

Newbury & District Agricultural Society

Annual General Meeting

held in The Society Building, Newbury Showground, Priors Court Road, Chieveley

on

Wednesday 28th September 2022

1. **Apologies for Absence** were received from Roy and Nina Speake, Steve Goddard, Binky Wells, Linda Watts, Diana Gough, Gathorne Gough, David Swait, Jonathan Dance, Lady Harman, Chris Wilson, Kathleen Walker, Penee Chopping, Keith Chopping, Caroline Poole, Simon Carter, Susan Carter, Marion Parmenter, Alec Hayton, Carol Gibbs, Will Nixey, Ann Harwood, Mike Harwood, Lady Iliffe, Lord Iliffe, Paul Frankel, James Hole, Neil Hurn, Gwendoline Hurn, A Chamberlayne, Sally Munnings, Denise Herrington, Caroline Athawes, Malcolm Bull, John Brunskill, Liz Brunskill, Edward Dann, Charlie Plank, Rhona Tucker, Michael Kimber, Suzanne Kimber, Wendy Wallis, Ali Brown, Steve White and Tony White.
2. **Approval of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 1st November 2021** All in favour and signed as correct by the Chairman.
3. **Chairman's Report**

“Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen, firstly I'd like to thank all of the members that voted for me at last year's AGM which enabled me to be elected to the Board of our Society, thank you. Secondly, I would like to thank my fellow Board members for having enough faith in me to elect me as the Chairman of the Board to lead the Society out of the difficult position it found itself in, so thank you all. I've no wish to dwell on the past or rake over what happened last year, suffice to say we are all still here and we are still trading. David will explain more detail about the current finances further on in this evenings Agenda. I do however, want to make one point regarding the events of last year, I know I speak for the whole Board when I say we all have no wish for the same thing to ever happen again in the future and to that end we are looking to put forward a special resolution to amend the Society Articles to add some clarity to the powers that the Board do or don't have regarding the sale of the showground without a membership vote. We had initially hoped to have something ready to be put forward at this evening's meeting but the wording required is far from straightforward and we need to get this right so we will be in communication with you all regarding a resolution to be proposed at the 2023 AGM. Once the decision had been made by the membership not to sell the showground your new Board set about making much better use of the resources we own and becoming more transparent with you about the Societies work. I hope you are enjoying the “Society Newsletter” and finding its contents of interest and enjoyed the Membership events that we have managed to hold this year. If you do have any comments, ideas or observations, please do let one of us know.

It was very apparent that this building was under-utilized not least because the wind and rain blew in and there were far too many pigeons residing in here and leaving their trade mark. Using purely volunteer labour the building was completely re-clad and a new

closed ridge fitted, thus keeping the weather and motorway noise out, noise from within the building in, as well as keeping out the pigeons, (I do note there are a couple of our feathered friends still residing here, they do have a knack of spotting an open roller door from 100 paces....) The work has paid off as so far this year there has been additional income of approximately £10,000 from lettings that have included the building who wouldn't have done so without it being enclosed. On the subject of lettings I thought I would share with you a list of the events that have happened on the Showground since the last AGM as I for one didn't realise just how much happens on the showground throughout the year:-

3 x Cross Country Running Events
Case UK Demo Days
Farols Open Day
Young Drivers x 9
4 x 4 spares day x 2 events (1 this weekend)
Aztec Dog and Flower Show
Wallingford Dog Show
UK dog Agility
Vyne dog Agility
Warners Motorhome Show
YFC Show + Wurzels
Reading and District Dog Show
SCCA Dog Show
Thames Dog Show
Spring Vehicle show
Xplosive Balloon Festival
Stance Fever – Car Show
Retro Festival
Labyrinth Challenge
Polish Car Show
Booked:
Showmans Show
Illusion Fireworks
4 more young drivers

We currently have a planning application with WBC Planning Dept, to ease the Section 106 planning restrictions in place on the Showground. One of the main things is the removal of the 4 month closed period so we can make use of this building throughout the winter months, we will update you all on this application as soon as a decision is made by WBC. I'm pleased to confirm that your Board have met several times with local Parish Councils and now have their backing with our application.

The toilets on the showground were another area that needed urgent attention to help with getting more events held onsite. The Newbury Building Society toilets were the first to be attacked, again by volunteers, who cleaned, painted and generally made them much more presentable.

The motorway toilets are on our hit list for this winter, they do need a little more work with the multiple cisterns being replaced. Once the old cisterns are stripped out we will be asking for volunteers to help with the painting – any help appreciated.

Drains on the Showground have also been fixed and replaced, fence lines have been trimmed and I'm hoping you'll agree that the showground is currently looking good? - Having said that there are always more jobs to be done.

Thanks must go to Linda Bowden and Mick Crockford who have come up with a comprehensive list of the jobs that need to be done by Spring. None of the work can take place without volunteer help and we desperately need new blood/volunteers to give an hour or two mending, painting, mowing, planting and clearing out areas - please have a chat to Linda or Mick later this evening if you have any time between now and April!! I don't want to take up any more of your time as I'm sure you would rather be eating some of the delicious food that Mick has been cooking than listening to me. So to sum up the year I would say it has been positive and productive and the Society is certainly heading in the right direction.

I would like to close with some "Thank yous" .

The first one is more of a general thanks, to everyone that has helped the Society over the years I know some people for various reasons are unable to help as much as they once did so I would like on behalf of the Society to thank everyone who has contributed to the Society in the past , present and hopefully the future too as the Society can't function without its volunteers. I'd like to thank Linda Bowden for her excellent minute taking at our Board meetings, I'm still unsure how Linda manages to get everything we say down on paper. I would also like to thank the dedicated team (I much prefer the word team to staff) that we have, Pam who looks after the lettings, Jan who does the fantastic work with the local schools and education programme and last but by no means least Susan who basically does everything else and is a great support both to the Board and all of our members. Thank you for your time in attending tonight.

4. Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2021 and Trustees Report

Presented by David Barr:

"The accounts have been published on the website, but I will summarise some of the highlights from them:-

We achieved a cash surplus for the year of £96,592 and the balance sheet at the year end shows net assets of £1,457,244. Cash at bank is up from £177K to £219K and borrowing down from £323K to £317K over the year.

As of today we expect a surplus of over £50K for the current year and our cash reserves currently exceed the total debt.

The auditors gave us a clean report with no Going Concern qualifications.

The accounts were approved on 8th June 2022 which is much earlier than last year and the Audit Report was signed on 10th June 2022.

On a question from Paul Bryant, ‘why has income gone down?’ David Barr responded that the previous year’s surplus was higher due to income received from the Covid Testing Centre, which has now gone. The Society is still standing on its own two feet.”

Anthony Rowberry Proposed and Michael Bowden seconded Adoption of the Accounts. All were in favour.

5. **Approval of the Appointment of Auditors** James Cowper Kreston was proposed by Andrew Chandler, seconded by Andrew Rolls with all in favour

6. **Show 2023**

Steve Ackrill opened:

What is happening about a show in 2023 is I’m sure the question on a lot of people’s lips at this point in time. Your Board have discussed this at length since we were elected last year as we are acutely aware as I mentioned earlier that the Show itself is vitally important to the Society but also committing the finances to put on a show are also a concern.

We have been approached by a company who work with the BBC to put on the Countryfile Live show to explore the possibility of a putting on a joint event here on the Showground. After numerous meetings/discussions with both the company and representatives from the BBC we have come to an agreement to put on a joint event in 2023. We have been approached as we have not only the venue but more importantly we have the Agriculture and Livestock that is wanted to put on this type of event. Your Board, in the discussions, have been very clear and it has been agreed that this will be a true joint event with no side taking precedence over the other, we see this as a fantastic opportunity to bring two shows together to create one even better show.

This show will be a 3 day event that will take place on the Fri/Sat/Sun of our normal weekend which will be 15-17 September 2023. There are still lots of details to finalise and as I’m sure you’ll understand the format of organising the show will need to be somewhat different than previous shows, that said, The Society will still need help from the membership and volunteers as in previous years.

I will now hand over to Judith who is going to explain more about the volunteer involvement in the running of the show.

Judith Marcham:

As you have just heard from Steve, we will be holding a show in 2023 as a joint venture with Countryfile Live. This is a hugely exciting opportunity for NADAS to re-establish itself on the show circuit. To make this joint venture work, we do still need the help of volunteers.

Initially we would like to set up committees to work on different areas. If you were previously involved with the show, would like to be involve now or would like to change direction or work in a different section, please let any one of the board members or office team have your contact details. We are still working very closely with Countryfile Live on the areas of responsibility, but do need to start working on the areas that we know will be our responsibility. We will be having an open meeting for volunteers on Tuesday 18th October in Chieveley Village Hall starting at 7pm. If you would like to be involved, do please come.

7. **Any Other Business and Questions**

A number of questions were taken from the audience, responses to which are summarised as follows:-

- a) Reconciling the Charity with BBC had been raised at the start of negotiations and the BBC are looking at it to make sure there are no issues.
- b) Any profit will be split between the Society and SME who bring experience and the name of the BBC.
- c) “Congratulations” from Simon Pallett – response to question ‘what will it be called?’ – Countryfile Live with Newbury Show, not to be publicised yet.
- d) The Society will not be letting the Showground to the BBC, it is a joint venture.
- e) A decision has yet to be taken on the future of the roles of Chairman and President, likely to be different.
- f) In the past Countryfile has been run over four days, three days will make it work and the joint venture spreads the risk.
- g) NADAS will have control of the spending.
- h) It is hoped the gate prices will be inflation linked to the last show in 2019.
- i) There is no commitment to Countryfile Live and a three day Show going forwards.
- j) This event will be a fantastic opportunity for us to put the country and thus agriculture, into Countryfile.
- k) The amount of net proceeds to be paid to the BBC is still under negotiation.
- l) There is a risk in putting on any Show, the Board believes that by doing so this way, the risks are shared.
- m) Countryfile Live is moving from Blenheim for several reasons, traffic management, accessibility, by spreading the potential increased numbers over three days, the volume of traffic per day should be little different from a two day Show. We will get the bonus of Matt Baker and the other Countryfile presenters who draw the public.
- n) The details of members ticketing and access to the Show is still being worked on, but we cannot have a situation where Society members get favourable access over paying visitors, there will be benefits but probably not free access over three days.
- o) Agreed it is vitally important how we treat are exhibitors and the NADAS team will be handling most of the action on the Showground, with SME London handling marketing (they have the department) an organisation by the Society, as previously.
- p) A bi-monthly Newsletter is emailed to all members with a link to the website. If anyone has any suggestion to improve communication the Board are very happy to listen to them.
- q) Volunteers are required for Countryside, Agriculture, Livestock, Food, Craft Fayre and Flower Tent, particularly. Need to establish who can help and then move forward.
- r) No money has been spent on legal fees as we are still at Heads of Agreement at the moment.
- s) To applause, the meeting was informed that the members and presidents areas will be very different as too many people took advantage in the past. There will be a VIP area – subject to payment – and there is no problem with self-funding corporate entertainment.

- t) Some members of the Board deal with contracts on a daily basis, but will appoint a Solicitor to go through the Agreement prior to signature.

<u>Question</u>	<u>Response</u>
How will we reconcile our Charity with their Company.	David Barr replied that this had been raised at the start of negotiations and the BBC are looking at it to make sure we don't cause any clashes. Both sides are confident they can work together.
We don't want to line somebody else's pocket	Steve Ackrill responded that any profit will be split between the Society and the Company. They will be bringing a lot with the name of the BBC and experience.
Simon Pallett – congratulations, well done. What will it be called?	Steve Ackrill responded that between the four walls of the building and not to be publicised yet, the title will be Countryfile Live with Newbury Show, final bottom half of printing yet to be agreed. Happy to put a picture up on screen at the end of the meeting of the proposal.
To all intents and purposes we will be letting the Showground to the BBC?	Steve Ackrill responded: no, this will be a joint venture with all the money going into a central pot, which will include a rent and hopefully a profit at the end which will be split equally between the two sides.
What has happened with regard to Chairman, President? Will there be a Countryfile Newbury Show Chairman?	One of the things yet to be decided, it will be different.
A three day Show has the potential to lose quite a lot of money, who is deciding what has to be spent?	Steve Ackrill said one of the upsides is sharing half the risk. David Barr said the reason for the joint venture is to spread the risk. In the past Countryfile has been over four days, three days is where it is to make it work.
How is it going to be managed, who holds the purse strings and who decides what will be spent?	The purse strings come to NADAS, risk comes with more revenue.
Gate prices are high relative to the man on the High Street. There may be quite a lot of people coming who feel they pay a licence fee to the BBC, what gate prices can we expect?	David Barr responded that it is hoped it will not be a lot more than it was when the Show was held in 2019. The gate prices will be on inflation linked on the last show, budget and models are the idea. The New Forest Show is three days and very successful, worked with Blenheim, 3 days very successful.
The cost of putting on the Show has grown to half a million pounds to put up the structure. All very nervous about investing that amount of money in the Show. An independent company called SME London, under licence from the	Steve Ackrill said he is very confident numbers of people through the gate won't be an issue. There is a massive following which wants the Show back. Countryfile wants their Show back, people will want to come and see it. This is an excellent way

BBC. The cost and the risk of loss is also shared. Is this not a good thing for the Show?	to re-start Newbury Show.
What happens the year after? Will you expect to support a three day show without the BBC?	No.
Please can you ensure the agricultural side is well represented?	Steve Ackrill responded “see it as a fantastic opportunity for us to put the country in Countryfile”.
Will we be charged normal rates for admission, or will it be free?	Steve Ackrill said hoping for this show will be minimal. Normally when SME have done it they have paid an amount to the BBC, hoping that will be waived, but still being talked about.
Whilst thinking this is a very exciting and challenging thing for the future and congratulate them on their negotiations. At what point will you be asking the members to approve what is happening? Will you be asking members this evening or will there be another meeting when you have more information? Paying 50% of the cost is better than paying the whole. There is a risk element and the finances must be in place or are you relying on the income to cover expenses?	Steve Ackrill responded that there is a risk, but we could never put on a Show without a risk. The Board have decided this is the best option which reduces the risk to less than it would be. The 2019 Show cost over a million to put on, we don’t have a spare million. How many years can the Society go on without a Show. We are of the opinion there is a lower risk doing it this way.
Have you had a chance to scrutinise the past performance of the Countryfile Live and why it is leaving Blenheim? There was a rent payable at Blenheim, same event a financial success.	They are keen to come to us to get agriculture, livestock, etc. We get the bonus of Matt Baker and the presenters who draw the public.
Living near Blenheim, there is bad publicity about traffic management, is why they agreed not to do it again. Totally in favour, one concern is traffic management.	Steve Ackrill said the numbers we are aiming for are not that different per day. The budget is working on 100,000 over the three days, not vastly different from the normal Show weekend. Traffic management has been much better. We have the ideal location.
One of the problems is getting new members. Is the intention you will get a ticket to the Show or will members have to pay half the ticket price?	Steve Ackrill said this is a million dollar question which has to be worked on. What we can’t have, as it is not fair on SME London, people getting tickets for three days @ £25 against an annual membership of £60, this is not yet set in stone. Members will get benefits but probably not free entrance on all three days.
D Ilsley thought Blenheim entrance was £30/head.	Steve Ackrill said can’t be expensive as want people here.
M Bissell said over the years we have been recognised as one of the Shows which gave	Steve Ackrill agreed it was vitally important and is one of the reasons we will be

<p>the exhibitors the best treatment they could have received. At Blenheim they were not satisfied with the way they were treated by this Company. It is important that we keep our reputation of being able to handle our exhibitors, it is important that we have that same situation on this Showground that we have had in the last 55 years.</p>	<p>handling most of the action on the Showground. SME London will be handling marketing, as they have this department. Organisation will be done by the Show as it has been previously.</p>
<p>Congratulate the Board on what they have done so far – three questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A lot of money is put in, will the BBC be putting the money in in advance? 2) How many people get free tickets to the Show? 3) Only hear about Events, is there any way we could all see what events are going on outside of annual show time? 	<p>Nick Wallis responded that a Newsletter is going out bi-monthly, which includes a bit about events and a link with the website. We try to avoid sending paperwork out because of the cost. If anyone has any ideas as to how we can improve communication, very happy to listen to them.</p> <p>David Barr said the BBC is putting no money up front, it is a joint venture, equal all the way through.</p>
<p>What volunteers are we looking for and in what areas? Was on publicity, is there a need for it?</p>	<p>Judith Marcham said in particular we are looking for Countryside, Agriculture, Livestock, Craft Fayre and Flower tent. Need to establish people who can help and then move forward.</p>
<p>Who is drawing up the agreement with SME London?</p>	<p>We are not yet in a position to instruct any Solicitors, no money has been spent on legal fees, still at Heads of Agreement at the moment.</p>
<p>Would like to congratulate on getting this far with Countryfile, will be many people coming from all over the country. Have we dispensed with Presidents lunches and hangers on and people with ringside seats, we don't want one side of the show on grandstand.</p>	<p>Judith Marcham said members and presidents area will be very different too many people taking advantage in the past (applause). Will be different from the past. Steve Ackrill said there will be a VIP area that you pay to go into. No problem with corporate entertainment as long as it is self-funding.</p>
<p>Assuming that the Board has no legal people on it, can they tie these commercial people right down?</p>	<p>Steve Ackrill responded that some of the Board deal with contracts every day, we will appoint a Solicitor before we sign.</p>

There being no further business the meeting was closed for members to partake of a BBQ and drinks provided for a donation to Society funds.