Newbury & District Agricultural Society

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

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

on

Thursday 19 June 2025

Present: Steve Ackrill (Chairman), David Barr (Treasurer), Steve Coventry, Nick Wallis, Paul Frankel, Simon Pallett, Beth Ackrill, Victoria Ackrill, Peter Alder, James Astor, Caroline Athawes, Rosemary Balsdon, Tim Barton, Linda Bowden, Michael Bowden, Michael Boyle, Paul Bryant, Duncan Campbell, David Cole, Linden Collins, Clive Collins, Daniel Collins, Alistair Cooper, Mick Crockford, Kate Edgell, CC Gibbs, Carrie Green, Cherryl Green, Mark Hathaway, Paul Helrose, Denise Herrington, Belinda Landon, Paul Landon, Carol Lewis, Jill Martin, Charles Parry, Lois Philipps, Clive Vare.

1. Apologies: Chris Boreham, Andrea Brandon, Sue Bourne, Malcolm Bull, Stephen Burman, Angela Chamberlayne, Andrew Chandler, Fiona Collins, Lesley Derry, Giles Derry, Mike Farmer, Jane Fox, Ian Freeland, Katie Goodman, Alec Hayton BEM, Kerry Hiscock, Meg Hooper, Colin Hughes, Suzanne Kimber, Michael Kimber, Katherine Landon, Susan Layton, Kathy Le Brun, Judith Marcham, Bert Marsh, Pat McGregor, Stuart McGregor Dean Mitchell, Andrew More, Sandra More, Sally Mullings, Sheilah Openshaw, Richard Payne, Charlotte Plank, John Read, Linda Saint, Chris Saint, Ian Wilson.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held Thursday 27 June 2024

Proposed by Clive Vare and seconded by Nick Wallis.

3. Chairman's Report: Good evening ladies and gentlemen, I know I say this every year but is still difficult to believe that a year has passed since we were in this building for last years AGM. There are no elections to the Board taking place this evening but I'd like to thank you again for electing me last year to serve on the Board.

I'd also like to thank my fellow board members for electing me as their Chairman for the last year and allowing me to continue to lead the Society. As last year they do have a 'get out clause' as the Chairman of the board will be elected at the next meeting that takes place in early July.

David will shortly give details on the Societies finances but I'm pleased to say we are still heading in the right direction.

As last year work on the showground is still on going, there's always stuff to do. The Saturday working parties are being led by Mick Crockford and are a vital part of keeping the showground up together. We were lucky enough to receive some hedge and tree plants from the Greenham Trust and also numerous hedge plants donated from elsewhere, you may have noticed the new hedge that has been planted inside the Black Trentham gate. Alongside the planting, various trees have been pruned or pollarded, gates / fencing replaced as required. Works have been carried out to de-silt the larger of the 2 ponds and further works are planned for the small pond.

There is always plenty to do so if you think you could spare an hour or two on a Saturday (or any other day for that matter) please do speak to Mick as he'd love to have you on board. More often than not on a Saturday Paul Frankel is on site with his mobile tea wagon so you could even get a cuppa and a chocolate biscuit for your trouble, thanks Paul.

Jan our education officer has been as busy as ever, I'd like to just share a few statistics from 2024. Jan covered around 4500 miles during the year, engaged with almost 5000 pupils from 95 different schools and spent 119 days out of the office on school / business visits. 37 schools exhibited in the education marquee at Newbury Show, 10 schools were involved in competitions at the ploughing match. As I mentioned last year if there are any of you out there that are not fully aware of the fantastic work that Jan does please do speak to Jan who I'm sure will be more than happy to explain more about what she does. I think one issue that Jan does have that limits the number of schools / pupils engaged with is there not being enough school hours or school days in the week as Jan is at full capacity, to this end I am pleased to announce that the Society has recruited a part time assistant to work alongside Jan to enable even more pupils / schools to be visited. Harriet Charters is joining the team in September. There will be some specific fundraising undertaken to help to fund the expansion of our Education department, this will commence at the end of the summer.

As well as Harriet joining the team, there has been other changes since the last AGM. I'm sorry to announce that after being with the Society for 16 years and, certainly since I have been involved, kept us on the straight and narrow, Susan moved on to pastures new earlier in the year. Susan certainly went above and beyond for the Society and we all wish her well for the future. However, every cloud as they say, I'm pleased to welcome Angela Plank to the team who has taken over as Finance Manager, I'm sure that some of you will know Angela through her family's involvement with the Society for many years. Nicki joined us this time last year but has hit the ground running and is successfully managing the lettings side of the business and I'm pleased to confirm we again have a very full calendar with Nicki juggling to fit in extra days wherever she can, as well as taking on more other jobs than I care to mention. It feels, to me anyway, that Nicki has been here for ages (not sure if Nicki will think that's a good thing or not?), The Show this year is being jointly managed by Nicki, Toria and Ben who are each responsible for various aspects of the show, they are being helped (we think helped, they may well say hindered) by members of the Board as and when required. I'm pleased to say that we have a great team in place and they all get along really well and just 'get the job done' and the office has a good feel to it.

Whilst speaking about the show and as this report is mainly based on 2024. The 2024 show we felt was a success and we were able to build on the 2023 show, the weather had other ideas, or on the Sunday anyway the weather forecast more than the actual weather did have an adverse effect on attendance figures but the weather aside we did receive positive feedback on the show as a whole. David will give more detail on the money side of the show shortly.

Last year I reported how we had been victim of a scam and ended up with a large quantity of material in the red carpark. The situation is still ongoing and we are currently working with the various agencies to hold the people to account for this. To this end Nick Wallis, Mick Crockford and myself attended a police station in Surrey to take part in identity parades where all of us are confident that we picked out the perpetrators but we are told it can still take several years

to get a court date. I am pleased to say that work is underway to upgrade the road along the top of the car park which ironically needed doing and was how this situation came about in the first place. We will of course update you more as soon as we can.

Following the trend of recent years, I couldn't give my Chairman's report without mentioning the S106 restrictions currently in place on the showground. Simon Pallett has put a tremendous amount of work into our application to amend the restrictions so I think it's only fair that Simon gives you an update for this evening so I'll hand over to Simon. *After two years, 5 planning officers and legal teams we can confirm the agreement is ready for signature. We can now let the building and roadways all year and have additional days available to allow this.*

Last year's ploughing match almost fell victim to the weather again but it did go ahead at Rookery Farm and was a great success. Thanks must go to Dan Willis and family for hosting the match and to Judith and her team for making it happen. Julian Plank has taken over as Chairman of the ploughing match and this year's match is being held at Suttons Estate on the A4 on 18th October so please put the date in your diaries.

I will finish now (about time I'm sure some people are thinking) as Micks BBQ will be beckoning, with a few thank yous', My fellow board members for their support throughout the year, the team in the office for their continued support and last but not least to the army of volunteers who all pull together to not only make the show happen but also keep the Society and the showground running as it should, we couldn't do it without you all so thank you.

4. Statement of Accounts for the Year ended 31 December 2024 and Trustees Report:

David Barr reported that the accounts run to 31 December 2024 and show a surplus of £13,982. Main sources of income are showground letting, the show and subscriptions with the main expenses being the education programme, the show and showground maintenance.

The show made a small deficit due to the weather forecast on Sunday however with the lettings income and savings in expenditure we achieved a small surplus.

The balance sheet shows net assets of £1.6M of which £1.45M reflects the land and buildings.

Over the past three years we have managed to reduce the Society debt from £280k in 2021 to £87k in 2024. The aim is to clear the term debt this year subject to the success of the show.

The auditors, James Cowper Kreston Audit gave us a clean bill of health confirming the financial statements give a true and fair view.

5. Approval of the Appointment of Auditors.

Simon Pallett proposed, seconded by Tim Barton that James Cowper Kreston be re-appointed as the Society's Auditors.

6. Election of President

James Astor was proposed as President for the 2025/26 year.

Steve Ackrill proposed, seconded by Rosemary Balsdon

7. A special resolution to adopt amended Articles of Association of the Society

It is not unusual for corporate Charities to periodically review their Articles of Association to ensure they remain up to date and relevant to the objects and mechanics of the charity concerned. The Trustees have therefore carried out a thorough review of the Articles and now attach a draft of the proposed updated Articles of Association of the Society.

Given the importance of this document the Trustees have consulted the following:

a) The Charity Commission website and model Articles,

b) The Association of Show and Agricultural Organisations (ASAO),

c) The CEO and the Manager of the Great Yorkshire Agricultural Society

d) Commercial counsel of Pump Court Chambers, and

e) Our existing Articles.

Thanks were passed to Charles Parry for his assistance with the amending of the Articles.

There were no questions from the floor therefore Steve Ackrill proposed, seconded by Paul Frankel.

8. Any Other Business

There was one question regarding members being permitted to bring picnics into the Members Enclosure due to the issue over catering in 2024. This will be discussed by the show team but the team are working hard on securing suitable members catering for 2025.

It was noted that the hot drinks in the Members Enclosure were appreciated.

The meeting closed at 1934 hours.