

Chair Report 2017- Annual Group Meeting EGB Lancashire Group

22nd March 2018 at 7.30pm at Charnock Richard Football Club. Charter Lane. Charnock Richard

Good Evening everyone - . Thank you for coming tonight, it's encouraging to see you all here supporting Lancs EGB. It has been a rocky start to the year, 3 weekends ruined due to Siberian weather and 1 AGM moved Lets hope it bucks up, I'm fed up with false starts

I am especially pleased to see a few of our newer members here. I realise it can be a bit off putting to come to something like this when you are new to the group, but it is really a great opportunity to get to know fellow members better and learn more about your sport. We really do need to encourage more of our new members to come along.

Last year was a game of two halves, with Sue Taylor-Green being our chair-person up to June 2017 and then myself being elected as Chair by the committee – Big Boots to fill and hopefully I haven't done a bad job so far

Unfortunately Sue can't be here tonight however I do have a few words from her, which I will read on her behalf:

SUES WORDS

Evening everyone. I am sorry not to be able to attend the AGM this evening which feels rather strange being the first one for nearly 30 years which I have missed. However, just to let you know that I am now feeling quite a bit better having finished most of the chemo, and hope to see you at an event soon. I would like to thank you all for your support and kind messages which really are appreciated , and especially for the wonderful and unexpected presentation at our awards evening in January.

Thanks again and hopefully see you soon.

Sue

SUMMARY

In summary of the year, I am pleased to say that the committee consider the 2017 season to have been very successful both at national EGB, and specifically where Lancs EGB is concerned. As far as rides go, we had plenty of rides on offer, all of them were full and in some instances we had a waiting list. Our financial position was good allowing us to make a £1000 donation to national as you will hear shortly in the treasurers report. Our membership is strong, and our members have been successful in a variety of ways as you have seen in the newsletters and Facebook posts.

RIDE SCHEDULE

In Lancs EGB this season, we hosted 10 rides ranging from beach, hills and bridleways. Unfortunately we had to postpone the Ulnes Walton Wander National through lack of entries, this was mainly due to National assigning our ride at Easter and

as you and many of rider friends have children and other events planned reduced the number of entrants and therefore would have been a loss of money to stage the event Undeterred Lancs EGB carried on and a decision was taken to move to On-line entry and PayPal. A new concept for our ride organisers. Janet Beddington, was our pilot RO and after a few teething problems and a number of tweaks I think we got there in the end.....didn't we Janet. It did cause a few headaches for our RO's but with some true grit and determination we got there. For the coming 2018 season we have agreed to open entries up 6 weeks before the ride so as the cancellations we received would be far fewer and easier to manage. Many riders seem to booking slots and then cancelling just before the event, mainly non-members.

We also took the time to gather rider feedback via survey monkey from our rides, so as we can improve the overall ride experience and hopefully bring on some new members as a result. Each RO received their own feedback which I have to say was very positive and with some heart warming comments. There are areas for improvement and we hope that feedback this coming season is even more positive

Obviously the task of ride organizing wasn't too horrendous, and we didn't put off the ride organisers. As I said at the Awards night without the RO's and the time they give to Lancs EGB, the awards night wouldn't happen. However we are still looking for new people who would like to shadow our RO's and see what it's like, what's required and then hopefully pass on the ride organising to them. The worry is that without new organisers learning the rides, the ride routes and the contacts the rides are lost. If fewer people are available to assist in setting up new rides, our ride schedule decreases and the vicious circle of lack of support, decreasing membership and loss of interest kicks in. So I am really pleased that the newbie RO's are still willing to run rides this season - but I do need to stress that we need some more. It really isn't as bad a job as you think - unless you are running a National! So if anyone is thinking of volunteering to be a ride organizer I can only encourage you to talk to us about it. And if its encouragement you need, take the time to speak to our new RO's and to hear the comments in that they did actually enjoy the experience and found it was a pleasant change to see things from the other side - quite enlightening in some cases as well

The ride helper scheme where we require members to help at least one ride a season in order for them to be eligible for group trophy points, was still causing some concern and possible confusion in some cases, but it really does seem to have settled in well, and everyone knows what is expected of them. It is only right that if you are competing in our sport, you contribute and put a little bit back by helping in at least one ride. I know it seems disappointing if there is a ride on which you want to ride, but instead you have to help - but think of the ride organiser who not only is unable to ride their own ride, but they give up a lot of additional time, and effort as well. So it is wonderful that all our riding membership has come up trumps and managed to help - and that's what filled our ride schedule and that will hopefully continue in future seasons. To note, as long as you have completed 1 help at a Lancs ride, and you have a skill may be first aid, you can volunteer at other EGB rides and gain points as well

Just to clear up a couple of queries I have received - for that ride you helped at and listed on your mileage card, you have all been given the kilometerage for the ride in your annual and lifetime kilometerages, but those points are not included in trophy points.

MEMBERSHIP

Moving onto membership, our aim each year is to increase membership both by encouraging new members - both Full and Associate- and by trying to maintain existing memberships from year to year (i.e. encouraging re-enrolment). I am pleased to report that we are still in a very healthy position with a slight increase. Sarah Bamber will advise us later in the evening how membership is progressing. We still have the perpetual problem of natural wastage were people join very enthusiastically but for a variety of reasons then only stay for one or two years. We have investigated this but don't seem to be able to reduce it.

We will continue our recruitment efforts during 2018, and I would encourage all of you to publicise our sport and encourage new membership whenever you can. There still seems to be quite a few regular pleasure ride attenders who don't join, despite the benefits. They often say they do not fall into the bracket of 'endurance riders', or even don't want to be considered as that, as their reason for not joining is often 'I only do it for a bit of fun'. - Don't we all? Something which always intrigues me is the number of entries at non- EGB pleasure rides e.g. some charity and hunt rides and even our own bridleway groups attract. Our group rides are much better supported when just advertised as a 'Pleasure Ride' without emphasizing EGB. As I have stated before, look how successful Formby is- most are non-members out for a bit of fun. Perhaps we need to change our marketing slightly, and remove the competitive element from our advertising

Obviously with a good ride program, and maintenance of good membership figures, we were able to maintain a healthy financial position. As a result of this we were able to put some of the money towards clearing the Croal car park, which was becoming overgrown and therefore reducing the number of attendees. There are a variety of reasons why the council hasn't done this, but it was in our own best interests, and will be put to full use on the Croal Spring National ride on Sunday 15th April

There is still a bit of tidyup work to do on the car park, trees over hanging and brambles/rubbish. If you have time to spare on Saturday 31st March from 11:00 onwards I would welcome your support, tree loppers, pruning saws, chainsaws and leather gloves.

TRAINING

After much discussion at last year's AGM, we still did not manage to clearly identify exactly what the membership wants in terms of training. Ideas ranged from evening talks to full day ridden assessments, with training advice and riding lessons etc. We apologies with the lack of activities over the winter period, but we did manage to run a Risk Assessment and Bridleways clearing event, which was quite an eye opener for what we need to do to ensure our rides are risk free as much as we can be

MERCHANDISE

We made significant efforts again to boost sales of Lanes Group merchandise by extending the range, and establishing consistency in supply in terms of quality and sizes etc. and this was definitely successful. Remember you can get full personalization in the embroidery of all of the items- this seems very popular. We hope to have some additional items on offer soon, including trailer plates, mugs, and key rings etc.

Merchandise is available to purchase or order at the back of the room

SUCSESSES

On to the success of the Lancashire EGB group. There were many successful wins and also, as always happens with horses, some disappointments. Our individual riders competing at higher levels in CERs as well as GERs, achieved well and several were placed in the national Awards listings. It goes without saying that the Pleasure Riders achieved some fantastic results this year

There were some fantastic achievements locally in both pleasure rides and competition as was seen at the recent Annual Awards evening at Ribby Hall. I think all of those who attended had a great time and I hope I didn't make too many mistakes, I think it was a rocky start, but remembering all the formal names to your steeds and translating them to their nicknames certainly had me thinking. I did try to speed things up a bit as there are so many trophies and awards to give out that the presentations can go on a bit. I think we are getting better and I would like to thank John Hudson and his wife Jane for coming all the way from Somerset to present the awards, and Sarah B and Tannia F for organizing this year's event. All achievements are very important to whoever is awarded them, no matter how big or small - everyone deserves their moment of glory. I don't know if you felt this worked ok by reducing the number of photos taken during the awards. I received some great feedback from a number of riders and we are now looking at another venue which is more central to our membership, plus we have so many younger riders or young at heart riders we are looking at a DJ/Disco after the presentation. Do you think this is a good idea?

One thing which does concern me slightly is still the reluctance of new members to come along. I know it can seem a bit overwhelming to come to something which you feel everyone knows everyone, and you won't fit in - but that isn't necessarily the case - and you soon do get to know everyone. Could I ask as current members, will you make every attempt to encourage newly joined members to participate in group activities, and come along to events such as this. We are not a clique, but one of the friendliest and most helpful of horsey disciplines. Perhaps that's the problem - our newbies think we are like some of the other disciplines. But seriously encourage everyone you can to come - we do like to see as many there as possible.

We still had a couple of issues this year where new members were unaware of our local points system, and the trophies and awards evening, till the end of the season. We are rectifying this by making doubly sure that everyone who joins as a new member is being contacted directly by our membership secretary Sarah, to make sure they fully understand how the system works. So if you haven't done so already, go to the website under membership and get a ride card

We commenced the on-line Horse Registration form for Lancs EGB, it does only cost a £1 but that's to cover printing and postage, and up to now we have 52 riders who have registered their horse and received their Lancs EGB ride cards for the 2018 season

In 2017 we had some fantastic achievements but to name but a few

Kate Atkinson qualified two horses for the Young Rider World Championships in Italy and become Young Rider National Champion at Kings Forest for the 3rd year running. Kate represented GBR in the World Endurance Championships later in the year. Rachael Atkinson represented the UK and was placed 17th at the European Championships at Brussels in August, Rachael was also awarded Endurance Gb International Performance Recognition Award at the National Awards for performance at Brussels

The North West team made up of riders from Lancs and Cheshire were again victorious at the Inter Regional Championships held at Cirencester. Lancs team members where: Tania Fitton, Karen Corr, Kim Lord, the Wilson family Kath, Izzy and Max, and Lily Gibbons.

Lily Gibbons and Kate Atkinson had great success at the National EGB Awards night. Lily was awarded the Peter Ball Trophy. t's so encouraging that we now have some strong, up and coming young members

We had some excellent ride reports received this year! Thank you to all contributors and ride organisers.

Well done everyone and although I can't name all successes I do hope that your plans for this season all come to fruition.

Well, I have rabbited on long enough, but always feel I have to in order to make it worth your while coming! As you know (or should do by now) - after the formal proceedings this evening, we will have the wonderful chips and butty's which our host always produces.

So my final theme is thank you. Thank you all for coming tonight I hope you find it informative. Thank you to the committee who give up a lot of their own time, and are fully committed to working for our membership. Thank you to all the ride organisers especially, for everything you do to allow us to continue indulging in our sport and Thank you to the membership for making the Lancs group the wonderful group it is.

Good luck with the 2018 season everyone and enjoy the rest of the evening.

Cath