

7. Kennels

A Covid 19 lockdown plan has been instigated at kennels to protect all those that live and work on site. One of our tenants has temporarily moved off site while we are on lockdown, but continues to pay rent.

Blissful has whelped and has a surviving litter of 5 dog pups and 2 bitches. We have 25.5 couple of hunting hounds in Kennels and 3 couples to enter. She was put to Demon, both of which go back to good New Forest lines.

Hounds are well but their exercise is limited to the adjacent fields, with no road work. All living at Kennels are well and the precautions we have put in place are working with trades people and those dropping off fallen stock, telephoning Michael beforehand. The Flesh Round continues to be busy. Our efforts to appoint a full time Kennelman proved unsuccessful and for the time being no further attempts will be made. But we have identified resource to provide Michael with part time/occasional paid help and holidays

8. Masters Report

Of course, Covid-19 is having a dramatic effect on all our lives and New Forest Hounds and trail hunting generally are not exceptions. We were fortunate to be able to complete our trail hunting Season and run our point to point before the general 'lockdown' was introduced.

Whilst we lost a few days through the Season due to severe weather and EHV, there were many excellent trail hunting days albeit in very heavy going and seemingly continuous rain, which tested the fitness of hounds, horses and riders!

We owe our heartfelt thanks to Michael and Kieran for caring for hounds, Penny for producing Hunt horses and all who help on trail hunting days-trail layers, whips, Field Masters, road crews and our generous lawn meet hosts.

All our fund-raising social events have been postponed or cancelled, but our Point to Point ran in the nick of time. For those who braved the typically challenging Larkhill weather, the racing was good. Thanks are due to all who helped, but especially to James and Trudi, without whose knowledge, experience and hard work our Point to Point would not be possible.

In light of the Covid-19 crisis, the first concern of the Joint Masters, Chair and committee was to protect the health of those who live at Kennels. We also wanted to be able to continue to offer the vital flesh round service to commoners farmers and horse owners generally.

To that end we have introduced a number of new procedures. The gates at Kennels are locked, no visitors are allowed and trades people or those dropping off fallen stock are only allowed entry by prior appointment with Michael Woodhouse. Extra bio-security precautions will be imposed on site visits and hounds will not be walked out by staff around neighbouring villages.

We are also saying goodbye to two of our team.

Wayne Windebank has been a very effective, keen and dedicated trail layer on foot for many years. It is a daunting task to run through the mud, keep up with hounds, read the map and speak on the radio all at the same time! We wish Wayne and his family all the best in the West Country.

Kieran Hawkes, Kennelman and occasional Whip has learnt his trade well under Michael's guidance and is now moving to whip in at the Essex with Farmers and Union Hunt kennelled near Dunmow. We wish him every success in his career in Hunting.

Of course, there are major uncertainties ahead and we must keep our focus on costs. A significant amount of scenario planning and activity has already been undertaken and we should celebrate what's already been achieved. Many people have contributed by their involvement in the Point to Point, paying subs early and Marilyn selling hunt coats etc. but we would especially like to highlight the work by Andrew in obtaining the £10k council grant, Penny offering a reduced rate for the Hunt horses through the summer and Michael planning to keep the Flesh Round going and manage Kennels without the support of a full time Kennelman.

Whilst there is no doubt the coming Season will be challenging in many ways, we are confident that the staff, helpers and supporters of the New Forest Hounds will see us through

Keep safe!

Alan, Graham & Carol