Hotel, Newmarket**

**Present:** The President: Mrs Fiona Fleming  
Chairman: Mr Mark Donsworth  
Company Secretary: Gail Sprake  
President Elect: Mrs Mary Ryder Davies

**In attendance:** Office Co-ordinator: Jess Ellis & Karen Evans, scrutineer from Ensors Accountants

**Members, Friends & Associates (40 signed in and present in room)**

Sue Wager, Cheryl Grover, Mark Donsworth, Abby Marshall Wyer, Paul Wyer, Fiona Fleming, John Fleming, George Pratt, Mary Keeble, Hazel Chapman, Chris Spalding, Neil Adams, Julie Wallhead, Gill Evans, Keith Twentyman, Paul Smith, Sophie Keene, Bruce McKim, Neil Syrett, Mary Ryder Davies, Matthew Bundock, Peter Bundock, Jonathan Purse, Jayne Groom, Gail Sprake, Louise Kemble, Adrian Hoskins, Andrea Hoskins, John Latham, Sandy Walne, Andrew Thompson, Christine Thompson, David Chaplin, Tegan Mould, Maggie Hallett, Jeffrey Hallett, Philip Ryder Davies, Ben Ryder Davies ( plus two further names which were unclear)

The President, Mrs Fiona Fleming, opened the meeting by welcoming those present.  
Jess Ellis confirmed the housekeeping / fire evacuation procedures and asked all to turn off mobile phones.

Gail Sprake as Company secretary confirmed the voting procedure to the room.

**1. Apologies for absence were received from:**

Mrs Sue Pennell, Mr Daniel Bunting, Mr Stephen Bunting, Mr Peter Crockford, Ms Miriam Newell, Mr Charles Cooke, Ms Dale Atkinson, Mr & Mrs Oakley, Mr Richard Dalton, Mr Bruce Smith, Mr Matthew Burks, Ms Jenny Jones, Mr & Mrs Hayter, Mr Fred Barrelet, Mr Barry Atkin, Mr Tom Walne, Mrs Spalding, Mr Graham Miles.

Also received apologies from Mr Alan Hawes & Mrs J Turner that were missed when reading out at the meeting.

MD read out names of Members, Friends and Associates known to have passed away since the last AGM:  
Mr Richard Hurlock, Mr Ian Redman, Mr John Leyton, Mrs Annabelle Swain, Mr WT James, Mrs Linda Banfield, Mr Mumford, Mr Richard Lee, Mr George Paul, Mr Bernard Adams, Mr Randy Hiscock, Mr Anthony Fitter, Mr Colin Wood, Mr Lawrence Hoskins, Mr John Kerr, Mr John Hargreaves.

Fiona Fleming ask all to pause for a minute's silence.

**2. To confirm the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Society held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2022**

The Minutes were confirmed as a true and accurate record by all present and were signed by Mark Donsworth.

Proposer – Fiona Fleming

Secunder – Chris Spalding

The Official Scrutineer confirmed the following:

In the room  
All in Favour - 28  
Against – 0  
Abstained – 23

Proxy Votes  
All In Favour -52  
Against – 1  
Abstained – 3

Total Votes –  
All In Favour 84  
Against – 1  
Abstained – 26

The Minutes were duly approved.

### **3. Chairman's Report for 2022**

#### **4. The Chairman of Council, Mr Mark Donsworth, gave his report:**

“Good afternoon and can I say how wonderful it is to see such support from all over the UK. We have now put those two disruptive years of Covid behind us and I can look back at the last three years and what we have achieved as a Society.

I promised from the day I took over to take a thorough look at the Society and to not shy from those issues that would prove to be controversial and indeed may alter the equilibrium, but it was and still is my belief that issues should be discussed robustly, discussions should take place and a common consensus be reached. In all decisions I have reverted to the Trustees and all decisions have been made at these meetings which are held bi-monthly.

I have said in the last two Chairman's reports that at the heart of a strong society is a strong balance sheet and once again Alan Hawes has steered us through a year which has seen massive movements on our investments and as always has seen his “pessimistic budgets” proved to be wrong and great results once again shown. But we must not be complacent, we are budgeting on about £50K deficit in 2023 and this only goes to show how important our reserves are. Grants will be guaranteed and the financial worries that affect so many small charities should not affect us while under such strong and able stewardship. Thank you, Alan.

In 2021 we created the first Suffolk Owners' Handbook, a working document that has in conjunction with the website kept all owners up to date with all forms and ways to apply for grants and many other bits of essential information.

A small subcommittee also has worked on the review Articles of Association and other documents to ensure that the Suffolk Horse Society is fit for purpose in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Keeping up with Company Law and Charity Law is essential and we are extremely lucky to have such a capable Company Secretary who has led this subcommittee. Can I thank them for the detailed work they have considered and thank them for providing us with the minor changes that you see today on the agenda.

The existing Articles of Association have been updated to include relevant provisions from the Charity Commission's model Articles of Association. It is this update that we shall be asking you to vote on shortly. Some of these provisions have been introduced specifically following the Covid pandemic so as to enable the smooth running of Suffolk Horse Society when it may not be feasible to hold meetings. For example, the new Articles will give us the ability to hold virtual meetings. And the provision for Council members to declare interests or possible conflicts of interest is included – these are all vital for the continued smooth-running of a national charity.

A summary of the proposed amendments has been shared with all members in the recent magazine, and of course available on our website.

I hope that members will support the revision of the Articles and the Special Resolution today so it can be adopted. However, if the Special Resolution fails to secure enough votes then the status quo remains, and we continue to function with the current Articles of Association.

Council has proposed the updates in accordance with the standard Charity Commission model articles - all proposed changes have been carefully considered and are and fully discussed with the benefit of legal support and I, together with all trustees, commend the revised Articles of Association to you.

The review of Good Practice, Governance and Management of the Charity have played an important part in our review of all aspects of Suffolk Horse Society dealings and will stand us in good stead to move forward. The Society has lost many great supporters and many great horsemen over the years but 2023 was particularly cruel. We sadly lost George Paul late in 2022. He was a previous Chairman, President and great gentleman, and an amazing supporter and fund raiser for the Suffolk Horse Society.

In February this year a stalwart of the breed, Bernard Adams, passed away, again a Chairman and past President whose memory will last long within the Society. Then in March we heard of the untimely death of Randy Hiscock, a great man taken too early from us, his enthusiasm for the breed and the massive contribution he made to its awareness in the South West, he will be remembered as a lovely man and great horseman.

In March John Kerr died, a long standing supporter and with his wife Jill, an owner and breeder at Easton Farm Park, they supported the Spectacular both in effort and financially to make those memorable days at Easton such a success.

And most recently another stalwart supporter of the breed, Lawrence Hoskins, whose support for Andrea when President and for the breed in general will be another sad loss to the Society. Our thoughts are with all their families.

So many people give so much for our breed, whether it is those breeders and owners, those helpers that assist at our shows, and indeed all that lay on the shows that enable this wonderful breed to be seen by so many. Can I thank personally so many of you who give up your spare time, the Trustees who work unceasingly to support the breed, and their partners who put up with the late hours and long meetings. I must also at this point thank our office staff Jess and Belinda for all their hard work and support over the last three years. Thank you. One other person I must also thank on behalf of the Society is Jeff Hallett, who is stepping down as a Trustee after this meeting, he has given unceasingly over his time in many roles particularly as Chairman and also in the major role he played in the rural past project where he put together such fantastic material and protected our rural heritage. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do. It was my delight last year to receive delivery of our new show vehicle now fantastically wrapped. It is proving to be a real eye-catching crowd puller at events, as always, these things don't just happen, and with over fifty requests from shows for us to attend we will be making a full impact around the country. Our thanks must go to Belinda from the office for the huge commitment she has shown in spreading the word and also her very able assistant Russell who supports her so much, we are truly indebted to you for the passion and hard work you put in. Thank you.

So what have we achieved in the last three years? Over 100 foals born, distribution of over £100,000 in grants and supporting the Suffolk Horse, a clearer format for owners and breeders to register, and fully comprehend what is available to them. We have now a semen bank that should and could protect us if something drastic were to happen. Over 722 straws are now being held with more hopefully collected this year. The Society and its breeders have fully embraced the SPARKS System and it is now playing a large part in the selection process that most breeders take. I must thank Dr Andy Dell for all his support and guidance that he has given, not only given to me but to the Society in general, you have been amazing. Thank you. The Articles of the Suffolk Horse Society state that we the Council are here to protect the purity of the breed. The Trustees have taken this very seriously over the past three years and indeed before my tenure. We have looked at various projects and one in particular was the Genomic Project. Whilst this was considered at great length, it was agreed that more research was needed and greater consideration needed to be given as to how any data gained would be used. It was potentially an expensive project and we were adamant that we needed to review any potential genomic project more fully and consider how results would be released, before embarking upon such a study. I am pleased to be able to tell you that at the Scientific Committee meeting earlier this month, the committee has embarked afresh upon giving their full consideration to an in-depth scientific study.

The Anglo American issue has been discussed many times and indeed dialogue has been started. However, the ability to treat these horses in the same way poses a number of issues that still prevents us from treating them in the same way as UK Suffolks. At present the Society is unable to recognise the American Suffolks as their pedigrees are not recorded in the same way and indeed the bloodlines are not traceable, the Society does not run with the same rules of entry in to the studbook as the UK and it is also considered at this stage it would be more beneficial that the two populations should remain separate on a genetic basis and that at this current time it could be considered a retrograde step to combine the two populations.

The community that relies on social media has taken a platform that could do so much good for the understanding and benefit of the owners and breeders; unfortunately, social media has been used to spread disinformation and discord with no recourse or justification. Sadly, over the last three years I have had to deal with many cases of complaint and indeed in some cases of harassment and bullying. All the cases where this has been reported in the correct manner I have taken very seriously and I have dealt with them in a way that I have felt appropriate. This Society has no place for bullying, harassment, corruption and indeed the use of social media for the furtherance of one's personal vendettas is totally inappropriate. I, my Vice Chairman and our Stud Book Secretary have been subjected to harassment, abusive language and accusation of improper behaviour, as have in some cases the Trustees. We have had to absorb these verbal and written assaults from those who have been so quick to write, email and post such comments on social media. I would therefore like to reaffirm very clearly that these individuals should be aware that while their personal fight, disagreement or vendetta may make them feel better, it is the Suffolk Horse community which suffers both morally and financially. Such behaviour is condemned by so many. Those few people who are happy to write untruths and in fact lie to further their own personal goals should make sure that they are correct. Advice should be given by people who are fully informed, not those trying to influence for personal gain. None of our Trustees gain anything other than the grants that are distributed to all horse owning members as listed in the Annual Report. The Council has been threatened with being reported to the Charity Commission, Companies House, The Horseracing Betting Levy Board, and other funding bodies and some Trustees threatened personally with action. As a member you should know that I and our Company Secretary have spoken personally to all those organisations and I can state here and now that no concerns were raised on specific points that we raised and we have, due to the barrage of criticism, taken legal costly advice in order to protect this wonderful society. I will state as I stated last year, I will not stand by and see the Suffolk Horse Society's good name be put at risk, indeed nor will I stand by when anyone attempts to slur its good name and reputation. I am sorry that valuable resources that so many of you have worked so hard to raise have to be squandered on people who consider themselves supporters of the Breed. It has been a privilege and honour to have been your Chairman for the past three years. Can I acknowledge the fantastic Council members who I have had the privilege to serve with and thank them for their loyalty and hard work. I must thank our two staff members Jess and Belinda. Thank you for all that you do. But there are two ladies in my life that have been immense and indeed without whom I would not have been able to carry out so much work and achieve so much – Sue Wager – your knowledge, your support and commitment to this breed is amazing. Thank you. And Gail Sprake, my Vice Chairman, and Company Secretary – the work you do, the eye for detail and your red pen! – it has been my honour to work alongside two such incredible ladies.

MD asked if anyone had any questions. None were raised.

#### **5. To receive the Annual Report and Accounts for 2022**

Fiona Fleming confirmed that the Suffolk Horse Society Treasurer had sent his apologies. She stated that the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 had been reviewed by Independent Accountants, and that the Report & Accounts had been correctly posted on the Society's website and hard copies have been sent to anyone who had requested them.

Mark Donsworth read out a report from Alan Hawes:

"I am sorry that I cannot be with you today as I have a previous family engagement in Worcestershire that I will be attending.

I would refer to the accounts on page 7 which shows the income and expenses of the Society for the year.

As you will see, membership subscriptions have increased which is partly due to the work at shows and events in attracting new members and also in our own recording of membership data which has meant we have recovered more subscriptions from members.

The other major item of income was the amount of legacies received. These came to £161,000 which has made a considerable difference to the financial position of the Society. Investment income has also increased which following the review of investments in 2021 was to be expected. Our total income was some £371k against £277K in 2021. Thanks to the work of George Paul in obtaining grants and donations for the breeding fund that were some £87,000.

Expenses were also higher but we achieved a net income surplus of £147,000. The one disappointment was the net loss on investments. This loss is not an actual loss as this is the movement in the value of investments in the year. The 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 was a particularly low point for valuation of investments and since that time our investments have increased in value by £ 30,012. The markets have been very volatile for the past six months but I am hopeful we will continue to recover some of the lost value during the remainder of this year. It should not be forgotten that in 2021 the investments increased in value by £132,606 so taking the two years together to date, the gain has been around £39,000.

Turning to page 8, this is the Balance Sheet of the Society as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022. Tangible assets have increased with the purchase of a van for use at shows and events. This will provide accommodation for staff who attend the shows as well as being able to hold more stock for customers to buy. At the present time most items had to be ordered at shows and these were then sent off from the office during the following week. This is time consuming and costly in labour and postage terms so to hold more stock at shows will reduce considerably the number of orders that have to be dealt with in the office.

As mentioned in the report, the trustees have decided not to include semen stocks as an asset in the Balance Sheet. Some semen stock is unlikely ever to be sold and it is difficult to value the remaining semen stocks as to what its true value is. This accounts for the reduction in stocks in the Balance Sheet and also shows as a cost of £25,746 in the Income and Expenditure account.

The net asset value at the 31<sup>st</sup> December is some £1,315,345 up by £24,000 for the previous year which leaves the society in a good financial position going into 2023.”

Mark Donsworth asked if any questions from the Treasurer’s report – there were none.

To adopt the Annual Report & Accounts:

Proposer – Fiona Fleming

Seconder – Cheryl Grover

The Official Scrutineer confirmed the following:

In the room

All in Favour - 33

Against – 0

Abstained – 5

Proxy Votes

All in Favour -49

Against – 2

Abstained – 5

Total Votes –

All in Favour - 82

Against – 2

Abstained – 5

Fiona Fleming confirmed that the proposal to adopt the 2022 Accounts Report and Accounts has been carried.

**6. To appoint Accountants for 2023**

Fiona Fleming confirmed that the Council recommends that Ensors be appointed as the accountants for the Suffolk Horse Society to act as such until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting.

Proposer – Neil Adams  
Secunder – Chris Spalding

The Official Scrutineer confirmed the following:

In the room  
All in Favour - 30  
Against –23  
Abstained – 1

Proxy Votes  
All in Favour -52  
Against – 1  
Abstained – 3

Total Votes –  
All in Favour - 95  
Against – 24  
Abstained – 4

Fiona Fleming declared the Proposal to appoint Ensors as Accountants for 2023 has been carried.

**6. To elect a President.**

Fiona Fleming confirmed her final duty as President of the Suffolk Horse Society has been to chair the Annual General Meeting up to this point. Fiona was pleased to confirm that Mrs Ryder Davies has accepted the invitation to serve as Suffolk Horse Society President for 2023 / 2024.

Proposer – Chris Spalding  
Secunder – Jonathan Purse

The Official Scrutineer confirmed the following:

In the room  
All in Favour - 29  
Against – 23  
Abstained – 0

Proxy Votes  
All in Favour -49  
Against – 3  
Abstained – 5

Total Votes –  
All in Favour - 92  
Against – 25  
Abstained – 5

Fiona Fleming declared that Mrs Ryder Davies was confirmed as the Suffolk Horse Society President for 2023/2024.

The retiring President addressed the meeting:

“Over the past 50 years of having Suffolk Horses, I’ve had the privilege of going to places I would never had gone to without the Suffolk Horse – from doing displays for the Queen’s “Celebration of the Horse” at Ascot, parade for the President of the United Arab Emirates, the National Stud amongst other events. These amazing ‘highs’ also come with the devastating ‘lows’, when you lose your precious Suffolk through colic, foaling, grass sickness etc. – many of you will know exactly what I am talking about and I know the trustees on the council can identify with this completely. When we hit these ‘lows’ we all question ourselves – why do we keep going on?

Because the Suffolk has – as the French say “Je ne sais quoi” – an indefinable quality, a uniqueness that creeps into your heart, your soul, and leaves you passionate about the Suffolk breed. Each and every one of us are passionate to see the Suffolk Horse thrive and go from strength to strength. That is why we are here today, and having trustees with a deep knowledge of the history of the Suffolk Horse is paramount to the safety and the future of the breed.

This knowledge and understanding how the Society works can only be acquired over time and to this end I have immense admiration to all the trustees who have dedicated hours and hours of time, commitment and discussion to achieve the best possible results for the Suffolk Horse.

It is also with regret that I have to say I have been disgusted by the way a few members have been extremely rude and threatening both on social media and in emails towards our Chairman, Company Secretary and Trustees – there is no place in our Society for this kind of behaviour. By all means ask questions – but with respect, and please remember if your question needs a council decision – it will held over until the next council meeting.

I believe the Suffolk Horse has a very positive future going forward with more young stallions being licensed and mares going to stud. There are 11 foals born so far this year and many more yet to come.

This past year has seen us return to normality with shows and events, and it has been a delight to watch people enjoying themselves either as spectators, helpers, or with their horses.

I thank you Mark for being Chairman for the past 3 years and under very challenging conditions at times. To all the trustees serving on the council and to all of you, for your support to the society throughout the year. And now I welcome Mary Ryder-Davies as our new President and I hope you enjoy your year ahead. Thank you.”

#### **Presentation of the President’s Award**

Fiona Fleming confirmed that she would like to award the President’s Award to Russell Large for all he has done volunteering for the Suffolk Horse Society on the Suffolk Horse Society stand. Unfortunately Russell was unable to attend the meeting. Fiona will present Russell with the award at the Suffolk Show in May 2023.

Fiona Fleming passed the Suffolk Horse Society Presidential Chain of Office to Mrs Mary Ryder Davies.

Mary Ryder Davies gave a welcome speech:

“Before we move onto item 7 on the agenda I would like, on behalf of the members, to express the Society's gratitude to Fiona Fleming for her very positive contribution during a busy, but we hope enjoyable, year as President.

As well as being involved with Council and Committee meetings, she continued to prepare the horses, show successfully in the ring and attend Society events with the family, putting Suffolks before the public in a very positive way. A huge thank you goes to you Fiona.”

Mary Ryder Davies then took over chairing the Annual General Meeting.

#### **7. To elect a President Elect.**

Mark Donsworth confirmed the Suffolk Horse Society Council's nomination for President Elect for 2023/2024 is Neil Syrett.

Proposer – Cheryl Grover

Seconder – Jeff Hallett

The Official Scrutineer confirmed the following:

In the room

All In Favour - 28

Against – 1

Abstained – 21

Proxy Votes

All In Favour -54

Against – 3

Abstained – 3

Total Votes –

All In Favour - 93

Against – 4

Abstained –24

Mary Ryder Davies confirmed Neil Syrett as the President Elect for 2023/2024.

#### **8. To elect Council Members.**

Eight candidates submitted their nomination paper for election to Suffolk Horse Society Council. There were six vacancies for 2023 and a ballot had therefore been legally and professionally conducted with all completed ballot papers returned to the Independent Scrutineers.

Mr Frank Kinge, Mr John Latham, Mr Bruce Langley-McKim, Mr Adrian Hoskins, Mrs Lawrence Hoskins, Mr George Pratt, Mr Chris Spalding and Mr Neil Syrett

The Official Scrutineer read out the results:

187 ballot papers received

3 ballot papers blank

1 ballot paper spoiled

183 votes cast

The Independent Scutineer declared the votes cast:

Mr Frank Kinge – 130

Mr John Latham – 126

Mr Bruce Langley McKim – 111

Mr Adrian Hoskins – 81

Mrs Lawrence Hoskins – 113

Mr George Pratt – 105

Mr Chris Spalding – 111

Mr Neil Syrett - 103

Mary Ryder Davies confirmed that Frank Kinge, John Latham, Mrs Lawrence Hoskins, Mr Bruce Langley McKim, Chris Spalding and George Pratt have been appointed as trustees for the Suffolk Horse Society for the next four years. She reminded all Council men that a short meeting of the Council would follow the Annual General meeting.

#### **9. To receive and approve the revised Articles of Association**



Mary Ryder Davies confirmed the Special Resolution: “To approve the revised Articles of Association in the form produced to the meeting, and initialled by or on behalf of the Chair for the purpose of identification, in substitution for the existing Articles of Association of the Company.”

Mark Donsworth, Chairman of Council, initialled the copy of the revised Articles of Association for the purpose of identification, in substitution for the existing Articles of Association of the Company.

A summary of the proposed revisions had been included in the Spring magazine and was published on the website, together with a full copy of the proposed revised Articles.

The President stated that she had called for a poll vote for this important item, as the Company Secretary has explained at the start of the AGM.

All members present who were eligible to vote, and those members responsible for the proxy votes for members not present here today, were asked to complete the coloured voting card which they had been raising to place votes. The reverse of the card was completed with a vote for the motion, or against or as an abstention, as you choose.

Proposer – John Latham  
Secunder – Frank Kinge

The scrutineer collected all voting cards and formally counted all votes cast in the room, to be added to the proxy votes previously placed and the results to be announced shortly.

The Scrutineer confirmed all votes had been collected.

#### **10. Any Other Business**

MRD continued the meeting whilst the scrutineer counted votes for the Special Resolution:

She thanked those members who had kindly submitted questions in advance of the AGM and in the time frame given. The questions had been given due consideration and the chairman Mark Donsworth then went through all questions submitted and read out the responses.

#### **From Stuart Harrison, Middle Weeke Farm (via A Hoskins)**

1. Please explain why the Society are unwilling to communicate with the membership. I have emailed a question twice, had a response from Jess Ellis saying my query had been passed to the relevant person and then had nothing back. I can only think that as an owner of 3 geldings, it is less important than mare or stallion owners. *Consideration was given to the questions you raised, apologies if the outcome of the discussion was not shared with you. I should add that all members and horse owners are of equal importance. MD will send a written response.*

#### **From Adrian Hoskins**

2. Why previous votes on changes to the articles have been individually voted on, however this one is an all or nothing vote? *Your comment that this is an ‘all or nothing’ vote is correct. It is true that all of the proposed changes to the Articles have to be adopted as one, or none at all. With very many changes such as are proposed here, it would not be feasible to adopt the changes piecemeal in separate resolutions. This would not be practicable. We have taken advice and used the model Articles as prescribed by the Charity Commission as the basis for the update and Council has considered every proposed change within the revised Articles which we are putting to the membership today.*

#### **From Adrian Hoskins**

3. Please explain the reasoning behind not having Zoom available this year. It is unrealistic to expect members from overseas, or great distances to attend this meeting so having no input into the society,

however you are more than happy to take membership fees from them. Having Proxy votes is not a substitute. There are no provisions within the current Articles which enable virtual meetings. This is one of the reasons the Charity Commission has advised all charities to consider updating their Articles of Association to include the provision for virtual meetings – this is included in the proposed revised Articles. However, each and every member has had equal opportunity to participate in this year's AGM, either by attending today, or by submitting their proxy vote and submitting any questions they might wish to raise.

**From Bruce Langley Mckim**

4. In relation to the 2022 AGM an excessive amount of charitable money was used to pay legal expenses. Could the society please shed light on the exact details of these expenditures and the outcome? This is an historic question relating to the accounts for 2021. Professional fees include both accountancy and legal fees and these are not broken down further for the purposes of compiling the annual accounts.

**From Adrian Hoskins**

5. Why when the change of accountants was put forward to the membership at the AGM, was it not stated that the treasurer had worked for them since 1967, until his retirement? This also means that the 'independent' scrutineers aren't and also why he is the only person to see the votes. In the accounts what is the actual breakdown between the accountants and solicitors costs? I refer to the previous answer given to Bruce McKim with regard to split of legal and financial costs. If you are suggesting that Ensors are not operating in a proper manner as advisors and indeed as Accountants I am sure they would be delighted to receive your accusations, from the Society's point of view I see nothing that would question their integrity and professionalism, as a large and reputable accountancy firm I cannot see what they might gain from rigging the votes for election of Trustees! If it were not such a serious allegation I would consider it laughable.

**From Adrian Hoskins**

6. What is the protocol for collecting semen? It would appear that the society have breached their responsibility on protecting the charities money on more than one occasion, by paying for the collection of semen before contracts with the stallion owner has been signed. The latest example of this has been confirmed by the current trustee stallion owner in writing, and meant that he was able to control the sale of an asset that the charity owns. I shall provide an answer in general terms, although I think you may be referring to a specific issue and an indivial breeder. I will not comment on individual issues, but I wish to make clear that money was donated for a semen collection project and contracts were agreed by stallion owners. Semen has been collected for future and not current use. As always, stallion owners may stipulate conditions on use of semen.

**From Adrian Hoskins**

7. At the time of sending these questions through, I have requested a breakdown of membership, which should be an easy job, to do, but yet again have not received it so this question could have been slightly different. Why is the AGM always in East Anglia in the middle of the breeding season? With the membership and ownership outside East Anglia growing why does it not move to other venues? In fact Tremblows were offering their facilities Free of Charge, so it could have been there, perhaps with a tour of their facilities before or after the meeting, to make it a more enjoyable day. With regards to the dates the articles state that the AGM must be within 15months of the last one, so there is room to move. The AGM has not always been held in East Anglia. The suggestion that the AGM should not be in East Anglia would appear also to be floored by the percentage of membership who are based in East Anglia and indeed not having the breed headquarters in its homeland would appear to me slightly wrong, like having the Clydesdale Society based out of Scotland!!

The date has suited the last 50 years so why would we move it and what advantage would it achieve - it would never suit all people.

Over 62% of all members are based in East Anglia (597 out of total of 956 paid up members)

**From Adrian Hoskins**

8. Under section10 of the Articles, It states that the President elect, President and retiring President, if not ordinary council men shall be for the duration of their time (3 years). I understand that this means they are

eligible to vote, however it would appear that they also become a trustee, (apparently this is an unwritten rule?) After the three years they would have no voting powers and should not be at any of the council meetings, as they are unelected. It would appear that our retiring president has had 4 years, and therefore anything within in the last year that has been voted on, should in theory be voided, and our current President would need to come off at this AGM without being the retiring president. As per the Articles, please confirm as these are the current rules that we must all work to, REGARDLESS OF COVID. Many charities had to temporarily revise their rules to cope with governance during the pandemic. The Charity Commission relaxed rules relating to tenure of office in order that charities could continue to function. The President, President Elect and immediate past President have traditionally taken a place on Council.

**From Adrian Hoskins**

9. What is considered to be the breeding season? As far as I am aware the official British breeding season of Northern Hemisphere horses starts February 14<sup>th</sup>. With such a small population of horses, why is information for breeding, not prepared in ample time for owners to make informed decisions before the start. Please explain why stallion listings, grant information, and Sparks Sheets are not readily available by January 1<sup>st</sup>. If dates are published for a deadline to submit paperwork to the society, then this is a deadline, why should everyone be made to wait for a few. I totally agree and I think the Office should be enabled to get the information out quicker and more effectively. However, this depends entirely upon stallion owners responding promptly when asked to supply details of their stallions. Time is then needed to collate all the data and for Dr Andy Dell to prepare the SPARKS sheets in time for the start of the breeding season.

**From Adrian Hoskins**

10. Why are changes not implemented at the end of a season, be it showing or breeding? It is not good practice to change rules part way through either, when people have made plans and spent money. Not aware of changes taking place part way through a breeding season. However, any changes are made in good faith and it is always going to be the case that it will affect someone at some time of the year.

**From Adrian Hoskins**

11. Why has there not been a limit on the time trustees are able to stay on council, added to the proposed changes? The issue of whether a trustee's tenure on Council should be limited was debated. The conclusion reached was that no limit on the term of office would enable the Society to retain the best experience on Council.

**From Adrian Hoskins**

12. Why were Zoom votes not included on last year's AGM? This year all members have been offered the facility to vote by proxy, whether they attend in person or not. This is particularly important this year as we are asking members to vote on the Special Resolution for the revision of the Articles. Last year members could attend the AGM and vote in person, the administration of voting via Zoom would create a challenge in ensuring that only votes cast by those eligible to vote were counted.

**From Adrian Hoskins**

13. Why has the society not released Sparks Sheets for stallions this year? Why was the colts and breeding loan mare Sparks sheets so hard to get, to the point that the RBST, whom set them up had to step in. Surely it is in everyone interest to have all the tools available in a timely manner. Stallion SPARK sheets were not and will not be available as they have been used to actively market individuals Stallions, this not only caused great upset with a number of mare owners, one family was particularly upset when a dead family member was approached. The RBST had no input into releasing of paperwork and the Society has control of the Data that Dr Andy Dell produces for us.

**From Julie Turner**

14. What was the reason for the full Council meeting in August 2022 voting against the recommendations of the SHS Scientific subcommittee to proceed with the Genomic Wide Association Study? The Council did not vote against the Genomic study, when Council met in July 2022, they voted to reassess the various factors

with regard to the project and address concerns that were raised especially on how the data that was generated would be handled.

At the July meeting last year Council voted democratically against the initial proposal as they didn't have confidence to support it in its current form.

**From Julie Turner**

15. It has been said that the SHS Council is instead looking into the transmission of unwanted white in the Suffolk Horse. Please provide an explanation as to how this project would be undertaken, what criteria, who is managing this, how would the data be collected and how, if this project is undertaken, would those full members breeding Suffolks be advised going forward? One particular area of the genomic study was to consider the incidence of white markings and as I have stated above a clear path not only for collection of data but also the handling of data is being considered. Any project would need the support and backing of members in order to make the research worthwhile and we will therefore keep members updated. I am pleased to tell you that at the Scientific Committee meeting earlier this month we started the ball rolling with fresh discussion on how to develop the new project.

**From Julie Turner**

16. With the stated aim of preserving and protecting the SHS stud book, why is Council continually changing the rules of entry? Why are maternal half-sisters in different registers? Why does a mare registered as 'grade' in 2000 have daughters in the full stud book? Rules changed in 2017/18 by Council to allow horses quicker entry in to the Stud Book. These rules were then reconsidered and reviewed in January 2022, as you know since you were at that time on Council. This was explained in detail in my letter to you.

**From Julie Turner**

17. What changes have Council made to the breed standard and where have such changes been made public? We continue to refer to the 1919 breed standard, and no changes have been made to the scale and points of horse in Stud Book from 1919. Council reviews this on a regular basis. However I should add that on the website metric measurements have been added.

**From Julie Turner**

18. Why did Council vote against limited tenure as Trustees? What is stopping those Trustees with valuable experience acting as consultants but without a vote, allowing 'new blood' on to Council? New blood is always welcome indeed over the last few years we have seen new people have join the Council, the fact you chose to resign and others have stayed on, does not in any way show that new members were not encouraged. The Council does not currently have the facility for 'consultants', but all members are eligible to stand for election to Council, it is a democratic process.

**From Ken Laing (chairman NASHA)**

19. I often see the SHS stating that the Suffolk horse is rarer than the Giant Panda. Since there appears to be only 2 Giant Pandas in the UK you are obviously using the world population of Giant Pandas which is about 2150 [1850 in the wild and 300 in captivity].

So my question is why do you not include the population of registered North American Suffolk horses of about 1500 with the 500 in the UK for a total of 2,000 which would suggest the Giant Panda and Suffolk horses have similar world populations? We have not and do not use the slogan 'rarer than the giant Panda' for some years, as it is incorrect. We consider all horses that are registered in the UK studbook to be the relevant number of horses and as the American population is not subject to the same understanding with regard to parentage and indeed no inspection is carried out on stallions, so we would be wrong to include them in the same population. I would add that the SHS is a breed society registered in UK and recognised as such by DEFRA.

**From Mike & Alison Clark, Holbeache Stud (via A Hoskins)**

20. Why was the chairman and or vice chairman of the society not at Randy's funeral he has done so much for the breed and they should have been there in person. I regret that neither myself nor the vice chairman

was able to attend the funeral which is why we requested that Lady Clare Euston, the Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk, represent us. The Council was also represented by past and present trustees.

**From Alison Saunders**

21. I see there are various Suffolk Horse groups on social media and sometimes despite the rules of engagement specified, the posts can be unprofessional and make statements that are not always correct, or has information presented as fact when it may not be wholly accurate, or even simply false. The posts can be derogatory regarding the Society and question its integrity. It is a challenge to manage the rhetoric of these external platforms and understand you have little control over their account management, however I would like to understand what action the Society is going to take to engage with the individuals and social media groups who are clearly passionate about the Suffolk Horse but feel that their views are not heard and how you could address the misinformation and inaccuracies that serve nobodies interest if left to circulate unchecked. It appears to me that some opinions have been formed from misguided or assumed information. It is surely the responsibility of the Society to present information in a clearer, faster and more open way across various platforms to foster a feeling of openness and transparency for the members. The society would benefit from improving the website to allow information to be found quicker and in a more intuitive way and also be updated more frequently to help stop rumours and misinformation being circulated which could so easily damage the cohesive ambition of the Society and the prosperous future of the breed. [I fully agree with the comments Alison has made, sadly we have seen several instances in the past year as to the negative impact of social media via unofficial sites over which we have no control. We are aware that the Society's website is in need of an overhaul and we have plans underway to get this done. I thank Alison for her valuable comments!](#)

**From Abbe Marshall-Wyer**

22. Could I please have answer to the question I asked at the 2022 AGM? I would like the SHS response to be made available to all members, as should be the case for questions asked at an AGM. [I believe you have already received a response to the 2022 question which related to AA matings and the conclusion was that you received a backdated grant on an orange mating. It would be wrong for me to deal with a specific historic issue, but I would like to reiterate that the new grants for 2023 are already published on website and in the magazine and that there should be no ambiguity or confusion going forward.](#)

23. How do I obtain an answer to the questions I have asked over the last year? I do not mean a polite response to my correspondence, but a full answer to the questions asked. The questions I have asked, in the main have been important to the proposed or actual breeding of my Suffolk horses, and their registration. [I think I am correct in saying that the office and the Stud Book Co-ordinator have responded in detail to your individual queries.](#)

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MRD confirmed that the scrutineer counted and checked all votes placed regarding Item 9, The Special Resolution to approve the revised Articles of Association.

She called upon the scrutineer to make public the results of the poll vote and the result of the Special Resolution.

The Official Scrutineer confirmed the following:

121 votes cast in total  
of which 59 by proxy in advance  
and 62 by poll vote in the room

In total, votes for the motion – 88  
Votes against the motion – 26  
Abstentions - 7

72.7% of votes cast were for the motion, therefore the resolution failed to be adopted as 75% since 75% of all votes cast needed to be in favour of the motion in order to enable its adoption.

MRD thanked everyone for attending the meeting and offered everyone to stay behind and have a drink and reminded all trustees to attend the brief Council meeting..

**The meeting was then declared officially closed by the President at 15.24pm**

Following the close of the formal business, as President of the Suffolk Horse Society, Mrs Mary Ryder Davies drew the raffle.

Raffle Prize Winners:

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize - £50 – Mrs D Tanner

2<sup>nd</sup> Prize - £100 – Mrs J M Montgomery

1<sup>st</sup> Prize - £300 – Jenny Wicks