

# Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust AGM | MINUTES

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Meeting date | time 25 September | 1800-2015 | Meeting location Riverside Community Centre Bovey Tracy

Meeting called by DPHT

Type of meeting AGM

Chair M Lithgow

Trustees T Jenkins

P Pearse

D Sheldon

M Snelgrove (Apologies)

Operations Manager C Anderson

Ambassador (Sales) M Rogers

Attendees:

Andrew Taylor

Joy Taylor

Michele Brusey

Colin Pooley

Patricia Pooley

Alison Geen

Ken Edwards

Trina Pinnington

Sue Martin

Michael Lamb

Caroline Belam

Tracey Lear

Tracey Elliot-Reep

Sue Greenaway

Sally Joyce

## AGENDA TOPICS

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Agenda topic Welcome | Presenter Chair – M Lithgow

Apologies from:

Malcolm Snelgrove - Trustee

Joanna Bellamy - Member

Paul Rendell - Member

Cherry Ashworth - Member

Clare Stanton – Member

Lizzie Houghton - Member

Chair introduced the team and as part of the welcome and introduction covered the question submitted by L Houghton who asked what each of the Trustees contributed to the DPHT and where the Trustees envisioned the Trust would be in 5 years.

Role and contribution of the Trustees:

- Trudie Jenkins is a trained accountant and acts as our Honorary Treasurer.
- Dom Sheldon is a professional ecologist and runs a consultancy business. He looks after the Bellever lease, liaises with FE and sponsors the scientific and academic studies on Bellever which is used: in our campaigns, to market Dartmoor Heritage Ponies for conservation grazing and educational programmes.
- Paul Pearse is a farmer on Dartmoor. He is also the Bellever Warden who looks after maintenance of the site and works with Dom Sheldon and FE to ensure that the DPHT is compliant with the Lease Agreement.
- Malcolm Snelgrove is a well-known photographer on Dartmoor and is one the longest serving Trustees on the Board. He undertakes farm visits, supports sales of ponies with photographs, liaises with potential purchases of conservation grazing ponies, looks after the DPHT website and has been the main contact with the DPHT legal advisers.
- Michael Lithgow – is an experienced Chair, Director and Non-Executive Director of different types of organisations. He was asked to join the Board having had a connection with DPHT whilst competing at Club level with Dartmoor ponies. He has led the DPHT business review and forward strategy. He has also been involved in writing and submitting grant applications.

The Chair highlighted that each of the Trustees served for 3 years and had the option to seek re-election at an AGM for a further period of 3 years.

The Board's vision for the Trust in 5 year's time was built around:

- Financially stable with an excess of income over expenditure based upon grants and legacies. This would require an annual income of between £60,000-£80,000 per year.
- Ability to continue to offer direct grants and support to established multi-generational herds as well as support to members seeking to take over or establish a new herd.
- Support an increase in market for Dartmoor Heritage Ponies both in terms of private ownership and conservation grazing with a premium price thus adding economic value to pony keepers and breeders.
- Good relationship with the DPS and whilst not under the control of the DPHT, a healthy Newtake scheme based upon members Dartmoor Heritage Ponies.
- One of the organisations that government and non-government bodies look to for input on policy and regulation to ensure a healthy eco-system on Dartmoor and more widely on the use of ponies for conservation grazing.
- A strong relationship with pony keepers on Dartmoor who feel that the DPHT assists in looking after their interests.
- Provider of education to the next generation who will take custodian ownership of Dartmoor.
- Provider of education and scientific evidence to the wider public on the value of the Dartmoor Heritage Ponies.

However the Chair highlighted that there was risk associated with the above – it was dependent on finding sources of funding within the next 12-18 months. It was dependent upon support from volunteers and the membership as well as individuals coming forward to be a Trustee. Specifically, the DPHT were looking for Trustees and/or co-opted members of the Board to come forward with the following knowledge/skills:

- Expert advice on SFI, CS and ELM
- Marketing and PR lead
- Additional pony keeper to represent our Beneficiaries.
- Finance, grants and legacies
- Education and outreach

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*Agenda topic Actions Arising from Previous Minutes | Presenter Chair – M Lithgow*

In introducing this item the Chair responded to the question posed by Michele Brusey who asked:

- Why the Minutes of the AGM were not seconded and approved.
- Why on Page 5 of the 2023 AGM minutes Dru Butterfield was not highlighted as one of the co-founders of the charity.

The board are only required to raise points of matter with the membership of a legal nature and not for day to day running of the charity, such as change of charity name or amendments to the AoAs. It is not a requirement to consult with the members on other matters. There is no requirement for the minutes of the AGM to be approved by the membership. They are reviewed at the Board of Trustees meeting following the AGM and when approved signed off by the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Where organisations do seek approval for the AGM minutes from its members only those that attended the previous meeting can either propose or second or ask questions or seek amendments. A potential issue with this approach is that only a small percentage of the membership are able to comment.

However the question has prompted the Board to adopt a different approach this year. The draft minutes will be posted online post and will be available for comment prior to final approval at the next Board Meeting.

Regarding the question pertaining to co-founders, the Chair stated that the original founders of the DPHT were:

- Elizabeth Newbolt-Young
- Roderick Newbolt-Young
- Stuart Shawcross
- Roger John Claxton
- Stuart George Lake
- Andrew Bradford
- Alistair Gunning
- Robert Abel

The founding document being registered on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2005

Dru Butterfied was the first employee of the Charity as a Business Consultant and was a witness to the signatures on the founding document but she was not a co-founder. This does not diminish the vital and important work that Dru undertook as an employee of the charity in various roles including CEO.

Actions arising from the previous AGM were:

- Publish the Job Description of Margaret Rogers. This was included as an Annex to the previous meeting.
- Update 2022 AGM Minutes as a result of comments provided by those attending – completed
- Review Electronic Voting to ensure it achieved its aim of wider participation – completed. We changed the format this year to point members to a DPHT website page which could be accessed without recourse to a code from Mi-voice which was one of the primary complaints last year.
- Review format of AGM to provide increased opportunities for member to interact – the intent was to organise either a talk, walk or tour prior to the AGM to both learn in greater detail of the work that was being undertaken and to provide an event where members could meet with each other. This remains the intent but the Board have not have the time to organise for this year. We will look at a potential gathering/event in Spring.
- Use place names at the AGM – complete
- Improve sound quality at the AGM – we changed location and it is hope this will be a better acoustic environment.
- Establish improved communications with Moorland Guides. It was suggested that a WhatsApp Group was established. A meeting was held with Moorland Guides on site to talk through coordination and payments to identify how we could work with them more efficiently. We have now designated a Volunteer to maintain contact/act as liaison with the Moorland Guides which we hope will improve communications. We would appreciate feedback as to whether the situation has improved.

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
Organise a Members Event in Spring 2025	Head of Administration	December

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**Agenda topic** *Update on Bellever* | **Presenter** *Chair, Paul Pearse - Bellever Warden, C Anderson - Operations Manager, D Sheldon - Trustee*

The Chair opened this item by responding to a question Hannah Fursdon, who enquired whether the lack of an agreed period to keep a pony on Bellever was preventing other pony keepers from grazing their ponies on this site.

The Chair stated that there was not a documented timescale for ponies to be kept on Bellever but the Board was conscious of this as a potential problem. There are a small number of ponies that form a semi-permanent population and are needed to act as the herd leaders. There is also a requirement in the Lease Agreement for a % of the ponies to be Registered Dartmoor ponies – these can be members ponies but a population needs to be retained even if it rotates. The new grazing agreement seeks to

formalise the responsibilities for ponies on Bellever and whilst there is not a firm time limit to how long they can remain on the site, the intention is to manage this such that there is fair usage and that the site is accessible to all. The Operations Manager and the Bellever Warden are responsible to the Board for ensuring this does occur.

### Report of Operations Manager - C Anderson

The Operations Manager stated that there were presently 22 ponies on Bellever belong to 6 Pony Keepers. The intent was to raise the number to 30 in winter and up to 40 in summer. Four ponies from Bellever had entered the Newtake Scheme and 3 were in foal. All ponies are regularly wormed and their feet are checked by a farrier twice per year. The ground on Bellever has proved to be ideal for maintaining the feet of the ponies.

The DPHT has continued to work with BEVA and approximately there were approximately 10 castrations this year undertaken via this relationship.

A new Grazing Agreement will be circulated shortly to clarify responsibilities between the DPHT and owners of ponies on Bellever. The Operations Manager stated that she would visit pony keepers in October and November to talk through the grazing agreement and discuss requests for allocation of places on Bellever. Key components of this grazing agreement are:

- Owners responsible for any costs arising from grazing on Bellever with relation to injury and illness.
- Requirement to check their ponies every 3 months as a minimum
- Cost of worming and feet – billed to pony keepers
- Limitation of 4 ponies per keeper if spaces became critical
- Agreed Emergency Procedure in the event of an incident

All pony keepers who are members of the DPHT are eligible to request grazing on Bellever – this should be through the Operations Manager.

There had been a reduction in walks on Bellever this year. This was largely attributed to the cost of transport to Bellever which schools were finding challenging. In total there were 15 school visits.

The Chair stated that they were seeking grant funding to cover cost of school transport from the Devon Elevation Fund. If this was successful the DPHT would contact local schools to encourage making use of the grant available.

Sue Greenaway asked whether during the handling stage of potential family ponies were being identified that could benefit from being held on Bellever to 'grow and mature'. She cited the example of Treacle and Golden Boy who were looked after for a further 12 months and were sold for over £1,000 each. Sue Greenaway felt that this was particularly important for geldings. The Operations manager agreed that this was something that should be considered.

### Report of Bellever Warden - P Pearse

The Bellever Warden provided a short update on maintenance of Bellever. The major issue highlighted was the requirement to remove trees and saplings that were outside the maintained FE forest blocks. This was a very significant project that would require a large number of volunteers. For the larger trees options were being considered to contract with a commercial company. The Bellever Warden highlighted that Ragwort had been a significant problem this year. Different techniques had been tried to remove and following discussions in the room removal by 'digging' rather than 'pulling' would improve the probability of permanent removal.

The Chair thanked the members and volunteers who had assisted this year and greatly appreciated the amount of time they put aside in helping the DPHT.

### Report of Trustee D Sheldon

D Sheldon provided an abstract of the two studies that were undertaken at Bellever:

Integrated Land Management: Gorse Control through Flailing and Dartmoor Pony Grazing - Niccolet Guerrero.

Gorse (*Ulex europeaus*) is highly invasive, posing significant ecological challenges to heathland and grassland ecosystems like those found in Dartmoor National Park, due to its rapid colonization and fire risk. This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of integrating mechanical flailing with free-range conservation grazing by Dartmoor ponies as an integrated land management strategy for controlling gorse as a target invasive species. 30 plots – 15 flailed and 15 untreated, both free-range grazed – were examined for ecological metrics such as gorse canopy cover, stem thickness, soil compaction, grazing pressure, and plant diversity.

Results showed that flailing significantly reduced gorse canopy cover ( $p < 0.05$ ), but had no notable impact on stem thickness ( $p > 0.05$ ). Grazing pressure was significantly higher in flailed plots (24.33% compared to 2.33% in untreated plots,  $p < 0.05$ ), suggesting mechanical treatments facilitate increased grazing. There was no significant effect of either treatment on soil compaction or species diversity. The findings suggest the short-term benefits of combining mechanical and biological controls, but also underscore the need for long-term monitoring and adaptive management to ensure sustained gorse suppression and promote conservation goals. The research contributes a case study that offers insight into integrated land management practices and biodiversity conservation in regions facing similar invasive species challenges.

Dartmoor Nature Conservation: Evaluating Changes in Ground Invertebrates Associated with Vegetation Change - Robert James Walsh.

Nature conservation is becoming crucial in the fight against the increase of invasive species such as purple moor grass (*Molinia caerulea*), which is having large concerns over the diversity and abundance of flora and fauna within the heathland ecosystem. This study looks at the presence of pony activity over a 425-hectare site at Bellever, Dartmoor. Where ponies are being used to reduce areas of high *Molinia* dominance and restore areas with native shrubs like heather (*Calluna*) to improve biodiversity and reinstate heathlands. This study wanted to explore the effects of ground invertebrates within three different habitat types within the Bellever site, assessing compositions of vegetation and invertebrate species and how they differ to areas of pony activity (Post-treatment sites) and Control sites (heather-dominated and *Molinia*-dominated sites). Grazing and trampling were associated with reduced *Molinia* sward height and increased bare ground, which facilitated the regeneration of heather and other native species. The abundance and diversity of ground invertebrates varied significantly across the different sites. The Heather sites exhibited the highest overall abundance of ground invertebrates, while the Control sites, characterized by taller vegetation and wetter soils, supported a lower abundance but higher diversity of ground invertebrates, with *Arachnids* and winged insects being the most prevalent. However, Simpson's Biodiversity Index indicated that the Heather sites, despite their high abundance of a few dominant species, had lower overall diversity compared to the more evenly distributed species in the Post-treatment and Control sites. To conclude, this research study shows how targeted pony grazing and trampling can affect areas and initiate restoration of heathland and consequently changing the diversity and abundance of ground invertebrates within these areas. However, more research needs to be done to compile enough evidence to provide further action on heathland conservation.

The Chair emphasised the importance of these studies in continuing to build upon the data base of knowledge that the DPHT holds on the contribution that the Dartmoor Heritage Pony makes to the

environment of both Dartmoor and similar habitats. This knowledge is unique and there are no other comparable studies undertaken in a large controlled area with only the presence of ponies native to that landscape. The studies underpin the value proposition of marketing the Dartmoor Heritage Pony to conservations trusts and also enables the DPHT to speak with greater authority in public debates and investigations into managing Dartmoor and like environments.

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
Operations Manager to visit Pony Keepers to discuss new grazing agreement, emergency procedure and allocation of space on Bellever	Operations Manager	End of November 2024

**Agenda topic** *Sales and Direct Grants to Pony Keepers* | **Presenter** *Ambassador (Sales) - M Rogers & Operations Manager - C Anderson*

Sales - M Rogers.

M Rogers stated that sales enquiries mainly target older, experienced Pony Club-type ponies ("been there, done that"). While our breeders and keepers (BRs & KRrs) mostly offer young stock, some healthy budget enquiries were referred to Jacky Newbery at New Oak, which was well-received and aligned with our shared goal of promoting Dartmoor ponies.

The DPHT have continued forwarding requests for younger stock, including companion ponies and show-quality handled SR and registered ponies, to our BRs & KRrs

The DPHT BRs & KRrs are encouraged to directly connect with potential purchasers to facilitate sales, with our support as or if needed. There have been two BR & KRrs who have made use of the new offer of a Stud Page on the DPHT website that has included a photoshoot. The cost of this is £35.

Given the rising cost of living, this year could be particularly difficult and challenging for sales.

The DPHT have continued to work through the conservation grazing spreadsheet and connected with the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, leading to positive leasing interest. Representatives will visit on October 4th-5th to discuss leasing 12-17 youngstock, with Dominic Shedon, to discuss conservation and environment aspects on the 4th. Cornwall WLT Mid Cornwall is also considering purchasing 6-8 ponies, with others registering interest but requiring further discussions.

For conservation grazing opportunities, Paul Pearse can confirm his ongoing placements, including Bedford and Dawlish. Margaret Rogers stated that she had ongoing placements include RSPB, with three private sites, and a potential lease with Norfolk. DPHT will continue revisiting the spreadsheet for additional opportunities, particularly for SR & Registered ponies, which may hold value under the recently released SFI Defra NBAR grazing supplements. Despite the challenges, we remain optimistic about placing ponies through conservation leasing and sales from the website. The upcoming Dartmoor pony drifts and sales will raise interest.

Following the presentation there was a discussion on how to improve Sales:

- DPHT Website and Sales Support. There was acceptance that a charge of £35 was justified for a bespoke 'stud page'. The DPHT would provide support in terms of photographs, host links to Pony Keepers website from the stud page. Where feasible and affordable, the DPHT would also provide limited consultancy support in the design of the page. The intent was both to support the Pony Keeper but make use of the stud page to show case the Dartmoor Heritage Pony to the wider public and draw them into the DPHT Website. The DPHT would continue to provide at no cost to the Pony Keepers single sale entries for individual ponies. The Chair stated that it would be a number of weeks before the new Sales pages were up and functioning as the website was being moved to a new provider.
- S Martin offered to host a meeting of Pony Keepers to discuss how best the DPHT could support them in marketing of the Dartmoor Heritage Pony.
- It was recognised with 3 charities with addresses on the Moor that it was important that the messaging from the DPHT was clear and distinct to assist the public understand the importance of supporting the Dartmoor Heritage Pony.
- A Taylor and S Greenaway reminded the Board that prior to Covid, the DPHT ran a scheme for fostering of Dartmoor Heritage Ponies which Pony Keepers felt was of value. The Chair recommended that this was re-visited and asked if A Taylor would assist the Board in undertaking a short review.

#### Direct Grants and Support to Pony Keepers.

The Operations Manager stated that over £15,000 had been given in direct grants in FY23/24. All grants were accepted and paid out at 80% of the individuals bids submitted. This ensure a fair distribution of the funds that were available. Members were asked to note that pony handling now formed part of the direct grant. All member pony keepers could submit a bid where it was genuinely required to cover costs of:

- Hardship payment
- Winter feed and hay
- Castrations
- Vet and Farrier
- Handling

It was emphasised that these grants were made available from existing DPHT funding and whilst there was no means testing given the DPHT stated that theses were primary made available to those who had greatest need.

A change from previous years was the inclusion of handling in direct grants rather than as a separate service. This means that when pony keepers request handling services they will be informed of the cost and that this will form part of the direct grant to them for the current year.

Following the presentation the following discussion took place:

- Request for support in completing the grant application.
- Assurance sought from the members that the DPHT, given its current financial situation only funded genuine cases of need rather than planned decisions by Pony Keepers.



Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
Organise a Meeting, hosted by S Martin, to discuss marketing of Dartmoor Heritage Ponies	C Anderson & M Rogers	To be complete by end of December 2024
Letter and visit to Pony Keepers to explain the Direct Grant process and provide assistance in submitting application	C Anderson	Complete by end of November 2024
Chair and A Taylor to discuss reviving the Foster Scheme	Chair	End of October 2024

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**Agenda topic** *Future of Parke* | **Presenter** *Chair - M Lithgow*

The cost of running Parke was approximately £25,000 per year. Prior to Covid it was used extensively for visits, equine assisted learning and open days. It also provided a base for handling and for rest and recuperation of ponies from Bellever. Since Covid the use of Parke has dropped significantly. Attempts have been made to generate income from shows, tabletop events and visits. This rarely raised more than £4,000 per year.

The Board have spoken with NT Parke to gain insight from them of the footfall and demographics of people visiting Parke. This too has changed for them and has had wider implications than just Parke with the closure of their shop in Widecombe. Those attending are nearly all existing NT members and their spend per visit has reduced. They are no longer generating significant numbers of new members. In discussions with their Marketing Manager, they observed that there is no direct attribution between the DPHT site at Parke and the work that is undertaken by the DPHT. The demographics of the footfall also indicate that it is not a natural market for the DPHT.

This resulted in the Board questioning this level of expenditure and what the direct and indirect return on this investment was at a time when grants and donations to the DPHT had reduced significantly.

Parke served 3 purposes:

- Physical address and location of the HQs
- Handling and recuperation of ponies
- Showcase for the DPHT

The latter was no longer the case with a drop in visits and interests and neither the volunteers nor the funding to keep open even at weekend.

The day-to-day staff and Head of Administration who can work from home and Operations Manager the majority of whose time is on Bellever and visiting pony keepers.

Handling and recuperation would still be able to be undertaken at Parke under the agricultural rent agreement.

The Board decided to relinquish the lease on the Parke buildings with effect from end of September. However in order to support rest and recuperation of ponies as well as limited handling

the DPHT have maintained an agricultural lease on the outside barns, school and paddocks for £500 per year.

## Action items

Person  
responsible

Deadline

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Agenda topic *Accounts* | Presenter *Treasurer - T Jenkins*

Report from Treasurer.

This financial year we have continued to focus on our core activities that underpin our mission and objectives to support and sustain the Dartmoor Heritage Ponies that are native to Dartmoor.

The total incoming funds for the year were £37,598, last year's total funds were £61,502, a decrease of £23,904 due a reduction in grants of £21,548, 10k from PWTT designated to Bellever and £11,548 of restricted grant income from the Devon Elevation Fund. This was restricted to advertising and marketing the DPHT and the associated costs were £13,520. The DPHT also received £7,031 from the Co-op community fund, this was restricted to providing educational activities namely our walks on Bellever for local groups and school children. This money was spent in 2023 £3,830 and 2024 £3201.

The total costs this year were £132,522 which is £14,000 below budget. The total costs last year were £117,142, the rise is due to increased wages, repairs and service costs. We have also supported 13 pony keepers and breeders by providing direct grants totaling £15,210 for winter feed, handling, castrations and to support breeding mares. This represents 80% of all the requests for support received from our PK members. This support helps to ensure that both multi-generational herds and those taking on or establishing new herds receive help and assistance.

The renewed focus on core activities has resulted in the Board reviewing expenditure. This has been made more urgent with the challenging conditions in the Charity sector which has seen many having to confront the new economic realities.

The major decision the Board has made is the closure of the charity's centre at Parke. The Board had looked at its usage and the income it generated against expenditure. The Board also consulted with the National Trust, landlord of Parke, to draw upon financial analysis they had conducted on footfall, demographics and spend profile of visitors to Parke. Unsurprisingly this has changed post pandemic, whilst footfall has been relatively buoyant, the nature of this footfall has changed. Visitors are mainly NT members, they no longer are spending money at Parke with cafe sales down and are not looking to spend on other items or activities. The interest in the DPHT was not resulting in membership or donations that made a significant difference to the finances of DPHT. The DPHT were not gaining any direct attribution between our presence at Parke and what we did as a charity.

The annual direct cost of Parke to the DPHT was in the order of £25k per year. It provided two primary benefits, a physical HQ and location for staff plus a facility to handle ponies.

As a result of this internal study, the Board decided to hand back DPHT leased buildings but retain access to outside barns and paddocks to support the handling of ponies. Staff will work from home, at the charity's conservation grazing site at Bellever, handling and caring for ponies in the outside barns and paddocks at Parke and visiting DPHT members farms on Dartmoor and working with other partners. This will realise significant savings.

As well as examining expenditure, the Board has also focused on fund raising. With expenditure of £132,522 it is clear that there needs to be significant effort committed to generating additional sources of revenue. The Board requested our outgoing CEO, Debbie Leach who has considerable experience in grant applications, to take on this task. We have now submitted over 30 applications with a total value in excess of £150,000. As many of you will be aware grant applications are a bit of a 'numbers game' -

the more you submit the more likely you are to have success. However it requires a significant amount of effort and time. Each one needs to be tailored to the grant's own mission and objectives, we have to stand out from the multiple submissions they review and we have to be seen to be undertaking vital work. We hope that this sustained effort will result in a significant increase in grants over the next 6-9 months.

The Board is also examining ways of making it easy for those that wish to leave a legacy to the DPHT. This is a sensitive subject. From analysis of similar charities nearly 50% of their annual income is from legacies. The Board recognises it needs to make it clearer what our mission is, how we deliver it and the impact that a legacy can have on sustaining the Dartmoor Heritage Pony.

Looking ahead into the coming FY the Board will need to continue to constrain cost but in a manner that does not impact our core activities. To that end approximately savings of £55,000 have been identified. The majority of these are associated with the closing of Parke and outsourcing administration. These savings will not be realised until the 2nd half of the 2025 FY - October through to March. This reduction in costs will help to extend the reserves to provide 2 years of running costs as opposed to 1 year, without impacting our core activities. The objective remains to generate income and enable the DPHT to rebuild its reserves.

Following the presentation there was considerable positive discussions on fund raising. The Chair stated that grant applications were being prioritised and that more work needed to be put into legacies. It was recognised that the latter could not be planned or forecast. Two specific recommendations were put forward as potential sources for grants:

- Application to the King's Fund
- Applications to Landscape Recovery Fund

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
Investigate potential of DPHT application to King's Fund and Landscape Recovery Fund.	D Leach & M Rogers	Report back to Board by end of October 2024
Review our Legacy offering and marketing	D Leach & M Rogers	Report back to the Board by end of October 2024

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**Agenda topic** *Appointment of Reporting Accountants* | **Presenter** *Chair - M Lithgow*

The Chair asked for a show of hand on the appointment of the Reporting Accountants for 2025.

The majority in the room were in favour with one abstain and one against.

The vote online was:

- Number of Eligible Voters - 113
- Number of Members who Voted – 17
- Turnout - 15%

- Approval of Reporting Accountant
  - For 1
  - Against 1
  - Abstain 1
  - Discretion of Chair 0

The Chair stated that there was a majority in favour of appointing MTD Accounting Ltd as the DPHT's accounts.

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
MTD Accounting Ltd appointed as Reporting Accountant	Chair	Complete by end of October

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*Agenda topic AoB | Presenter Chair - M Lithgow*

Unanswered Questions Submitted Online.

The Chair covered the remaining question posted online which had not been answered.

Jenn Whitehorn has asked what the vetting process was for joining the DPHT. The Chair provided the following response:

- The Trustees are subject to DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Checks. This checks for criminal records and suitability work with children and vulnerable adults.
- Some employees are also subject to DBS where they are in contact or potentially in contact with children and vulnerable adults.
- Volunteers are not subject to DBS.
- Potential employees are interviewed by a minimum of two members of the Board as part of the employment process.
- Volunteers are interview by one Trustee and Operations Manager.

Trustees are interviewed by 3 Trustees, including Chair of Board and where applicable references sought. The interview consists of:

- Ensuring the applicant is aware of their responsibilities as a Trustee
- What skills/knowledge can they bring to the DPHT and Board
- Are there potential areas of conflict of interest

Trustees can be initially co-opted onto the Board before putting themselves forward for election at the following AGM.

DPHT's Articles of Association.

A request was made to make available the DPHT's Articles of Association. Chair undertook to action this. They would be made available with a copy of the draft minutes. They would also be made more visible on the revamped website.

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
Make publicly available the DPHT's AoA	Chair	End of October 2024



Michael Lithgow CBE CEng FIET  
Chair – Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust  
Charity Number  
Signed 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024