

New Forest Livestock Society **Online Auction Report**

Like many other organisations, The New Forest Livestock Society (NFLS) was faced with very different circumstances this year due to the COVID19 pandemic and had to make the very difficult decision to cancel the usual Beaulieu Road pony sales this year. The Beaulieu Road sales are renowned as the place to buy and sell New Forest Commoners semi feral and handled stock, and it is probably one of the first times in history that no sales have taken place at the yard for an entire year. With the reliance of New Forest Commoners using the sales for their stock, this left the NFLS with a challenge of how to continue to support them and to look at other options for facilitating the sales.

With careful consideration and planning from both the NFLS and Southern Counties Auctioneers, the idea of an online pony sale was conceived. The NFLS worked closely with the auctioneers to adapt the sales and provide an opportunity for the New Forest Commoners to market their forest run stock in line with the aims of the society. This of course did not come without its complications and strict regulations, which meant having to narrow down entry criteria to support New Forest Commoners and their forest run stock only. However, NFLS Directors and committee members worked hard to create terms and conditions that ensured a sale could go ahead this year and ultimately help commoners find some wonderful homes for their ponies during these unprecedented times. Unfortunately, the second lockdown did hamper the original date set for the online auction and, again after much consideration, the online auction got moved back a month to meet the changing pandemic regulations.

The auctioneers created an easy to read and/or register online catalogue from their website detailing guidelines on viewing, collection and transfer of all paperwork for the lots presented for the auction. The NFLS was very fortunate to have a volunteer within the local community who was able to build and manage a page on Facebook to help promote the auction and answer queries, working alongside the auctioneers. With all the hard work of many, the online sale was a thriving success with some fantastic ponies available with prices reflecting their quality.

Entries included three fully registered New Forest filly foals who all attracted great attention and fierce bidding, with Nicky Stephens dun filly Waterslade Pheobe, by Thatchers Dun Roamin reaching a heady price of £1220; Jonathan and Matthew Gerrelli's black forest bred filly foal Portmore Cinders, by Sway Scrumpy Jack reaching £980 and Nicky Stephens chestnut Waterslade Molly by Thatchers Dun Roamin at £680. The New Forest registered colt foals did not disappoint either, with Kate Ingram's bay roan colt foal Hollyhatch Lockdown by Portmore Thundercloud selling for £1300 and her chestnut roan colt foal Hollyhatch Hustler by Portmore Thundercloud for £800. A small number of New Forest registered youngstock were also entered and sold, including Anita Smith' two-year-old bay gelding Janesmoor No Warranty by Obershade Skylark achieving £2060 and Julia Barrett's three-year-old bay gelding Yewtree Clay Kicker by Walhampton Scholars Farewell making £1760. Therefore, some fantastic ponies are now heading off to new homes and lives with their new owners.

Although a great new revolution for the sales, the NFLS, along with the local forest

community, are all looking forward to the normality of being gathered around the sales ring again at the Beaulieu Road sale yard, hopefully in 2021. However, having experienced this online auction, the NFLS will not be ruling out future online sales going forward. 2021 sale dates are currently being planned and will be available on the New Forest Livestock Society website when agreed nfls.org.uk.

Report supplied by New Forest Livestock Society