

## Newbury & District Agricultural Society

### Annual General Meeting

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

on

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2023

**Present:** Steve Ackrill (Chairman), David Barr (Hon Treasurer), Steve Coventry, Nick Wallis, Paul Frankel, Chris Boreham, Linda Bowden, Denise Herrington, Victoria Ackrill, Beth Ackrill, George Matthews, Mick Crockford, Giles and Lesley Derry, Charles Parry, Clive Collins, Neil Hurn, Michael Bowden, Judith Marcham, Suzanne and Michael Kimber, Michael Barr, Duncan Hodge, Suzanne Battle, Tim Barton, Margaret Hooper, Jane Fox, Mike Thornton, Dave Cole, Andrew Rowles, Peter Alder, Sarah Sladen, Roger Hovell, Kathy le Brun, Paul Killen, Brian Willis, Paul Bryant, Gill Martin, Kate Edgell, Mike Farmer, Diana Ash, Cheryl Green, David Tompkins, George Chichester, Duncan Campbell, Lucy Booth, Fergus, Annabel and Duncan Hodge, Linden Collins, Simon Hiscock, Clive Hartwright, Carrie Green, James Cole, Ian Freeland, David Hillier, Stephen Goddard, Michael Bissell, Peter Walker, Rosemary Balsdon, P J Trentham, Anthony J Hall, Caroline Athawes, George Bucknell, N J Blawden, Clive Vare and Vicki Booth.

1. **Apologies for Absence** were received from Alec Hayton, Mark de Pass, Sheena Cartwright, Shane Prater, Cathy Austin, Fiona Collins, Chris Salmon, June Ogden, Gerald Brown, Bidy Hardy, John Gleeson, Dowell Conning, Prue Matchwick, Michael Skinner, John & Liz Brunskill, Maria Bird, Linda and Chris Saint, William, Pat and Stuart McGregor, Helen Cook, Faye Parkes, Roy and Nina Speake, Dawn Cunningham-Reid, Penne & Keith Chopping, James Stephens, Jean Whittaker, Ian Wilson, Mr & Mrs Green, Robert Astor, Clare Killen, Mary Gladstone, David Mitchell, Stephen Mears, Ian Campbell, Allen Kennerley, Noel Hatton, Jonathan Foote, Jonathan Dance, Stuart Povey, Mr & Mr Edwards, Anthony Rowberry, Elizabeth Anfield, Ali & Donald Brown, Sheila & Ivan Cork, Charlotte Plank, Wendy Evans, John Gent, Andrea Brandon, Jane Wells, Priscilla Hungerford, Dawn Cunningham-Reid, Leigh Darling, David Swait, and Pam Hillier-Brook
2. **Approval of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2022**  
Proposed by Andrew Rowles, seconded by Paul Bryant with all in favour. Signed as correct by the Chairman.
3. **Chairman's Report**

Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen, I can hardly believe that almost a year has passed since the last AGM. Last year I thanked you all for voting for me at the previous AGM that enabled me to be elected to the Board of our Society, this year is slightly different in that as I was elected for 3 years you've been somewhat stuck with me but I would like to thank you again for the initial vote. You do have a get out clause in that I am now entering my final year of this term so you get to choose again next year ...

I would like to thank my fellow Board members for again electing me as their chairman for this past year and giving me the opportunity to continue to lead the Society, the Board do have a get out clause as they get to vote again for the Chairman at our next meeting.

I am not going to say much on the finances of the Society as David will give you the detail later in this evening's meeting. The thing I would like to and am proud to say is that towards the end of last year for the first time in quite some time the Society had more cash in the bank than we had debts, so whilst we obviously couldn't use our working capital to pay off the mortgage, should the need arise, we could pay off all of our debts and still be left with our Showground so we are certainly heading in the right direction financially. (Round of applause from the attendees).

Work has been ongoing on the Showground to get things back into shape, thanks must go to Linda and Mick for organising the working parties that continue with the seeming to be never ending list of jobs to do on the Showground. Since the AGM last year, the Motorway Toilets have been stripped out, re painted and new cisterns installed, the Chapman building has been repainted, the NBS building has been tidied with all of the signs etc sorted and itemised to name but a few. The jobs on the Showground are very much ongoing and there is quite a large list of jobs to be sorted ahead of the show in September, so if anyone does have a few hours to spare then please do speak to Linda or Mick as I'm sure they will find you a job or two.

As well as the volunteer jobs there have been a few projects carried out that have involved spending some money I'm afraid, but we as a Board are of the opinion that we are here to stay so we need to look after our asset that is the Showground. New security gates have been installed at the Chapman entrance, The Black Trentham gate has been refurbished, the fencing on the safety lanes both adjacent to this building as well as along Priors Court Road have been replaced. We are aware that there are lots of things that still need attention not least a lot of the fencing that is starting to show its age, we are planning to put a program in place so that some fencing is replaced each year as I believe used to be.

Jan, our Education Officer has been as busy as ever and I'd like to take this opportunity to give you just a few statistics from last year. During 2022 Jan covered 5086 miles, spent 121 working days out of the office visiting schools, visited 59 different schools across Berkshire and engaged with 6539 pupils. As well as arranging the Agricultural Challenge for Special Education, the Design Make and Market Challenge, the Autumn Harvest Celebration, and the Potato Challenge. I will hold my hands up and say that until I joined the Board, whilst I knew there was an Education element to the Society, I had no idea about the amazing work that Jan does so if any of you are not aware of what Jan does then please do take the opportunity to speak to Jan (who is here this evening) who I'm sure will be happy to explain more about what she does.

There have been some changes to the Board since the last AGM. Paul Frankel who I am sure most of you will know, was co-opted to the Board at the end of last year, albeit somewhat belated but welcome Paul and I'm sure I speak for the rest of the Board when I say we really do value your input. Judith Marcham took the decision to leave the Board

earlier this year and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Judith for her support whilst on the Board through what were some difficult times for the Society. Last but not least Simon Pallet has been recently co-opted to the Board, Simon unfortunately could not make this evening's meeting but welcome Simon or I should probably say welcome back.

At this meeting last year I mentioned that we had a Planning application with WBC to hopefully ease some of the S106 restrictions currently in place on the Showground, unfortunately we had to withdraw the application at the end of last year due to "Lack of information". It is a shame it took 5 months and 3 case officers to decide that more information was needed but we won't go there..... Simon is now taking the lead on this project and the plan is to discuss our revised plans with both local Parish Councils before re-submitting to WBC, the new plans will be more centred around using this building during the closed period, this was always our plan but apparently, we were not specific enough last time around.....

Since the last AGM we have arranged two member visits which have been enjoyed by all those who attended. Most recently was a visit to Ramsbury Brewery and Distillery, one of the few Distilleries that not only goes through the entire process from grain to the finished product, but also uses Estate water purified through a series of reed beds and every part of the process is made with all the primary ingredients coming from the estate itself, possibly one of the most environmentally friendly produced beer and spirits anywhere. They've also just won the 'World's Best Vodka'. Prior to this there was a visit to Kingsclere Stables, Andrew and Anna Lisa Balding, one of the country's premier training establishments. This was a fascinating trip giving a deeper understanding of their history and a vision of their future.

We have also had some changes to the team in the office (I much prefer the word team to staff), Pam is still managing the Showground Lettings and I'm pleased to say we have an almost full Calendar of bookings in place. Susan who is away this week and couldn't make this evening's meeting manages the finances, and whilst she probably wouldn't admit it Susan runs the office on a day-to-day basis. Emily Moore joined the team recently as "office administrator". Amber Wernham, who I am sure most of you will know, has returned on contract as Show manager and last but by no means least, my daughter Victoria has joined the team for the summer whilst home from university to help with the show Admin.

This brings me on to the Show, there was no way I could give this report without speaking about the Show. First and foremost, the show is back. It has reverted back to its original name of "Newbury Show" and will take place over the weekend of 16-17<sup>th</sup> September. We as a Board spent many hours talking about the show, If we could, how we could etc. I think everyone agreed there needed to be change and the Show could not just return as it was before. A decision was taken that this year the show would be organised differently than in previous years, so there has been no "Show Chairman" appointed and instead all of the Board members are much more involved in the organisation of the Show on a day-to-day basis. With the show finances being so important, especially so in this first year we felt that the financial security of the Society needed to take precedence over any previous protocol with regard to how the show was organised. With the Board being very hands on we feel

gives us the best chance of achieving this. We see the first year back after a 3-year break as very much putting building blocks in place for future years, some things will work and I'm now going to break the golden rule of any report where I'm supposed to stick to purely positive things and be realistic and say that I expect that some things won't go as planned but we will learn from this year and build on it for the future. I'm not planning to go into too much detail regarding the content of the show itself within this report other than to list a couple of the more major changes: Firstly the livestock will all be housed within this building which does result in the need to reduce the number of livestock classes. I'm sorry to say the change does come down to money at the end of the day and these changes will save money not only on marquees but also prize money etc . We are working really hard to get all sections to be as close to cost neutral as possible whilst still putting on a show. Secondly the equine sections are being reduced, again this is finance related - there will be heavy horses, scurry racing and the Pony Club mounted games, unfortunately there will be no Showjumping this year as we just could not make the figures stack up. There will be a chance for any specific questions about the show (or other matters) later in this evening's meeting or either myself or any other Board member will be happy to discuss any aspect of the Show or indeed Society management in general on a more one to one basis if preferred.

I am drawing to a close, I am sure you'll be pleased to know as I expect the lure of Micks food is more appealing than listening to me...

I would like to finish with just a couple of thank you, I try to keep these more general than individual as I am bound to forget someone. I would like to thank all of you here today for your continued support of the Society, I would like to thank my fellow Board members for their support throughout the year, I would like to thank our team in the office without whom the Society could not function. I will mention one name, Linda for not just taking the minutes this evening but also at our Board meetings, I still don't know how Linda turns all what we say in meetings into minutes. Apologies if I have forgotten anyone.

#### **4. Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2022 and Trustees Report**

Report on the financial Statements by David Barr

The Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2022 show a surplus of income over expenditure of £59,080 compared to £96,592 in the previous year.

Therefore over the past two years a net surplus of £155,000 has been made which has greatly helped the finances of The Society. The Balance Sheet which shows the statement of affairs as at 31st December 2022 now stands at £1,516,324. This includes the Show Ground and Society Building at circa £1.5m, cash at bank of £322,000 and total gross debt of £290,000. The Society is now therefore in a position where if it had to it would be able to settle all of its outstanding loans.

The accounts were signed on 6th June 2023 and a clean audit report was issued.

There were no questions as to the accounts and the proposal to adopt the accounts was Proposed by Fergus Hodge and seconded by Lucy Booth and approved unanimously by all those in the room.

#### **5. Election of one member to the Board of Management of the Society**

As there was only one nomination received, Paul Frankel is elected uncontested – proposed by Steve Ackrill and seconded by Nick Wallis.

6. **A special resolution to amend the Articles of Association of the Society:**

**“The Board of Management will not either sell the freehold or grant a lease in excess of five years of more than 5% (by area) of the Society’s freehold land-holding as at the date of this Special Resolution without first obtaining approval of the members by simple majority at a general meeting.”**

Following some discussion on the wording it was agreed to proceed to a vote with Steve Ackrill proposing the special resolution, which was seconded by Fergus Hodge. The motion was carried with 49 in favour, 9 abstentions and 4 against.

7. **Approval of the appointment of Auditors**

Proposed by Michael Bissell seconded by Lucy Booth. All in favour.

8. **Any Other Business and Questions**

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

Question	Response
How will Life Members get their badges?	Due to cost admission tickets not being posted. Ticket with QR code to be scanned on first visit to the Members area and Life Members badge collected.
Why have the Section 106 restrictions still not been resolved?	First application for a modification of a Planning Obligation was withdrawn (having been through three case officers) due to requests from Council for a lot more detailed information. Currently working on an amended MDOPO which will be submitted shortly.
How is the Show different so as not to drain the Society’s funds?	Society now in a more solid and stable position, the risks are being negated by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Knowing where the expenditure is going.</li> <li>2. The total cost of the Show is less, an example being all livestock housed in The Society Building. We have a good idea where we are with the costs, but are beholden to the weather on Saturday and Sunday as to the income.</li> <li>3. We have mitigated the risk as best we can.</li> <li>4. Cash at bank is forecast not to go below £200K at any time.</li> </ol>
How is the sale of trade stands going?	Slightly behind where we were at the last Show at this point which is reflected in our

	Show budget. The general consensus is trade bookings seem to be down at all shows. We have recently taken on some professional help to try and improve the numbers.
Is there a new layout for the Showground?	There will be some parking in horse area at the far end but layout will be similar to previous years with the Food Fare going back to its original position so that visitors can make their purchases on the way out.

Our volunteers and stewards training is taking place on 20<sup>th</sup> July, please come to this if you would like to volunteer, make contact with the Office to book in and we can go from there. It will be four years since we last held a Show and things will have been forgotten.

The meeting closed at 1956.