

Policy Plan Review

D.R.V. Hippocampus

Board: 2022-2023

'Unicorn Rebellion'

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Secretary - Tessa Beinema
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1. Introduction

This document is the half-year review of the 58th Board's policy plan, originally presented to D.R.V. Hippocampus at the general members assembly (GMA) on October 11th 2022. This half-year review is being undertaken at the half-yearly general members assembly (HGMA) on March 27th 2023 to note progress on the points of the Unicorn Rebellion plan. A summary of the key points is given below.

Member bonding

This section describes our approach for integrating new members and for improving engagement with current members.

Financial, time and level stability in the lessons

There is a new subsidy model which caused some unclarity between stable, SUT and the association over the past year. To this end, a number of conversations have already taken place to improve the system by discussing unclarity followed by making clear agreements to avoid this in the future. A new financial system was required and in combination with preferences for more consistency in the lesson schedule, we will be introducing riding passes for members. More explanation can be found under Financial-, time-, and level stability in the lessons.

Membership duties

This section describes our view on the duties all Hippocampus members must assist with, namely bar shifts at the Sports Cantine at the UT and help during the lessons at the stable.

Performance team and SOs

The performance team (PT) was constructed to improve Hippo's representation at SOs with our sister associations. The PT has been a success, and we are continuing its use with some updates. Coordination of the performance team will be done by the Competition Commissioner. Depending on the interest, there will be two performance teams (with one for less experienced riders who can train for F- and/or Ba tests) who each ride a bi-weekly lesson. More strict rules are formulated regarding lesson cancellation for PT members.

To recruit members for the PT, interested Hippoërs are informed properly about the PT and riding SOs (or competitions at Horstlinde) via digital promotion and an information night. Promotion and information about upcoming SOs will not only be shared with PT members but with all Hippoërs.

Horse and rider well-being

For the health of the horses, the stable has updated its policies. This section gives an introduction to our approach regarding well-being of the riders, well-being of the horses, and improving Hippocampus member knowledge about horse-related skills.

External communication

This section describes how we can maintain a consistent look and communication approach with other associations (in particular, sister associations and the Student Union), the outside world (via social media and our website), and the Horstlinde Manege.

2. Member bonding

Following the start of the Corona pandemic in the spring of 2020 and the series of lockdown measures that accompanied the pandemic, we have noticed that there is a lower involvement of members with Hippocampus. That is, fewer members stay at the riding school for a whole evening or stick around for a drink after their lesson and the number of enrollments for activities is at a low point. The following subsections detail our ideas to improve member bonding.

2.1. New member package

It can be difficult for new members to have an overview of everything that is expected and possible within Hippocampus. Therefore we want to ensure that each new member receives a package with the following:

- Information about being a Hippo member (--> use the existing email for this?)
 - Flyer mentioning all committees, the Thursday nights at the BARrage and a QR code to the website.
 - Draft calendar of upcoming events or traditional events to expect.
- A small Hippo item.
- A bag to hold the above items, which can fit caps and chaps.

Since this year will be the first year that such a new member package will be handed out, we will also make sure that all existing members receive one.

2.1.1. New member package Review

The Hippo Welcome Bags were purchased and prepared. These have been given out on several occasions, such as the New Member Welcome Dinner in November 2022, during the Pas de Deux in December 2022, the Thursday Night New Member Welcome in March 2023 and will be available at several events throughout 2023. Plenty of bags remain available for current and new members.

2.2. Buddy system

The board of 2020-2021 intended to set up a buddy system for new members but encountered difficulties due to their year starting with a lockdown that restricted members by just allowing them to come to the riding school for their lesson slot. We would like to introduce such a buddy system this year. Members can volunteer to be a buddy during the beginner course. A Hippoër will be connected to new members and will help them for a few weeks. As needed depending on the experience level of the new members, buddies will assist with horse riding basics, such as saddling and brushing, getting to know the individual horses, and becoming acquainted with the stable and its standard policies.

2.2.1. Buddy system Review

The buddy system is being used for the new members who joined in March 2023. A 5-week “beginner course” has been planned to instruct beginners on:

- Stable safety rules
- What to do before a lesson
- What to do after a lesson

The Hippo members have been very responsive and we have more than enough volunteers each week to pair with the new members.

To ensure the beginners learned what they need to, a quiz night will be organised on the last Thursday of March. This will double as a social event and potentially overlap with a jumping lesson so the beginners get to see that and interact with other rider levels.

2.3. Association clothing

Since association clothing is a good way to make people feel part of an association, we want to have a round of association clothing before Christmas. Furthermore, we would like to arrange for Hippocampus competition clothing to be available for SOs such as competition jackets in a few sizes that people can borrow.

2.3.1. Association clothing Review

Hippo merchandise was made available via a webshop on hippo.utwente.nl. A decision was made to place orders in bulk rather than taking individual orders. This way, items are much cheaper and arrived sooner as we did not have to organise what people wanted before placing orders. The merchandise is expected to be distributed at the end of March to the members.

Regarding competition clothing, that has also been a success. We have jackets in multiple sizes available that have contributed to our association being more visible, recognizable and professional looking during SOs. However, only one jacket was ordered per size, which has been restrictive, especially if Hippo riders have consecutive start times at the SO. We plan to order a few more jackets in the most popular sizes.

2.4. Activities

We would like to increase member involvement with Hippocampus by regularly organising activities. This will be in association with our existing committees such as the Thursday Evening Committee (Docie), Interaction Committee (Incie) and Horse Knowledge Committee (PKcie).

To start, the Incie has already arranged for a quiz and new members dinner in October, as these are activities that have low thresholds for joining and encourage interaction with other members of Hippocampus.

The success of these committees is dependent on active engagement from Hippo members, not only in attending events, but also in properly planning events. Given the low engagement of the past years, agreeing to be on a committee may be seen as a high barrier. To lower these barriers, we will construct a calendar of potential social events. We will then ask for volunteers to pick an event to be in charge of. Rather than a full committee structure, volunteers can be “task-oriented”. We hope in this way we can avoid having a small group of people putting in a lot of effort over a prolonged period. Instead, a broad number of members can put in time at specific points during the year, thus spreading out the workload. Several added benefits are:

1. A broader range of activities might be organised so all Hippo members find something of interest throughout the year.
2. Higher engagement as those organising events may also be inclined to attend the events of others.
3. Greater awareness of planned events.

In general, we will provide a list of social activities which can take place at the manege (for example, quiz nights, themed nights), Hippo-social activities not at the manege (bbq/potlucks, movie nights), and participating at events not organised by Hippo (Military Boekelo, events near Münster and Dülmen).

To improve engagement on Thursday nights and to give Docie a kick-start, we will encourage members to come before their lessons and stay for a drink or a snack after their lessons. We believe this tradition fell out of practice due to social distancing measures from Covid, and newer members might not be aware that this is possible.

2.4.1. Activities Review

The board has successfully organised multiple activities so far, such as the Pub Quiz/New Member Welcome Dinner and the Pas de Deux competition. For each of these, nearly 50% of Hippo was in attendance. Currently, several social activities are planned for spring 2023 (combined social event(s) with the Hercules association, a pub quiz + jumping lesson social, the Hippo Weekend, etc.).

However, we would like to plan more. The board's time has primarily been taken up with administrative duties, maintaining the website, organising Bar Days, trial lessons, weekly lesson scheduling and normal issues which arise, etc. We have had difficulties in recruiting for committees, and even attended a meeting with the Student Union on this matter as it turns out many associations are struggling with member activism.

We plan to address this by reaching out 1-on-1 to members and asking for assistance with planning specific activities. This is more targeted and should foster more involvement.

We believe this plan will be effective as it was how the Beginner Helper's schedule (previously called the Buddy System) was successfully arranged.

3. Financial, time, and level stability in the lessons

The current system for weekly lesson enrollment offers some flexibility for individual members, but leads to large uncertainty regarding the number of riders each week. This greatly complicates lesson planning, and negatively impacts members—riders cannot know what time their lesson will be and with what group until the day before. We have developed a new weekly lesson enrollment system which still offers flexibility, but helps ensure a more stable number of riders per week, with more clarity for members beforehand on the time and lesson group members.

3.1. Riding passes

The first way to improve stability regarding the lessons is the introduction of riding passes for members. A riding pass is a prepaid pass for a certain number of lessons. A pass can be used throughout the full study year. This means members can still choose when they want to ride, but the treasurer and lesson commissioner will have a better indication of the number of actively riding members based on the outstanding lessons and cards. This will allow them to schedule trial lessons when lower attendance rates are to be expected, which will help to keep the number of lessons up - especially in the second half of the year when attendance always drops. We believe passes for prepaid lessons will also motivate members to join lessons and reduce the number of weekly cancellations. To assist with members selecting riding passes, we can provide them with the number of times they rode in previous years.

3.1.1. Riding passes Review

From November we implemented riding passes. Members can use 10 lessons for riding weekly or 5 lessons for riding biweekly. All the riding passes are valid for 15 weeks to keep the flexibility to cancel without costs (if cancelled on time). Requesting new riding passes is available on the website and it is also visible how many lessons are left. The Influences of the riding passes on the training evening will be explained in 3.2.1.

A monthly deadline is needed because the riding pass needs to be paid before it can be valid. Since the automatic payments are arranged by the treasurer once a month, members need to request their passes in time. Despite multiple reminders and the lessons left being clearly visible to the members on various web pages, it still happens often that a new pass is not requested in time. This might be because people still need to get used to it, so there is still hope that this will improve in the future.

3.2. Training groups

The performance team of this past year provides a prime example of what we would like the regular Thursday lessons to look like: a group of regular riders who make progress together, bond as a team, and support each other. We aim to replicate this experience in the regular Thursday lessons through training groups. Members are assigned to training groups in such a way that each group has a similar riding level and an expected attendance of 6-8 people each week. This will hopefully lead to lessons being at consistent times and with a consistent group of people. To create these training groups, it is important to ask members what their riding preferences are. For example, some people like to ride once a week, others once every two weeks, and others once per month. This choice of riding preference is related to their choice of riding pass, described in the prior subsection.

Consistency in training groups will improve the progress of individual riders and might help the instructor with setting training goals for each group. In addition to time and level consistency benefits, regularly training with the same group of people will hopefully also lead to members within these groups getting to know each other better and maybe also staying for a drink after their lesson. They can perhaps even rely on each other more for help with saddling or when they are running late, which is nice for the members who have a lesson assistance shift.

3.2.1. Training groups Review

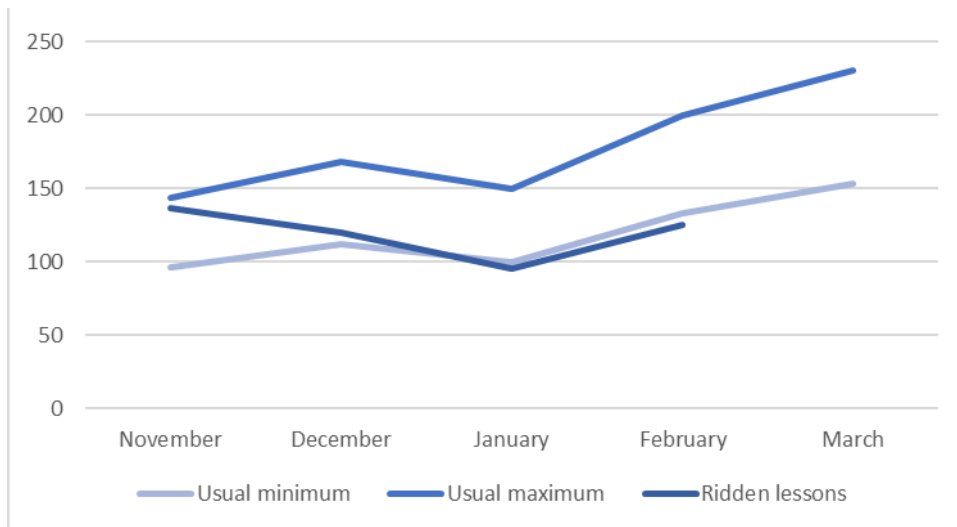
Knowing the expectation if members show up weekly or biweekly helps in making a more reliable monthly schedule. But because there is still a range in using the riding passes, we see in the last months that despite the growing members, we are having less lessons than expected. Due to many last minute cancellation we have an hour less than expected and this results in unreliable times compared to the monthly schedule.

Having two levels riding after each other can make it easier to combine and having other lessons just one hour earlier. But in the past months we experienced this is difficult to get in practise for the following reasons:

- Sometimes the cancellations are separated over all levels, which means all groups need to be merged. In this case combining only two levels is not working out.
- Some horses are only suitable for higher lessons with more experienced riders and more difficult exercises. Other horses are more suitable for little experience and easier hours of work. We need the horses multiple hours during the evening and give preferable an hour rest between the hours. Having the same levels riding after each other is for this reason contradictory and makes scheduling the horses more difficult.

So, how can the riding times be improved? Looking at the results with the riding passes over last months, we see that it is following a steady trend close to the minimum expected riders.

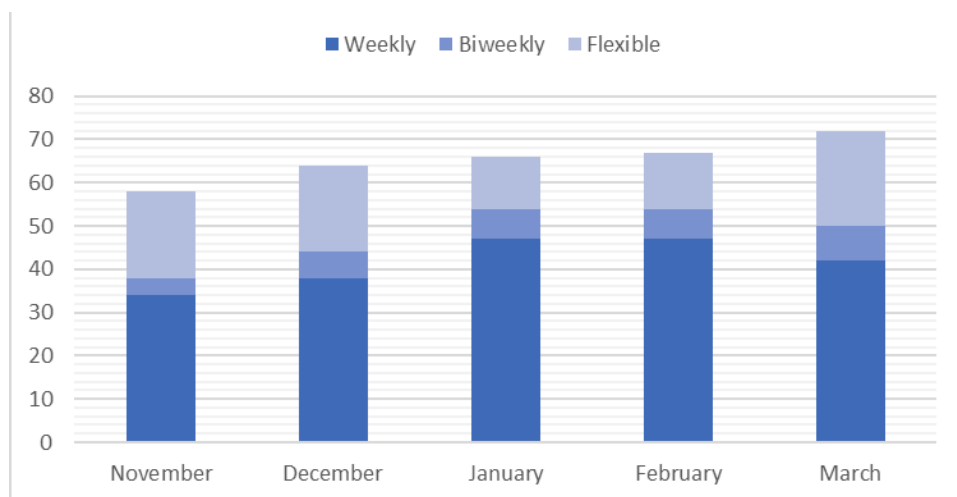
Expected lessons from riding passes



The numbers used in the figure above are the total expected lessons of the month compared to the actual numbers. Taking into account that not every month provides the same amount of weeks you can look at the figure below to get an image of weekly expected members.

The health of the horses is more important and we see scheduling groups after each other is not solving the problem, so we have quit scheduling like that. Therefore, when there are less hours than in the monthly schedule, it is not possible to minimise the time difference of riding for members.

Members and riding passes



We can think of three other elements which can improve the expected times:

- Make sure members indicate new riding passes in time. We changed this now to every last Thursday of the month and hope to see improvement in the upcoming months.
- In case less than 6 lessons are expected it is possible to schedule one hour reserve in the middle of the evening in the monthly schedule. We expect this scenario is only needed during periods where we anticipate many cancellations, such as UT holidays or exam periods.
- Stimulating members to predefine their lessons of the month. Suggestions during the hGMA are welcome.

3.3. Automating enrollment

Keeping track of enrollment in the lessons through the current manual email-based system is a time-consuming task for the lesson commissioner. Therefore, we want to look into a way to make this process more efficient, easier for members and less time-consuming for the lesson commissioner. We are currently investigating options such as a sign-in page within the Hippocampus website.

3.3.1. Automating enrollment

Enrollment through the website has reduced some of the burden of scheduling the weekly lesson, as the high email load has been mostly eliminated. The website is working smoothly and members have adjusted well to using it.

We have additional improvements to reduce workload further, as transferring the info from the website to the one-list is still burdensome. However, this only impacts the board and its workload and not members. We plan to improve our way of working and will keep in mind future boards that will have to learn and work with this system. Further ideas regarding the website usage and improving functionality for the members will be noted below in Section 7.4: Website.

4. Membership duties

To keep our association running and to have subsidised lessons, there are two types of duties for Hippocampus members. We discuss our plans for these two types of duties below.

4.1. Bar shifts at UT

To ride subsidised lessons, members of Hippocampus have always been required to complete 5 hours of bar shift at the University's Sports Canteen per person each academic year. During the previous Corona years, this requirement was made more flexible, allowing for the completion of the five hours in a two-year period. This year, the requirement will go back to 5 hours per person per year.

We have also noticed that many members have little experience with these bar shifts or do not feel confident that they know what to do. Therefore, we would like to organise a training activity at De Stal where members can learn what to do. We also want to emphasise and check that members complete their 'certificate responsible alcohol distribution', which is required when you have a bar shift at the sports canteen.

4.1.1. Bar shifts at UT Review

Hippocampus has successfully completed Bar Days on 4th November, 9th December, and 16th December. We were told Hippo had a Bar Day on 5th February, but this apparently was a mistake caused by a communication error. The Sunday, 5th Feb Bar Day was assigned to DIOK, who graciously agreed to allow us to take shifts from 8:30 - 12:00, so we should still receive income for this. DIOK already stated this to the Sport Canteen, so if it is correct we will receive the money directly, else the Penningmeester will look after this and contact DIOK.

For our board year, we have two remaining Bar Days: 26th April (King's Night) and 5th June.

This gives us a total of 5 bar days, for approximately a total of 185 hours of bar shifts (10:30 - 17:00: 2 persons each, 5 days = 65 hours; 17:00 - 1:00: 3 persons each, 5 days = 120). Although the fine for missing hours has not been strictly enforced in the past, we plan to do so this year. We believe the €15/hour fine is still reasonable. Those members who do not work Bar Days then contribute financially to Hippocampus.

For the members who still want to stand bar and avoid the fine, after the last bar day, we are looking into the possibility if they can stand bar at the stable during our club championship or the VNSK—however, this is not a guarantee so we encourage all members with 0 hours to sign up for the remaining bar days.

4.2. Lesson assistance shifts

The previous board introduced lesson assistance shifts. This system was based on the manege bar shift system, which was discontinued when the pandemic started. The assistance shifts are intended to reduce the burden on board members during the lesson evenings because the members on shift can help with (un)saddling and during the lesson change. We would like to make members on these shifts more recognisable by arranging, for example, vests or baseball caps that can be worn. We would also like to improve the way in which the schedule for these shifts is made so that shift time slots are as adjacent as possible to members' own lessons.

4.2.1. Lesson assistance shifts Review

The lesson assistance shifts are now called the Helper's Schedule and are arranged via the website. This has been working smoothly and we will continue to use it.

An area of improvement is that creating the Helper's Schedule has become an additional duty for the Lesson commissioner, who already has a lot of work. Unfortunately the Helper's Schedule is dependent upon the Lesson Schedule, meaning the Lesson commissioner must still ultimately make or check the Helper Schedule in the end. However, we are looking into ways to improve how the schedule is arranged. We may be able to use the website to partially automate this process as well.

5. Performance team and SOs

Last year was the first year that Hippocampus had a performance team. It was experienced positively and led to more members of Hippocampus actively participating in SOs. Therefore, the performance team will continue. We are however making a few changes.

5.1. Performance team and SO coordination

The VNS-representative will coordinate the sign-up and general activities of the team. However, the specific day-to-day enrollment and cancellation for performance team lessons will go through the lesson commissioner.

It will be made clear to all members that one does not need to be in the performance team in order to join SOs. The invites will be shared among the entire association (together with a brief explanation about what it is every time) rather than only the team, which was the case last year.

5.1.1. Performance team and SO coordination Review

Enrollment and cancellation is, in contrast to what was stated in the policy plan, not done via the lesson commissioner but via the competition commissioner. Members can enrol and cancel via a separate system on the website, where they can see who is joining and whether there is an open spot left.

So far, the attendance of SO's inside and outside of the performance team is going well! Around 10 members joined the first two SO's of the year and there are also quite some sign-ups for our own SO in april.

5.2. Performance team sign-up

To give new members the chance to join the performance team, the selection of new performance team members will happen at the end of October and the change of team will start in November. If there are enough sign-ups, there might be a possibility to have two teams - split on riding level - that will both ride bi-weekly. In this way, less experienced riders are also stimulated to represent Hippocampus at SO's (or F-tests, depending on rider level). If there are not enough members interested there will be one team of 8 with a maximum of 2 reserve riders.

Joining the team means that you have to join at least two SO's of our sister associations - our own SO does not count. Since most (especially new) members do not know what an SO is, they will get all the information (and an impression video of last year) they need to base their choice on whether or not to join the team on. Before sign-up closes, members will be informed about the possibility to join the performance team and what it means. For those who are interested in joining, an 'information/impression night' will be organised on a Tuesday, in which they first get information about the team and the rules, followed by the opportunity to watch a lesson of last year's team for an optimal impression.

5.2.1. Performance team sign-up Review

The year started with two separate teams, but over the months there were multiple members who quit the team for varying reasons.

Therefore, the performance team now consists of 7 weekly riders and 4 biweekly riders, which is working well so far.

Since the members that quit the performance team during the first half of the year were mainly from the lower-level team, there is now quite a big gap in level, which can sometimes be a challenge for the instructor and riders. There is no solution for this (yet).

The rules for attending SO's or other competitions have turned out to be feasible, as most members already meet this rule after only the first half of the year.

5.3. Performance team lesson attendance

Last year, there was no specific rule regarding the presence during lessons for the performance team. While this all went well to prevent someone from joining the team but not showing up on a regular basis, or seeing the Tuesday lessons as a replacement for Thursday if it suits them better, the rule will be that every member of the performance team can cancel their lesson only once a month (Tuesdays and Thursdays both count). If someone cancels more often (or does not join competitions), the VNS-representative can schedule a meeting with this person to discuss whether they can stay in the team or not.

5.3.1. Performance team lesson attendance

The minimum of six riders, preferably seven, is met for all performance team lessons in the first half of the year. Right now, there are a total of 9 riders signed up by default, so if one member cancels (which happens on a regular basis), the lesson is still filled with eight. If less than eight riders have signed up, reserve riders are contacted to aim for a full lesson. This works quite well so far. The people who cancelled more than once a month on some occasions have either quit the team or have valid personal reasons.

6. Horse & rider well-being

An important aspect of horse well-being is making sure the rider is not too heavy. Last year, the riding school started with weighing her riders and we are happy they want to continue doing this every 3 months. Weighing in horse riding is important, but still difficult to deal with or talk about. Our goal would be normalising weighing, and hereby taking care of the well-being of the horse and rider.

6.1. Well-being of riders

The riding school has introduced regular weighing moments for riders, as having to carry heavy riders can impact the health of the horses. This means that once every few months everyone's weight will be measured in a private setting with just one instructor of the riding school present. If you weigh 90 kilos or more you are not immediately prevented from riding, but you will be advised to lose weight and will be re-weighed after a month to see if you are on track. However, how they should lose weight is left up to the riders themselves.

Therefore, this year, we would like to see if we can help riders who are interested by providing them with the tools to keep up or improve their fitness. For example, we will investigate if we can contact a dietician to create a booklet with some advice for a healthy lifestyle. We will also investigate if we can provide something similar for exercises that, e.g., increase riders' balance or if there is interest in a motivational WhatsApp group.

6.1.1. Well-being of riders Review

There has not been any progress yet on this topic, mostly as there were more urgent tasks to focus on first. This is something we will be looking into in the second half of the year. We welcome suggestions, ideas, and any volunteers.

6.2. Well-being of horses

To improve the well-being of horses, we want to inform members of why the weight limits are there and provide them with clear examples of horses they know. We can, for example,

explain that a horse can carry riders that weigh no more than 15% to 20% of the horse's weight and that the guidelines from KNHS are to use 17% as the maximum amount. We calculate beginner weight with a maximum of 15% and experienced weight at 17% to show an indication that hopefully provides a better understanding.

Since the stable does not have many horses at the moment, it could be an option to regulate new members on their weight. This sounds very strict, but if we have 10 people of 90kg and only 6 horses that can carry this weight because these people cannot ride ponies, a lot is still asked of the horses. We, therefore, want to be transparent with the stables in how many riders we have in each weight category and see if there is enough flexibility in the horses to guarantee the well-being of horses and riders.

6.2.1. Well-being of horses Review

There has been communication between the stable and our board. This resulted in, for example, that there has been a lower maximum weight for the new beginners since there are not a lot of horses who can ride in those lessons so the ponies are needed and in this way that wouldn't lead to problems with scheduling the horses.

6.3. Horse skills improvement

In addition to the items above, we would also like to improve members' knowledge of and skills with horses. We will therefore ask the Horse Knowledge Committee (PKCie) to organise workshops or lessons on this topic, such as saddling lessons or theory lessons on themes such as common horse health and behaviour issues, what to look for, and how to resolve them; hoof-care; horse diet; mental well-being of horses or even stretching or horse massage.

6.3.1. Horse skills improvement Review

The 2022 Pas de Deux competition which was arranged was a nice way to have Hippo members learn or improve a new way of riding. For many of the participants, this was their first time riding in a duet and learning a synchronised routine. We will make the routine and the explanatory animated video of the test (proef) available for future use.

The board hopes to organise several more events which are even more strongly associated with PKCie:

- Horse theory lessons taught by an external person or experienced Hippo member
- Ruitervalans Centrum event in April or May
- Outdoor rides

Organisation of these events is entirely dependent on member involvement. As mentioned before, we will reach out to members 1-to-1 to see if there is interest in organising the events we have in mind, or if members have additional ideas they wish to pursue.

In addition to events and activities, the board is collecting a series of videos and materials which may help riders improve certain things, such as riding posture, connecting with a horse, how to release tension and warm up a horse properly before riding, etc. We will consider the best way to use this material and may have it on the website as a repository of information.

7. External communication

Hippocampus is not always visible to outsiders such as our sister associations, other associations in Enschede and most importantly potential new members. Potential causes for this are limited attendance at SOs and limited interaction with other associations, but also a lack of general association colours. We, therefore, have some ideas to improve our external communication in collaboration with our Website Committee (Webcie), City Meeting Committee (SOCie) and Public Relations Committee (PRcie).

7.1. Association colours

Over the past years, each board introduced a new colour for their merchandise. Our idea is to introduce a Hippocampus colour scheme for long-term use so that we will be consistently recognizable by other associations. The proposal is to use bright red as our primary colour, with white as the secondary colour. For accents or certain clothing items for which only red or white is not desired, navy blue or black can be used. None of our sister associations use this colour scheme. This additionally matches the colour scheme of the equipment we use during the Hippo SO, for example, the Hippo jump.

7.1.1. Association colours Review

These colours have been uniformly introduced across the Hippo merchandise, website, social media accounts. For the consistency of Hippo's branding, we hope future boards will maintain these colours.

7.2. Contact with sister associations

In the coming year, the aim is to get a larger group of Hippoërs with us to SOs in recognizable Hippocampus (competition) clothing. The VNS-representative will stay in close contact with representatives from other associations to bring back the good name of Hippo. An activity together with one or more other associations will also be considered.

7.2.1. Contact with sister associations Review

We hope to organise an exchange with a sister association, but again this is dependent on member involvement. To combine efforts, an idea is to plan an outdoor ride via the PKCie committee and invite a sister association to join.

In addition, Jetske Bonnenkamp attended an AB working day and has become a member of the VNS.

7.3. Social media strategy

Currently, Hippocampus' social media is somewhat chaotic in terms of used colours, fonts, language style, et cetera. The aim is to use the new Hippocampus colour scheme in all Instagram posts from now on and to use a more general style overall so that it looks calmer, better recognizable, and more professional.

Nowadays, very few people use Facebook. Therefore, Facebook is no longer considered to be a useful channel for communication with (potential) members. The focus will be on Instagram and Whatsapp.

7.3.1. Social media strategy Review

As mentioned in Section 7.1 Association Colours, a consistent brand using red and white as primary colours has been introduced. Instagram reels, normal posts, and stories have been used effectively to promote events and share activity outcomes. We are also engaging with the posts of other associations.

WhatsApp has been used for internal Hippo communications, but since not all members have WhatsApp, crucial information is still shared via email as well.

We use 3 App groups:

- Hippocampus: for general discussions and to let members post, e.g., when a member might be running late on a Thursday evening or has a general question
- Hippocampus Announcements: for updates and announcements which the board can give to the members, without discussions causing information to be quickly lost
- Performance Team: for updates, announcements, and discussion of lesson plans for the PT specifically.

These groups can be shared and used by future boards as well.

7.4. Website

In addition to active communication with (potential) members via Instagram posts and stories, the idea is to use the renewed website more extensively for information, blogs, competition results, updates, upcoming activities, et cetera. More information and/or news items on the website can reduce the amount of information in the lesson schedule emails, as members can simply be redirected to these pages via a link.

7.4.1. Website Review

The new website and corresponding lesson system have been successful. It is a central medium for communication to (potential) members and other interested readers and makes it easy for both the members and the board to get insight in the presence for upcoming lessons. The system does have a relatively complicated back-end that is sensitive to (human) errors. To make sure the maintenance and development can be taken over by future boards, a manual is in development. In addition, the webmaster has been working on a front-end maintenance page for the future webmaster so that it gets easier to work with the system and data updates can be processed faster.

7.5. Relationship with the Horstlinde Manege

The Horstlinde Manege is currently undergoing multiple changes, some of which include the number of available school horses and instructors. These have impacts on Hippo with regards to number of available lesson spots, number of members we can accept, etc. Our board will keep open communication with Horstlinde staff to ensure smooth operations and inform Hippo members of changes. The board will act as a first point-of-contact for discussions between Horstlinde and Hippo's members.

7.5.1. Relationship with the Horstlinde Manege Review

We have maintained regular conversations with key staff at Horstlinde and the board is up-to-date. The board passes along relevant information via the website, WhatsApp groups, and emails to the members. The board will continue to work with Horstlinde with respect to the number of lessons we can schedule and how that impacts the number of new members and at what riding level Hippocampus can accept. We appreciate the open communication from Horstlinde, and their willingness to work with us in hosting fun Hippo events such as the Pas de Deux, the Hippo SO, and look forward to planning more such activities.

7.6. Relationship with the Student Union (SU) and Sports Umbrella UT (SUT)

Hippocampus is a sports association of the UT and as a result, receives subsidies from the UT. The Student Union (SU) is a point of contact with its own set of policies and standards which Hippo is subject to. The board will keep open communication with the board of the SU regarding changes that impact Hippo's members, the subsidy, and other aspects of being a UT sports association.

Currently, the SU has requested compliance with maintaining a threshold number of UT-student members. We are in communication with them regarding this request and are

working toward a solution which will minimally impact the current members of Hippo. A copy of a formal letter written to the SU board and the current SU chairman is available.

7.6.1. Relationship with the Student Union (SU) and Sports Umbrella Twente (SUT) Review

The SU has not formally responded to our letter or our concerns raised. They followed up in February 2023 to ask about our current student membership percentage. The Lesson commissioner and Vice Chair replied, and asked for a meeting, but the SU did not respond. We believe this will continue to be an issue for future boards and will document as best we can to provide future boards with necessary information.

Ultimately, the diversity of Hippocampus is a strength, particularly as we depend upon having a strong base of experienced members. A majority of applicants on the waiting list who are UT students (either bachelor or masters) are inexperienced, and so there is a dependence on allowing non-UT-student members (UT PhDs, UT staff, Saxion students) to also join. This has been communicated to the SU.

In addition, the Chair and Vice Chair attended a meeting organized from the Sport Sector of the SU. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss various ways in which the SU could support the various sport-related associations.