

**Blended Meeting of the Board of Trustees held on
Wednesday, 2 February at 11:00**

1. Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 9 December 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 9 December 2021 were proposed by the Chairman and agreed to be a true reflection of the meeting by the Trustees

2. Matters Arising

The Trustees were advised that the guidance for Local Authorities on Omicron Grants had been amended to remove riding schools altogether. Some Local Authorities were continuing to issue grants to riding schools; however, the majority were not. In the event of a new lockdown, the BHS would reopen discussions with government regarding the classification of indoor and covered arenas under lockdown legislation.

3. Abridged Minutes of the December 2021 Board Meeting for publication

The abridged minutes of the meeting that took place on 9 December 2021 were approved for publication on the BHS website.

4. Conflicts of Interest

There were not any conflicts of interest declared.

5. Recommendation for the Co-option of an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Trustee

Resolution: The Board of Trustees accepted the Nomination Committee's recommendation to appoint Beverley Simms (BS) as Specialist Trustee for EDI.

6. BHS International

The Specialist Trustee for Access raised several points about the Society's international activities, with specific reference to activities in China. She raised concerns about whether the terms of overseas contracts were sufficiently beneficial to the BHS given the financial and reputational risks involved, and particularly that the governing law of the contract should be UK law where applicable and not that of an overseas territory. She stressed that the Society should continue to carefully monitor the financial performance of its international activities to ensure they do not become a drain. She also raised concerns of BHS activity in countries with human rights issues.

The trustees held a meeting on April 19th to discuss, and this was discussed at the board meeting. The key outcomes were:

1. The International Strategy that was agreed in December 2019 was reconfirmed.
2. Activity in China will continue.
3. The contract between The British Horse Society and Equuleus is being redrafted under UK law.
4. Potential risks will be reviewed within the risk register.
5. The board will continue to review performance in its international activities.

7. Chief Executive's Report

A short snapshot report of activity undertaken since the December Board meeting had been distributed in advance. It was noted that there had not been a dip in activity during December or January and referenced the significant achievement of changes for equestrians in the Highway Code, achieved as a result of the magnificent work of the BHS Safety Team. The Board asked that its congratulations and thanks be passed on to the Safety Team for their contribution and leadership in achieving these Highway Code changes.

It was reported that membership in the Republic of Ireland (RoI) was as expected, and that the Society had retained c.10% of its members in RoI following the removal of insurance.

There was positive growth of 4% across the UK in 2021.

8. Health & Safety Update

Work towards completion of the recommendations arising from the Volunteer Health & Safety Audit was progressing well.

Two near misses were reported which both pertained to water leaks at HQ which were resolved quickly. The Facilities Team is undertaking an audit of pipes and water following the incident, and early warning mechanisms will be put in place.

9. Safeguarding, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

The People Team, including the Safeguarding and EDI Manager, supported the recruitment process of the Specialist Trustee for EDI with the external search company.

10. Information Security

It was reported that the Volunteer Email Accounts project has been delayed due to issues in the ability of the selected platform. A new platform has been identified and will be tested in due course.

There had been some issues with document and email security due to the application of sensitivity labels. In some cases, too much protection had become a constraint as opposed to an aid.

11. Project & Programme Update

The anticipated launch of the new website remains in Q1 as planned.

The Digital Passports project has been paused due to the forthcoming Defra consultation on Horse ID and Horse passports.

The Driving Force project completion date has been delayed due to a nationwide shortage of chassis. The two new vehicles will be similar to the smaller welfare lorry but will not have the functionality to transport horses. The welfare lorry attended 44 events and interacted with over 1000 horses during the period May-December 2021 to facilitate the delivery of awareness and education to their owners. The two new smaller lorries will be used across the UK to support the Society in broadening its reach to non-Approved Centres and livery yards, as well as giving advice on horse care, Access, Professional Pathways, Recreational Education, and other areas of the Society's work.

The Career Transition Fund was launched at the National Equine Forum on Thursday, 3rd March 2022 as part of the Workforce Sustainability session which is being Chaired by James Hick.

12. Report & Minutes of the Finance Committee 20 January 2022

The Finance Committee Terms of Reference had been distributed in advance of the Board meeting as a reminder to the Board of the Finance Committee's role. Although the Committee are delegated the responsibility of considering the financial matters of the Society, it does not mean that the Board of Trustees are unable to check and challenge recommendations or request additional information before recommendations are accepted and ratified.

It was advised the price of Gold Membership has been increased by £1. Although the Committee are acutely aware of the rise in the price of living, they believe that the membership target that the budget is based on is achievable.

The Finance Committee discussed the proposed Expense Allowance Policy and the revised Volunteer Expense Policy at length. In summary there has been extensive input from a cross-functional group of volunteers and Home Team members, the proposals have been temperature checked with stakeholders and the Finance Committee agree that both policies should be recommended to the Board of Trustees.

Resolution: The Board of Trustees agreed unanimously with the proposed Expense Allowance Policy and the revised Volunteer Expense Policy, and they were both ratified.

It was agreed that a review of the Reserves Policy for publication in the 2021 Annual Accounts and Strategic Report would be undertaken.

13. Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting 29 November 2021

The minutes of the Audit Committee that took place on 29th November 2021 were noted.

14. Management Accounts for the Period Ending 31 December 2021

The forecast in Q4 of 2021 had indicated a £1.2M surplus on unrestricted funds, which had come to fruition as the advanced draft of the management accounts evidenced that position and validated the decision to make the formal designations in year.

It was advised that the final position for 2021 of realised and unrealised investments had added £455,000 to reserves to assist planning in future.

15. Any Other Business

There were not any further matters arising for discussion.