



EQUINE STUDBOOKS ASSOCIATION

Representing Horse and Pony Studbooks of the UK

Chair: Celia Clarke (WBSUK), Vice-Chair: Natalie Meredith (AHS), Secretary and Treasurer: Jane Murray (New Forest),

CHAIR'S REPORT MARCH 2026

In the six months since our last meeting, the committee of the 826 Equine Studbooks Association has not been as busy as it usually is. This is mainly because a heavy workload relating to the revisions of the SBS regulations, staff shortages and illness, DEFRA has had problems scheduling in discussions with member studbooks about any issues relating to part-bred zootechnics, revised studbook structures and breeding rules in general. This has meant that although we had a very useful and collaborative discussions and follow up about these matters in November, few – if any – members have been able to have their revised rules and regulations confirmed with DEFRA in the meantime.

Clarification on a number of matters is therefore urgently awaited from DEFRA and although we were promised an update from Liam prior to this coming meeting you will see that the update attached (provided by Helen Johnston) only really relates to the on-going negotiations with the EU about the Common Understanding on the SPS Agreement, which is not really very helpful, although the call for more industry engagement and business preparedness should be of use in the long run.

Even so, there are a few matters that I need to update you with as follows:

- 1 Following a potential scare relating to our GDPR status (in which our mailing list was inadvertently used by a member studbook for commercial purposes) we have now checked our insurance policy with Zurich and I am pleased to confirm that our cover amounts to £1million. As the only data we hold are the names and email contact addresses of member studbooks, consultants and observers (just over 100 in total) and nothing else, our GDPR liability is fairly minimal anyway, but is good to know that we are well covered anyway in case a data breach occur..
- 2 We are currently investigating a possible breach of government procedure by a quango used by DEFRA which has been promoting one particular studbook as better for recording changes in ownership etc because it is more 'digitalised'. This, of course, is strictly against DEFRA protocols and we await further information on this. If any member studbooks, breeders or owners, have also received such guidance please let us know and we will follow these cases as well.
- 3 Following the very useful exchanges on part bred status etc arising from the last meeting, more and more members are asking us to help them contact other studbooks with similar interest, breeders, members, clients and owners, who might be able to help them resolve any current problems. We are delighted to be able to do this – after all it is basically one of the main reasons the 826 ESA exists – and the kind of groups we are able to help range from heavy horses to breeds with studbooks of origin outside the EU, from sports ponies to coloured breeds, from tiny studbooks registering only a very few foals each year to those registering many thousands and a whole host in between. Working together in this way will also help us all strengthen our position in the industry as a whole, which can only be a good thing.
- 4 Through our excellent veterinary consultant Jane Hastie we continue to monitor the current developments and changes in biosecurity and related areas and hopefully Jane will update us on the latest situation at the meeting.

- 5 We are still looking at developing a small web site. As we do not really have a public facing identity – apart from our presence at the British Horse Council, the National Equine Forum and WHIRDEC, plus our on-going close relationship with the British Horse Foundation, the web site will be a relatively small and clearly defined one (hosting a page explaining who we are and our constitution, plus others with downloadable membership forms etc, Minutes of past meetings etc) one, but as none of the committee have much experience of web site building if any member studbooks have contacts in this field who could help us with it (preferably for free|) then we would be very grateful if they could make themselves known to us.
- 6 We are also currently looking into changing the type of deposit savings account we hold with Lloyds to maximise our income. Our Treasurer will explain any possible alternatives at the meeting.
- 7 Finally, you will all have received your invoices for your 2026 membership fees, so we would be grateful if you pay these ASAP as only paid up member studbooks can vote at the AGM.

Best wishes

Celia Clarke

(Chair, 826 Equine Studbooks Association)

PS If you have added extra people to the usual attendance list for this meeting please be sure to forward this report to them, so that they are up to date with developments.