

# Equestrian Association Of Shetland



## Shetland Equestrian Facilities Working Group

Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> January held in the Meeting Room, Hayfield House at 7.00 p.m.

### Present

Graham Wishart - Shetland Riding Club (Chairman SEFWG)  
Elaine Laurenson - Clickimin Open Riding Club (Secretary SEFWG)  
Vaila Stevenson - South Whiteness Riding Club (Minute Secretary SEFWG)

Bob Kerr – Shetland Islands Council  
Vikki Robertson - SPRDG  
Susie Nicolson - Equestrian Association of Shetland  
Helen Thomson - Pony Breeders of Shetland Association  
Marion Slater - South Whiteness Riding Club  
Marianne Hughson - Shetland Riding Club  
Abigail Robertson - Dunrossness Riding club  
Dorothy Sales – Filsket Riding Club

### Apologies

Susan Goodlad - Shetland Pony Riding & Driving Group  
Steven Morgan - Clickimin Open Riding Club  
Olga Smith - Equestrian Association of Shetland  
Sonja Flaws - Pony Breeders of Shetland Association  
Whalsay Riding Club

### Adoption of Minutes

An addition to page 3 of the previous minute was required. This was to record the fact that the EAS had a confirmation from Michael Duncan giving permission to utilise the feasibility money initially granted to the EAS for the purpose of undertaking a survey and associated legal costs to move the Girlsta proposal ahead. This confirmation had been referred to but not Minuted, therefore reading as if authorisation had come from Bob Kerr.

On page 4, the Minute should reflect the fact that the online petition had been set up on behalf of the EAS, rather than by Abigail personally. The minute will be amended and signed by Graham. This given, the Minute was proposed by Marion and seconded by Helen.

### Matters arising from minutes

The Whalsay Riding Club sign off has been completed. They have no representative at present but do intend to be part of the Group.

### **Results from visit to Broonies Taing**

Susan was not present at the meeting and the e-mail inviting members to view the building had not been sent. The group still felt, as previously decided, that we should not rule out Broonies Taing as a venue. If we contact Susan, her husband David should be able to get a key. Elaine is to send out an e-mail in the next couple of weeks.

### **Transfer of funds to SEFWG from EAS**

Donna was not present; however Abigail was able to inform us. The EAS is now able to transfer the funds into a bank account in the name of the SEFWG but with the EAS retaining control. In this way our Groups' spending is covered by the EAS Constitution. The £3,000 feasibility money was granted to the EAS from 'Quality of Life' funding which originally should have been spent by the end of March 2008. We have already been given a year's extension on this deadline which takes us to March 2009. Graham suggested talking to Michael Duncan about the possibility of further extending this deadline. It was agreed that Abigail will do this on behalf of the EAS. It is essential that we find out whether extension of the deadline is possible, if not, we require a worthwhile and permissible use of the money before the end of March. There was some discussion round the issue of spending the money. This links to the next point.

### **Valuation and survey of Girlsta Hatchery**

Michael Thomson has not been instructed so far. Elaine was unsure what to request as she felt she had no clear indication from Stephen Morgan. However, Stephen had e-mailed Graham some details. Graham reported that Stephen had spoken to Building Control and had been charged approx. £40.00 to search through their records. Stephen had also spoken to SIC Planning Dept., regarding Change of Use certification. Unfortunately he was not present to report his findings. Elaine requested that if Graham received more information from Stephen he was to let her know so that she could contact Michael Thomson. Bob suggested an informal meeting with Michael Thomson in that he might provide us with more insight.

We remain unsure of the position regarding the sale of the Hatchery to Hjatland. Graham had tried to get in touch with Hjatland and failed. The Group found it difficult to see that the sale could go through quickly due to the various complications, Minuted previously.

Elaine suggested that we write and request an update from Johanna David. Marianne offered to speak to her directly as soon as possible.

We have still failed to establish legal ownership of the land on which the building is sited. Marion suggested doing this through the Land Court. We were unsure whether this was a body which resolved disputes or merely provided information. There is also the Land Registry in Edinburgh. She felt that speaking to Graham Fraser of the SAC might be useful as a first step, as

his knowledge might point us in the right direction. Marion also thought the Crofters Commission might be worth trying and volunteered to speak to both.

Marianne suggested writing to Frank Johnson to request the details of the bank whom, we understand, now have title, as we still do not possess this information. It was suggested that we try and impress on him that we are serious, as regards purchase. Graham said that he would be willing to speak to Frank.

As far as we are aware Johanna David owns the land at one corner, hence complicating the issue. Helen wondered if there was any possibility of cutting off this corner (knocking down a wall and reinstating it) and perhaps pricing this as part of our survey. Obviously to consider this, we would need to clearly establish the boundary.

Bob wondered if there would be anything to be gained in getting Johanna and Frank together for a meeting with ourselves, in order to gain some clarity. Marianne felt that Johanna would come to Shetland if we paid her fare. The group felt that this might be a valid use of part of our feasibility money.

Marianne made the plea that everyone who had a task to do should do it quickly and get back to Graham to speed progress.

As a final point regarding the feasibility money, Graham wondered about getting a generic plan for a building drawn up. Bob could tell us that the EAS had already drawn up a document requesting initial costings for a building of 60m X 30m, including toilets and a viewing gallery. This was done with a view to sending to local surveyors who would then charge a professional fee to produce a design. Procedures had been underway under the EAS, but the difficulties with representation of all the groups, had drawn these to a halt, hence our current Working Group. It was possible that the requirements could be revisited and reviewed by our group.

There was a strong feeling that we needed to act quickly regarding the Girlsta Hatchery but this obviously still depends on the Hjaltland bid. It was suggested that those acquiring information should contact Graham who could collate it and probably call an early meeting if necessary.

Vaila pointed out that we had already agreed, at our last meeting, to commission a full survey of the building so perhaps we could move ahead towards an offer ourselves, if the results of our enquiries prove positive.

### **Proposed allotments at Seafield by SIC**

Abigail, Helen and Elaine had attended the meeting with SIC. Their impression was that Seafield was not now specifically being considered although it remained on the list of possibilities for allotments. The Allotment Group were instead considering the Clickimin grazing park and looking to replace it with the park at the side of the Sound Gospel Hall but other Lerwick sites were also possible. Elaine had e-mailed Stephen Cooper and Mary Lisk,

regarding her concerns around the Sound Gospel Hall park option, but had received no reply. As Seafield remained on the list, the EAS had left their petition open.

Elaine reported another possible development regarding Seafield. Neil Watt had been quite positive about the idea of an all-weather surface on Seafield Park. This idea had previously been dismissed by Council officials but discussion with Neil had centred on a riding arena rather than the whole park. Abigail had said she would get back to Neil Watt regarding costings etc. Bob Kerr cautioned that Council funds would be limited. Dorothy wondered whether seeking an all-weather surface might detract from our case for an Indoor Venue.

### **Results of preliminary discussions regarding Cunningsburgh Show Ground**

A group of SEFWG members had visited the Cunningsburgh Show Ground and discussed plans with Willie Ross. Graham had also spoken to Willie who had shared their plans. Graham summarised the plans for the group's behalf.

As reported at the last meeting, the Cunningsburgh Show Committee has big plans to upgrade their show ground. They intend to seek funding from the Scottish Rural Development Programme. Copies of a map detailing the plans were circulated. These include a new area dedicated to larger horses, specifications of which Willie had discussed with our group members during their visit. The plan also includes a designated area where, potentially, a large shed/ indoor school could be built. This groundwork area will be shown as part of the Cunningsburgh application to SRDP. The committee would be willing to give our group a long-term rental on this site if we were to put up this shed. We would be free to run it as an indoor school and there could be an agreement for the Show Committee's use for stands at show time and possibly some long-term storage. The Show Committee is not proposing to take an ownership or share, although there might be some share at the grant application stage.

The above differs from what was previously minuted in that we had understood that the Cunningsburgh Show Committee was going to build the shed. It was felt that this was an exciting proposal nevertheless, particularly if there was a grass arena on the same site. The group had impressed on Willie the need for this arena for the whole summer season and not just the show. This had not been Willie's initial idea, as he had a tenant with sheep grazing the park to keep the grass down, however he could see our point and thought seasonal access could be arranged. The plans for this arena will go ahead as part of the Show Committee expansion plans which in itself is good news for equestrianism in Shetland.

Discussion then centred on possibly inviting Willie Ross to attend our meeting; this had been mentioned again during the meeting with him. The Cunningsburgh Committee AGM is due to take place in February and Graham felt that it might be useful to wait until after this date.

Abigail had asked Willie if it would be useful to have someone representing larger horses on their show committee, and he was in agreement. The group felt that as Abigail was willing, she would be an obvious and excellent choice.

A few group members had sought the views of their clubs regarding the suitability of Cunningsburgh as the site for an Equestrian venue, given that it is to the south of what would be central for everyone. Helen had considered the needs of The Pony Breeders of Shetland and had contacted Northwards regarding the additional cost of hiring a truck. She had been informed that the cost (compared to a Lerwick venue) would be an additional £35.00 to £50.00, depending on the size of the truck i.e., quite significant.

Dorothy had consulted Filsket Riding Club, who had no particular problem, as Cunningsburgh and Girlsta would be equi-distant from Burra. As regards Riding for the Disabled, Lerwick would be an ideal option but Cunningsburgh would be acceptable.

Marion had spoken to a few people from Whiteness Riding Club who felt that Cunningsburgh was a viable distance.

Marianne had not spoken to Shetland Riding Club Members but felt that since most were from the area surrounding Girlsta, they would prefer the Girlsta option.

The overall consensus from the group is that we continue to proceed with Girlsta Hatchery as it is already up and running satisfactorily and could be upgraded further, if we were successful in purchasing it. Seafield and Cunningsburgh should also receive our consideration. Helen pointed out that an Indoor Arena at Seafield really would be ideal.

## **AOCB**

### **Outdoor Show Arena Specifications**

Susie reported on her previous offer to get specifications for a show arena. She informed the group that there was no particular specification but we established that Seafield was 60metres X 120 metres.

### **Change of Use certification for Girlsta Hatchery**

Stephen had raised a query at the 9 December meeting regarding Change of Use in relation to insurance. The fact that the hatchery is probably not an official Equestrian Venue may pose problems for insurance/ public liability. Marianne advised that Shetland Riding Club are insured with Shearwater and that they had public liability insurance against the building. It was felt that endorsement by a British Horse Society Representative would be useful in recommending the building in terms of suitability. Susie has a useful BHS contact and can get details. Marion stated that Marjorie Norrie and Allison Fellows, both qualified instructors who had taught in the Hatchery, had both said they'd be happy to write an endorsement.

Marianne was aware that a Change of Use would cost £250.00 but this would ideally be pursued if we gained ownership.

**Date of next meeting**

Set for 19:00 hrs., Mon 23<sup>rd</sup> February in the Meeting Room at Hayfield House.

For note: Wed 18<sup>th</sup> February is the EAS Meeting to gauge opinion regarding creating a branch of 'The Pony Club' in Shetland.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Marion Minchin".