



EQUINE STUDBOOKS ASSOCIATION

Representing Horse and Pony Studbooks of the UK

Chair: Celia Clarke (WBSUK), Vice-Chair: Natalie Meredith (AHS), Secretary: Jane Murray (NFCPS), Treasurer: Susan McGeever (Rare breeds)

CHAIR REPORT FOR 2023 AGM

First of all I must start by thanking the excellent Officers and Committee members of the 826 Equine Studbooks Association (both studbook representatives and consultants / observers) for all the valuable work they have done over the past 12 months and also thank all the other 826 ESA studbook representative and members for their continuing support of the organisation.

With the resolution of many of the issues of EU and reciprocal DEFRA studbook zootechnical recognition now resolved, much of the last 12 months of 826 Equine Studbooks Association activity have been devoted to providing input into the consultations by DEFRA and the British Horse Council on Equine ID and the need for electronic identity of all equines from birth onwards.

Whilst the review of the results provided by DEFRA fairly reflected the input by 826 ESA members and other knowledgeable and informed sectors of the industry, those produced by the British Horse Council based upon their responses have seemed – to the British equine breeding industry anyway – to emphasise far more the concerns of the Welfare sector and the amateur / single horse owner. Whilst obviously equine welfare should be a major concern to us all, not least in these times when the Social Licence to Operate (SLO) is becoming increasingly important, the fact that more effective use of the excellent record keeping of PIO studbooks by the ER is actually the solution to cleaning up the records of the CED, not its cause, seems to have been sadly overlooked by the BHC review. However, as an active member of the BHC we are always making the case for the benefits the studbook PIOs can make to the whole issue of Equine ID and our monthly meetings with DEFRA in a liaison committee set up to examine and report on progress on these consultations and their legislative output is proving invaluable in this process. Thank you DEFRA for involving us in this consultation in such an on-going way.

As far as other areas of interest are concerned, the 826 ESA meetings have featured reports on the WBFSH General Assembly (in which one of our committee members is the first ever UK-Based Vice President 😊) and we are also Friends of the National Equine Forum. Our increasing collaboration with the British Horse Foundation, which features a description of us and our interests on its web site, and our involvement in its Better Beginnings initiative also helped us to raise our profile throughout the equine industry as has our role as a corresponding member of CANTER (Controlling ANTiparasitic resistance in Equines Responsibly) which has featured in a number of presentations that we have hosted. Sustainability of stud farms and other equine establishments has also become increasingly important as has – sadly – helping members deal with issues relating to the increasing abuse (usually by telephone) of their hard-working staff. A sign of the times, unfortunately, and not one we foresaw when we set up the 826 ESA in 2019.

So now we enter our 5th year of existence, and what with Zoom meetings, BREXIT, COVID, SLO – and of course the Equine ID consultation – we seem to be in a whole different world from the one we started out in. But we are an adaptive organisation and have coped very well so far with all that this changing world has thrown at us, so onward into 2023 we go, looking forward and using our combined experiences to solve all that is thrown at us as we trot on bravely.

Good luck to all of you for 2023

Celia Clarke