

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Arab Horse Society held on Saturday 18th
April 2015 at 10.30am at the Bromsgrove Golf Centre, Stratford Road, Bromsgrove,
Worcester, B601LD**

Present:

Chairman: Mrs J Bridges
Treasurer: Mr A McLeod
Council: Mrs A Dixon Mrs J Lowe Mrs E Mann
Mrs N Meredith Mrs D Whittome Mrs Joan Woodward

Mrs J Armstrong	Mrs R Bertram	Miss A Bourne
Mrs P Bowles	Miss B Brigg	
Mrs A Brown	Mrs A Doxey	Mrs J Evans
Mr M Gamlin	Mrs C Georghiou	Miss K Gore
Mrs R Gould	Mrs P Grant	Mrs F Grant-Chivers
The Hon F Guinness	Miss F Harper	Miss P Harper
Mrs T Jackson	Mr A Knott	Mrs C Kokta
Mr P Lowe	Mrs J Martin	Mrs C Nelson
Miss G Parker	Mrs JA Parsons	Miss J Parsons
Mrs J Phillips	Mrs S Plant	Mrs G Rose
Mr A Ryder	Mrs C Sheridan	Mrs J Sidebottom
Ms J Sorensen	Mrs M Sweet	Mr P Upton
Mrs D Volpe	Mrs J White	Mr E Woodward
Miss J Woodward	Mrs Janet Woodward	Mr I Price

In attendance from Windsor House: Miss L Nicholson

1. To approve the Notice Convening the Meeting

1.1. The Treasurer, Mr A McLeod read the Notice Convening the Meeting. After the notice was read the meeting was adjourned and with the agreement of all those present, re-convened in the Conference Room upstairs, there being no objection by any member present and all members were in agreement that no member present required disabled access. Alternative arrangements had been made if there had been a need for a venue with disabled access.

1.2. The meeting reconvened at 10.40. Before the formal business was addressed the Chair asked for a minute of silence to remember members who had passed away, Patricia Lindsay, Jacqui Pouch, John Ratcliff, and Marjorie Thompson.

2. Apologies for Absence

Mr N Armstrong	Mrs F Atkinson	Mr P Atkinson
Miss C Belam	Mrs C Beckett	Mrs C Bennett
Mrs B Carey	Ms A Cheek	Ms J Clarke
Mrs B Durey	Mrs C Fitch	Mrs M Gaddas Brown
Mr B Gore	Mrs H Gore	Mrs D Godwin
Mrs A Green	Mrs A Hedley	Mrs K Houghton
Mr G Houghton	Mrs N Howard-Price	Mrs V Hull
Mr E Jones	Mrs S Jones	Mr C Lowe
Mr S McCormick	Miss L Maryon	Miss T Mattocks

Mr T Mattocks
Miss A Mitchell
Mrs J Ratcliff
Mrs C Sussex
Mrs A Unwin

Mrs N Mellor
Miss K Murray
Mrs C Roebuck
Mrs M Sutherland
Mrs S Wainwright

Mrs T Miller Burrage
Miss M Pollard
Mr P Simmons
Mrs G Trimmingham
Ms K Wood

3. To note the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on 12th April 2014

3.1. Mr A McLeod proposed the minutes and Miss F Harper seconded. The meeting agreed.

3.2. The Chair asked if there were any questions on the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting.

3.2.1. Mrs C Kokta asked if any progress had been made on the strategy paper referred to in item 5.8. She felt it would be helpful to have a strategic plan published so members could see where the Society was going on important issues. The Chair replied that some issues had been considered including the website and future of Windsor House. The suggestion of a strategic plan was very helpful and would have to be considered by Council. Mrs N Meredith added that software requiring updating had been identified including the Show and Stud Book programs.

3.2.2. Mrs J Armstrong enquired about a proposal to move the Studbook to Weatherbys. Mrs N Meredith replied that an options paper would need to be produced before any decisions could be made. Mr P Upton said a decision on the Studbook should come before members and he would ensure it did. He also thought that the decision about the closure of Windsor House should have been put to the members. Mr P Lowe said that as Councillors, they were responsible for doing the job and didn't have to come back to the members and asked where Company Law said they did. Mrs J Armstrong said that Company Law did not require Directors to consult the membership but it would have been nice to have consulted them. Mr A McLeod said that he would fully cover the decisions surrounding the closure of Windsor House in his Financial Report later in the meeting.

3.2.3. Mrs C Kokta enquired if the Public Relations Committee still existed as communications to the membership was a key issue. Mr McLeod replied that the Committee had been in existence throughout the year but had reverted to its previous name of General Purposes Committee. The Chair added the Council were mindful that the website needed attention.

4. To consider any matters arising from the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting

4.1. There were no matters arising.

5. To receive the Report of Council and the Accounts for the year to 31st December 2014

5.1. The Chair invited Mr A McLeod to report on the accounts.

5.2. Mr A McLeod said that Council and the Chair of each committee in particular, had been very conscious of the financial implications of operations. During this year hard and difficult decisions had to be made on how resources were spent. This had resulted in a substantially better financial situation than originally predicted due to the careful management of every aspect of our business and the hard work of individuals. The Society had in the previous four years made an operating loss every year totalling some £53,000, only saved by a huge increase in the value of our share

investment which grew by over 40%. This year we had managed to cover the full costs of operations, including paying for urgent repairs on Windsor House and had managed to produce a surplus. Our share investments had also risen by a modest amount resulting in placing the Society in a far stronger financial position.

5.3. He outlined the financial reasons why the Trustees decided unanimously to sell Windsor House and to move to new offices.

5.3.1. It was done in accordance to the requirements of the Charity Act. The Trustees had the responsibility of holding the assets of the Society in Trust as Charitable assets and as such Windsor House was not the property of the members. If the Society closed down for any reason these assets would automatically have to be passed to another Charity with similar aims as detailed in Clause 10 of our Memorandums. The Trustee Directors acted within the requirements of the Society Memorandum and Articles of Association under clauses 4.13 and 4.14 which gave Council Members as the Trustees the responsibility to make decisions on how they could acquire, let, or dispose of property of any kind in accordance to the requirements imposed by the Charity Act.

5.3.2. Windsor House was a building that required extensive repair work. £10,000 was recently spent on doing emergency work to patch things up but major urgent repairs were needed. The electrical system was at least 25 years old and required re-wiring, the roof had slates coming off and may need to be completely re-tiled if the fixings are corroded. The plaster on the end elevation was unstable and needed replacing; the windows of which there were 20 were all rotten and needed replacing with individual timber custom made replacements. There were problems with damp especially in the Library. In addition, the interior carpeting was badly worn and needed completely replacing and the whole of the interior needed redecoration. In total it was estimated that this would cost between £60,000 and £80,000 if not more and would not increase the value of the property by this amount if at all.

5.3.3. After much consideration by the Trustees the building had been put on the market at just under £1,000,000 and when sold the surplus proceeds would be invested to provide an income to safeguard the capital released. This was a condition of the sale and a requirement to save paying capital gains tax.

5.3.4. The new offices could be purchased outright for £285,000 however to do this before Windsor House was sold would have meant that investments had to be cashed in which would have left insufficient unrestricted funds to satisfy our reserves policy which requires between £190,000 and £380,000 to be held in unrestricted funds. If this was done we would also lose the income of about £15,000 a year which in fact is three quarters of the rent we are paying as an interim rent while Windsor House is sold. The society had a fixed price option to purchase the new offices for £285,000 when money was available from the sale of Windsor House. Should Windsor House fail to sell, as a last resort, the offices could move back after essential repairs were done. This safeguarded the finances of the Society as we were not committed to buy new offices until the money had been released from the sale of Windsor House. It was not viable to sell Windsor House first and then try to find new offices in the area to enable us to retain our essential and experienced staff. To move out of the area would have cost the Society £31,000 in redundancy payments as well as the cost of finding, employing and training new staff in a different area, estimated to be between a further £10,000 to £15,000.

5.4. The new offices at Hungerford, Agriculture House were within 3 to 5 minutes walking distance of Hungerford town centre with its railway links. It was in a complex of similar office buildings and a Medical surgery on the edge of a retail park which was in front of a light industrial /retail outlets park. It had its own dedicated car park.

5.5. Hungerford had super fast broadband which Ramsbury did not. The offices were modern, low maintenance, double glazed and air conditioned and have enabled the setting up an Archive room, and a secure strong room with security barred windows for additional security of all the society assets. This meant that instead of records being held in a separate heated garage at the top of the garden as at Ramsbury everything is now in one building. It had fully disabled toilet facilities to comply with the current requirements unlike Windsor House. The overall cost of maintenance and heating would be substantially less and was a far better working environment for the staff.

5.6. It had a Boardroom / Library which had accommodated all the Library furniture given to the Society by the late Marquess of Townshend and provided a light airy open plan spacious office area accommodating all office operations on one level floor area with open plan glass partitions. There was also an option to let a downstairs office space within the building to generate income unlike Windsor House where the flat at the top of the building was unusable.

5.7. The problems of remaining in Windsor House had been an ongoing concern for many years. Council had finally made the move which was in his opinion and the opinion of many others long overdue.

5.8. Mrs A Brown said she had visited the new offices, they were ideal for purpose, easy to find and she would be proud to take visitors there. Mr P Lowe added he had also visited and thought the offices were brilliant, staff were happy there and the whole feel was good. Council had done an excellent job.

5.9. Mrs J Armstrong said that members were not against the move, it would just have been nice to know the reasons earlier. Mr A McLeod replied it had been announced in the yearbook and the members appointed their Trustees to protect the assets.

5.10. Mrs P Grant commented that as an ex-Council member, she was delighted that Windsor House was being disposed of. Mr P Upton disagreed and stated that great effort had been made to buy Windsor House as an investment but the Society now cannot go back. He added that the Articles of Association state that members must discuss and determine any issues of policy. He knew of issues of less importance that had gone to meetings. Windsor House and Weatherbys should have come before members. Mr A McLeod agreed that registration was a matter for members as it was working policy. Windsor House was not an asset of the members but of the Charity. However, it was a liability owing to the cost of restoration and continuing essential maintenance. Council had acted as responsible Trustees in moving to a low maintenance, modern office block.

5.11. Mrs C Kokta agreed that the Trustees had acted in the best interests of the Society and even though the move had been mentioned in the Yearbook, further information had been lacking. Mrs C Nelson said that Windsor House was no longer fit for purpose and she commended Council for their actions. Mr P Lowe commented that retaining existing staff was essential so a move to a nearby location was important and less expensive.

5.11. Mrs M Sweet asked if the advertised sale price was realistic. Mr A McLeod answered that 4 valuations had been obtained between £700,000 to just under £1 million. Society was obliged to test the market at the top price and was doing this through Savills. His personal opinion was that £1 million was very optimistic; given the amount of work required and that £850,000 would be more realistic. He and Mrs N Meredith were working with the Agents, 7 people were interested, and 1 had made an offer but although above the lowest estimate was below the higher amount. It was planned to market for 2 months under a best and final offer strategy. He thanked the staff for all their hard work in cleaning and moving.

5.12. The Chair thanked Mr A McLeod for his hard work on the finances and the amazing turnaround he and the staff had achieved.

5.13. Mrs J Armstrong suggested an open day at the new site. Mr A McLeod thought that was a good idea and should be considered. She also asked about removal costs. Mr A McLeod replied that these costs had been calculated and would be ring-fenced within the sale price. It would be unacceptable to deplete existing cash assets.

5.14. Mrs C Kokta enquired if Mrs M Court's post was to be filled on her retirement. Mr A McLeod replied it was to be discussed. The other staff would pick up her duties for 3 months and receive a bonus. There would be substantial cost saving if this was successful and continued. Mrs Court had been made a life member in recognition of her long and valued service.

5.15. The Chair remarked that an operating surplus had been turned which was a good result.

5.16. There being no further questions, Mrs A Brown proposed and Mrs S Plant seconded that the Report of Council and the Accounts for the year to 31st December 2014 were approved unanimously. The meeting agreed.

6. To approve the appointment of James Cowper as Independent Examiner to the Society

6.1. Mr A McLeod said that the move to independent examination instead of full audit had been approved at the last AGM. This had worked extremely well, had used the same firm and had saved the Society £3,000. He was happy with the accounts submitted. Mr P Lowe said he was content if Mr McLeod as Treasurer was. Mr McLeod responded that they had done a very thorough job. The systems set up were adequate and he had agreed to stay on as Treasurer in the interim to ensure continuity.

6.1. Mrs J Armstrong proposed and Mrs J Martin seconded that James Cowper be appointed. The meeting agreed.

7. To announce the name of the 2015/2016 Honorary President

7.1. The Chair said that she was delighted to announce that the Honorary President for 2015/16 would be Mrs Judy Phillips. She was an enthusiastic supporter of performance horses, having won the WAHO trophy with her mare Khamilla. She hoped that Judy would have a happy and busy year.

7.2. She also thanked the retiring President, Mrs Anne Brown for the energetic and dedicated way she had undertaken her role. She had been an excellent President. Mrs Brown commented that she

had had a wonderful year and had been welcomed by the members. She thought that they enjoyed having a President at their events.

7.3. The Chair presented the President's badge of office to Mrs Phillips who said that she would try to come to any events she was invited to. She hoped she could work together with the retiring President and the President elect for 2016/17. She would continue to assist Mrs Brown with the Performance Horse Awards.

8. To announce the name of the new Council Members and the name of the new Direct Elects to the Committees

8.1. The Chair said that as there had been fewer candidates than vacancies no voting was required. Existing council members seeking re-election were Mrs E Mann and Mrs J Woodward and were therefore automatically re-elected. There were 2 new candidates, Mrs A Brown and Mrs K Oldroyd. Mrs Oldroyd had since withdrawn so only Mrs Brown remained to join Council. She welcomed Mrs Brown and re-welcomed Mrs Mann and Mrs Woodward to Council. She remarked that it was quite disappointing that so few nominations had been received and Council must look at how to bring forward younger members. There were no nominations for Committees.

8.2. Mrs F Grant-Chivers said that Council had known she wanted to be put forward for election. Unfortunately she hadn't been aware that postal notifications were no longer sent out and had missed the deadline. She asked why somebody from Council had not spoken to her. Mr McLeod replied that they did not know until the due date who had applied. Mrs J Armstrong said that the decision not to mail requests for nominations out had been taken at the AGM about 3 years ago as it was more economical. Mrs J Lowe added that the information used to be sent out with the show schedule but that placed pressure on the organisers to finalise the schedule early. Mrs J Armstrong thought that the process should be better publicised. Mrs P Grant asked what the options were for members who did not access the internet. Mrs J Armstrong suggested that they phone the AHS office and ask for information to be posted to them. Mrs F Grant-Chivers stated she was now offering to be co-opted. She understood that last year Council put to the vote her joining and had refused her application. Council replied that this did not happen.

8.3. Miss F Harper suggested that the Yearbook contained a page stating what Council and Committees did to encourage members.

8.4. Mr A Knott said that he and Mrs K Oldroyd had made great strides in Judges Training events and were both happy to continue doing this.

9. To announce the name of the 2016/2017 Honorary President Elect

9.1 The Chair announced that Mrs Joan Woodward had been nominated by Council and had agreed to take on the role. Mrs Woodward said that she had been involved with Arabian horses for over 40 years and was honoured by the appointment. She looked forward to helping Mrs Phillips and to meeting as many members as possible.

10. Any other business

10.1. The Chair said that before proceeding to members' questions she would like to thank the staff who moved to the new offices and to Mrs M Court who had decided to retire. She also thanked Mr A McLeod for his help and support and to members of Council and those on Committees who had given their time voluntarily.

10.2. The Chair said a number of written questions had been received from members in advance of the meeting and these would now be addressed.

10.2.1. Questions from Mrs C Kokta

(1) Mrs Kokta raised concerns that the AHS website had been used to post personal statements about an individual member of a committee.

The Chair responded that there had been considerable internet postings on Facebook concerning a decision taken-wrongly as it transpired-about the removal of a committee member who had not been able to attend meetings for almost a year. As the AHS uses its own website, not Facebook, the announcement about Council's decision to reinstate the person appeared on the AHS's own website.

(2) Why was there no mention on the Website of the deaths of John Ratcliff and Patricia Lindsay? They were eminent people and massively influential to the breed and Society.

The Chair responded that not all deaths of members were posted on the website. Miss Lindsay had been an Honorary Governor, had served on Council and been a distinguished breeder. Members who had died were remembered at the start of the AGM and this had been done today. Mr A McLeod added that a longer lasting tribute would appear in the yearbook. Mrs Kokta responded that both should be done. Mrs N Meredith suggested an "in Memoriam" section should be added to the Yearbook in future.

(3) Why does the website have no Arab horses on its banner?

The Chair stated that Council all agreed that the website needed updating and it was an identified priority. The General Purposes Committee had approached specialist equine website developers who offered 24/7 support, with specifications for lay-out and content. They had provided a range of ideas to re-vamp and brand the site and make it compatible with PC's, tablets and phones. Unfortunately this was not pursued because of costs and procedural defects. Website updating and improvement must be progressed in 2015. Mrs C Kokta remarked that there were people in the Society that were capable of running the website. Mrs J Armstrong said that the existing website was easy to run and maintain and she had done this until October. The problem had been securing Council's agreement to adding content. It could be run for about £300 per annum as opposed to costs of around £2500 if done externally. She added that she would not be in favour of funds being spent until Council had agreed on what was required. Mrs C Nelson said that in 2 similar organisations she was involved with the websites were run by the office staff. Mr P Lowe proposed that Mrs J Armstrong was asked to sort out the Website.

(4) Mrs C Kokta understood the need for an Internet and Social Media policy for Council and Committee members but did not believe it was appropriate for ordinary members to be subject to such a regulation. In a country of free speech, it was impossible to police.

The Chair responded that the Social Media and Internet policy, agreed by Council was common to other breed societies including CHAPS and NPS. The AHS was not alone in seeing PR damage through the use of Social media. Free speech was essential but postings should be fair and honest and stand up to scrutiny. Mrs Kokta asked how could this policy be policed, it had to be workable. Mrs C Nelson said that no one should write anything derogatory or defamatory.

10.2.2. Questions from Mrs M Sweet

(1) Council had now agreed that shows in 2015 would run under the 2014 rules. She asked for reassurance that when the 2016 rules were being developed, input would be sought from people directly involved in running and officiating at shows. Consultation was essential to ensuring agreement of a set of workable and appropriate rules.

The Chair agreed. She said that rules and policies were agreed and set by Council and showing rules should be consulted on then agreed by Council and published by the end of the previous showing season. Input from members, judges and officials were always welcome and should be sent to the Shows and Events Committee.

(2) Young blood was needed to inject some enthusiasm and new ideas into the Society. Council meetings held mid- week stopped such people coming forward because work commitments prevented their attendance. Could Council meetings be held at the week-end?

The Chair agreed, saying young people were the future of the Society. It was disappointing that there had not been a need for elections and vacancies still remained. Ways must be found to involve them. Council were aware that mid-week meetings are difficult for some but the offices were closed at weekends. Conversations with staff on meeting days were important and proved extremely useful.

Mr A McLeod added that meetings had been held at week-ends in the past but staff had felt disenfranchised. If meetings were held at weekends the office would have to be opened and staff brought in which would cost. It was important that staff see their Directors. Miss K Gore suggested that a mixture of week-end and mid-week meetings would be helpful. Mrs J Lowe said that this had been tried in the past to provide a balance. Mrs A Brown suggested more use could be made of Wi-Fi and Skype.

(3) In order to encourage more members to participate could the AGM be held during the National Show? This has happened in the past.

The Chair replied that the trading/financial year ran from January to December and the budget had to be agreed by 31st December prior to the start of the trading year. An AGM should be held fairly soon after the year-end so that any changes to council members and committees could be put in place and they could take over the year's activities and budget with a fresh start and with fresh plans. The cost of holding an AGM was also a factor and perhaps the venue should move around the UK. This would be considered for the next AGM.

Mr A McLeod added that if the AGM was held at the show in July then new committee and council members would have no input. Mrs J Armstrong commented that the Show was the Society's major event, it was an upheaval to have a change of show committee 3 months before but it would also

create major problems having to change members during the show. The AGM should remain in April but suggested a general meeting at the Show to capture members' opinions and views. Mrs Dixon said this would be better termed an "open" meeting. Mrs J Lowe suggested a social event following a short formal meeting.

(4) Questions about the three tier membership were answered by Mr A McLeod

(4.a) If someone had enough interest in the breed to own and participate in breed classes they should support the breed society by being members. Owners/exhibitors should be AHS members, not just the handler/rider. Had the Bronze membership been a success?

The Bronze membership had been a success as evidenced by the membership totals listed in the Report and Accounts. Prior to the introduction of the three tier system the Society were losing an average of 150 members every year over the previous 5 years. Since the new system, membership had stabilised at the same number for the last 3 years. By insisting that Handlers and Riders were members, the Society had the right to exercise control of the membership in cases of proven abuse. This was the reason this category was included in the Bronze membership.

(4.b) All members should be given voting rights.

Bronze membership was introduced as a replacement for the Subscription and Junior memberships which had no voting rights. These members only received the magazine. The value was enhanced so that Members had free admission to the National Show and could bring 2 children free of charge to encourage the younger person. To have voting rights you had to be over 16 and be either a full Silver or Gold member.

(4.c) The Website does not make it clear that membership runs from 1st January to 31st December, some members think their membership runs for a year from the date they join, for example, June to May

The membership form that everyone had to submit clearly states at the top that membership runs from 1st January to 31st December. In addition people were told that if they join at the end of the year, it is an annual membership. It was the responsibility of everyone to read and understand the clearly stated conditions of membership.

It was not practical to have a variable membership starting at any time and giving 12 months from the joining date, the Society has not got the systems to support and maintain this. A member joining in June could enter their horses at the National Show but if they failed to renew, would not be a member when it came to show or would not be able to attend for free. Most organisations run their memberships from January to December.

Mrs M Sweet responded that all members should have the right to vote. Mrs A Brown said that Bronze members were able to enter the Performance Horse Awards. This has brought in an additional 100 members. She also asked that voting rights be discussed in Council.

(5.d) As Mrs Sweet's question relating to the Website had been covered earlier in the meeting she was content for it not to be discussed again.

10.2.3. Questions from Mrs J M Crozier

(1) Could Council please explain its attitude towards the Society's Social Media policy? When will Council implement the disciplinary procedures in the light of recent postings by judges and officials on social media sites which were critical of members of Council, and in breach of the policy? Why has immediate action not been taken against those in breach of the policy? What action does Council intend to take in future against those who continue to breach the policy?

The Chair said that Mrs Crozier's questions were noted and that a full examination of the matters would be undertaken by Council. There would be a full discussion on how to implement the Social Media policy; Council must uphold its policies fairly and transparently.

10.2.4. Questions from Mr I Price

(1) Why was there such a high cash value of microchips in stock 5 years after the purchase of 3 years stock was authorised?

Mrs N Meredith replied that 5,000 chips had been ordered as a good price was obtained for a bulk order. Mr A McLeod added that the minimum order was 3,000. If less than 5,000 were ordered the unit price would have been greater and re-ordering would have been more frequent.

Mr Price said the microchips were larger than current ones and they represented a lot of money sitting on the shelf. Mrs N Meredith said that they were the same ones used by the thoroughbred industry, were fit for purpose and there had been few problems with them. They were specifically numbered for the Arab Horse Society. They were automatically registered by the Society on the Anibase data base. Miss J Parsons introduced herself as a Vet and said that the smaller chips used in cats and dogs were not suitable for horses and confirmed that all chips issued by the AHS would be on the Anibase records. This was confirmed by Miss Gore who checked then and there via the internet that her horses were logged on the Anibase database.

(2) As Mr Price's question about membership consultation and Windsor House had been covered in the Financial Report he was content that it did not need to be discussed again. However, as Mr Price had entered the meeting after it had been discussed, and as it was an important issue, Mr McLeod reiterated the information given earlier.

(3) Over the past years significant equipment purchases have been made and shown on the accounts. What happens to replaced equipment and what records are kept? Who decided what and how surplus items were disposed of from Windsor House? Should any purchase over say £500 be documented in a monthly published list?

Mr McLeod said that recording of office equipment was dealt with in line with advice given by the Independent Examiner. Some items were written off over the period of their useful life and best price deals were negotiated when equipment was no longer required and sold on.

(4) How were changes to previously taken Council decisions made without any legal meeting being held? This had happened on several occasions and as clearly shown by Government documents, E-mails do not count nor do telephone calls to each Council member.

The Chair replied that the Constitution allowed them to communicate by electronic means and this had been accepted by Council members as acceptable for Council matters as well. Mrs M Sweet

asked how Mr Price was so well informed about how Council had conducted business when he wasn't a Council member. Mr E Woodward suggested Mr Price should put himself forward for Council so he could understand and help rather than criticise the excellent work they did.

(5) His suggestion that re-location of the office would have produced cost savings had already been covered in the Financial Report. Mr Price agreed that it did not need to be covered again.

(6) A question about reduction in running costs had also been covered in the Financial Report. Mr Price agreed that it did not need to be discussed again.

(7) Why do members of Council appear from the meeting minutes to be asked to deal with important issues but nothing appears to be done?

The Chair said that although Council had tackled many important issues throughout the year, efforts would be made to tighten up more thoroughly on matters arising in the future.

A further 3 questions were withdrawn by Mr Price.

10.2.5. Question from Miss F Harper

(1) Miss F Harper read out a statement about Showing in the 21st Century. She said that the AHS had charitable status and that its activities were to preserve and improve the standard of horses and ponies in GB and to prevent cruelty. The best way to get people to include Arabian blood in their breeding programmes was by demonstrating their qualities in the show ring. The outside view needed to be changed. Jerking and standing with head held high did not allow the horses to be shown to the best effect. The method of presentation in the Crabbet related classes, shown beautifully and sympathetically allowed spectators to see how the Arabian should look and should be shown. The AHS must ensure that everything connected with showing was natural and included no element of cruelty. There were too many assertions of cruelty in the prevalent style of showing for them to be ignored. The answer was with the AHS, they must ensure that the style of showing was such that any element of cruelty was ruled out.

The Chair thanked Miss Harper for expressing her concerns and said that Council would discuss the issues she had raised.

10.3. Mrs J Martin asked a question on behalf of Sarah Rigby about using Judges from other panels to ride exhibits at smaller AHS affiliated shows, rather than having AHS Judges judging from the ground. Mrs J Armstrong suggested this could be done as an approved rider and said it was worth looking into. Mr P Lowe said that if not an AHS Judge they would not be covered by the AHS Insurance.

10.4. Mrs M Sweet asked if Miss F Harper's points on Showing had been addressed. Miss F Harper said that the AHS needed to look at her points. There had been considerable discussion on social media about cruelty involved in showing. Cruelty could not be condoned in the show ring. Mrs P Grant said that the Disciplinary Committee had a part to play. Miss K Gore said that at a recent Judges' Seminar there was a view that if judges were to strongly enforce sanctions then they would not be invited to judge again. Mrs J White agreed with this view. Miss P Harper said that the AHS had a bad name and had to turn this around. People saw the breed as tainted and didn't want to have

them. Mrs J Martin disagreed saying that there was increasing interest in the breed through seeing them performing. Mrs J Armstrong said that the Show Committee had tried to improve perception of the breed through the National Show by adding additional classes encompassing all aspects and giving 500 free tickets to encourage new interest. She added that it was more difficult for individual judges to take a stand when working with other judges when using the points system but most handlers were kind to their horses. Mrs J Lowe remarked that a sense of proportion was required. Mr A Knott said as a Steward it was his responsibility to ensure that cruelty was not permitted. Red and yellow cards could be issued and followed up but a word in the handler's ear worked well. Mark Gamlin said that 95% of trainers were basically good handlers but some applied quick fixes to the detriment of the horses in their charge. Owners had to take some responsibility; money came into it as handlers were expected to win. It was their livelihood and sometimes they transferred that pressure onto the horses.

10.5. Mrs J Armstrong wanted to comment on her unlawful removal from the Shows and Events Committee. Although she had been reinstated she felt she had not had a proper explanation or apology. She had spent the last 10 years doing more for the Society than many others and felt her removal and the manner in which it was announced was a total insult. As the Chair of Council had backed up the Chair of the Shows and Events Committee's decision to remove her she had no other internal recourse and so used social media to comment on the situation. The Chair said she did refer the issue to Council and Mrs Armstrong was reinstated as soon as possible. Mr A McLeod suggested that a formal complaint to all Directors by Mrs Armstrong would have been more appropriate. They would have resolved without recourse to social media. Mrs J Lowe said that there was a lot of support for Mrs Armstrong on Council. Mrs J White thought Mrs Armstrong did the right thing in exposing the issue on social media. Mr A McLeod said that Mrs Armstrong had every right to use social media if all internal procedures had been exhausted but they hadn't. However, Mrs Armstrong believed she had been ignored and that was unacceptable. He agreed that the situation could have been better handled and there were some lessons to be learned. It was agreed that the statement on the AHS website would be removed. Mrs F Grant-Chivers asked why Mrs Armstrong was only reinstated following the members support on social media. The Chair said this was not the case and once aware Council had jumped in quickly to resolve.

10.6. Mrs J Phillips announced that NaStA tests would take place on 25th and 26th August at Milton Keynes Equestrian Centre for Stallions and Mares. 2 new premium stallions had been added, Juliet Martin's "Velkov" and Jane Harris's "Kayeed".

10.7. Mrs A Dixon thanked Mrs P Bowles for taking on the National Show arrangements.

10.8. Mrs N Meredith thanked the staff at Windsor house for their tireless efforts throughout the year. The meeting signalled their agreement with applause.

10.9. Mrs A Brown drew the meeting's attention to a display in the room about the Performance Horse Awards. They were free to enter for all AHS members. Rowena Bertram's Marcus Aurelius was the overall champion of the 2014 season.

11. There being no further business the meeting closed at 13.10