Newbury & District Agricultural Society

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

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

on

Wednesday 24 June 2026

Present: Steve Ackrill (Chairman), David Barr (Treasurer), Sue Bourne, Steve Coventry, Paul Frankel, Simon Pallett, Charles Parry, Beth Ackrill, Victoria Ackrill, James Astor, Caroline Athawes, Michael Barr, Caroline Booth, Linda Bowden, Michael Bowden, Duncan Campbell, David Cole, Mick Crockford, Peter Gale, Carrie Green, Cheryl Green, John Handy, Mark Hathaway, Edward Iliffe, Clare Killen, Paul Killen, Belinda Landon, Paul Landon, Judith Marcham, Andrew Rowles, Nick Wallis.

Before the meeting started there was a minute silence for those members who passed in the last year.

1. Apologies: Chris Boreham, Sally Boreham, Stephen Burman, Pauline Burman, Andrew Chandler, Fiona Collins, Keith Chopping, Hannah Cowan, Peter Cowan, Victoria Davis, Lesley Derry, Giles Derry, James Duffie, Carol Gibbs, Mr & Mrs Gough, Suzanne Kimber, Michael Kimber, Katharine Landon, Kathy Le Brun, Anthony Rowberry, Chris Salmon, Jamie Smith, Annie Sparkes, Carol Stradling, Peter Warren-Tibbetts, Jane Wells, R Wells.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held Thursday 19 June 2025

Minutes were agreed.

3. Chairman's Report: Good evening ladies and gentlemen, I know I say this every year but it is still difficult to believe that another year has passed since we were in this building for last year's AGM. There have been several changes to the Board of Trustees since the last AGM, Nick Wallis stood down at the end of last year and I'd like to record my thanks to Nick for his help and support through some of the more difficult times for the Society. Both Sue Bourne and Charles Parry were co-opted to the Board during last year and I'd like to welcome them and also thank them for their support during the year. There are two elections to the Board taking place later during this evenings meeting but for now I'd like to thank you again for re-electing me in 2024 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 though they do have a 'get out clause' as the Chairman of the board will be elected at the next board meeting that takes place towards the end of July.

David will shortly give details on the Societies finances for 2025 and I'm pleased to say we are still heading in the right direction. Although not strictly from 2025 I am going to steal David's thunder somewhat as I am immensely proud to be able to tell you all that earlier this year we repaid the last of the Societies borrowings and the Newbury and District Agricultural Society is now officially debt free.

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As last year work on the showground is still ongoing, there's always plenty 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 more 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 is thriving and now the new hedge reaches all the way round and past the sliproad gate which is a fantastic achievement. Alongside the planting, various trees have been pruned or pollarded, gates / fencing replaced as required.

The work is very much ongoing and 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 and has been as busy as ever, along with her assistant Harriet who hit the ground running in September. I'd like to just share a few statistics from 2025. Our Education Team covered almost 5000 miles during the year, engaged with over 6000 pupils from 91 different schools (of which 18 were new) and spent 157 days out of the office on school / business visits. 35 schools exhibited in the education marquee at Newbury Show, 7 schools and 13 Classes 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 and Harriet do please do speak to them and I'm sure they will be more than happy to explain more about what they do. Whilst speaking about our Education programme, although not from 2025, I would like to mention that our President James Astor has been working with both Jan and Pam on a new funding project the aim of which is to be able to expand our Education programme even further to be able to reach more schools and more pupils. We currently have a 'project ' (I think that is the word) live on the 'Good Exchange' funding platform and yesterday we were fortunate to obtain some 'match funding' from the Greenham Trust so there has never been a better time to make a donation to the Society. James is with us this evening and I'm sure he will be happy to share more details about the scheme over one of Micks burgers later this evening. I would like to pass on thanks from the Society for the work that James, Jan and Pam have put into getting this project off the ground.

I am pleased to say that the rest of the office team remains the same as last year with Angela doing the numbers and the Show itself being jointly managed again this year by Nicki, Toria and Ben with help or hindrance from Steve Coventry and myself. Molly who was with us last summer has recently rejoined the team for this year's show and they will be joined in a couple of weeks by my eldest daughter Beth and I'm confident that between them they will be a formidable show team.

The showground lettings are as busy as ever and we have been and are practically full from April through until the end of October so thanks must go to Nicki for making this happen, along with everything else she manages to achieve in her 'spare time'

A few words about the 2025 show as this report is mainly based on 2025. The 2025 show we felt was a success and we were able to build on the 2024 show with increased livestock numbers, the weather again managed to throw a bit of a curved ball, this time with it being a mini hurricane that came through the showground late on Saturday evening which managed to

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destroy a few gazebos, others we managed to drop down to save them as well as tying down numerous others. We barricaded off several avenues to keep people away from the worst areas. I didn't relish Toria's job of calling numerous tradestands at 11pm to let them know of the damage to their stands / stock. But the wind died down and with an early start on the Sunday morning we managed to get everything back to as normal as we could so that the majority of people were unaware of the previous night escapades. Overall there was a good feel to the show which around 32,000 people attended. and we received lots of positive feedback. David will give more detail on the money side of the show shortly. Moving onto this year's show, plans are coming together well, I'm pleased to announce that the JCB Dancing Diggers are returning to the Show this year for the first time in more years than I care to remember. There will be more equine this year and all of the Rings will be full all weekend with a mixture of Show jumping, Side Saddle, Ridden, In Hand and Driving Classes and I'm sure that will mean more to others than it does to me. Livestock entries are open and are steadily growing. We will again this year be striving to ensure that there is plenty for families to do once they are here without continually spending more money. If anyone does have any questions on a specific part of the show then please don't hesitate to speak to any of the team, Steve C or Myself and we'll do our best to answer any questions.

Last year's ploughing match was hosted by The Suttons Estate and was a fantastic day in the most scenic location. Thanks must go to Julian and his team for making the day happen. This year match is being held on 17th October at Shefford Woodlands by kind permission of Rooksnest Estate.

I will finish now (about time I'm sure some people are thinking) as Micks BBQ will be beckoning, with a few thank you/s, My fellow board members for their support throughout the year, The whole team in the office for the work they all put in and 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 2025 and Trustees Report:

David Barr presented the accounts for the year to 31 December 2025. These show a surplus of £65,622 in comparison to £13,982 in 2024. This is an even split between show and lettings. The income in total was £930,000. £260,000 from lets and £630,000 from the show with the remainder from membership, ploughing match and other activities. The show took around half the income in tickets with the other half being from tradestands, sponsorship and catering.

The main cost of the Society is the show, which is a large annual overhead, together with staff costs which include the education staff. The budget is still tight but we are going in the right direction.

The balance sheet shows net assets of £1.7M of which £1.4M is land and buildings leaving £300,000 of net current assets. The Society policy is to hold reserves of between ¼ and ½ of the cost to run the show. We are pleased to report that we have now achieved this!

Nick Wallis proposed that the accounts be adopted and this was seconded by Paul Frankel. All were in favour.

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5. Approval of the Appointment of Auditors.

James Astor proposed and this was seconded by Simon Pallett that James Cowper Kreston be re-appointed as the Society's Auditors. All were in favour.

6. Election of President

James Astor was proposed as President for the 2026/27 year.

Steve Ackrill proposed and this was seconded by Sue Bourne. All were in favour.

7. Election of President Elect

Edward Iliffe was proposed as President Elect for the forthcoming year.

Steve Ackrill proposed and this was seconded by James Astor. All were in favour.

8. Election of two members to the Board of Management of the Society

Paul Frankel and Steven Coventry put themselves forward. There were no other nominations.

Steve Ackrill proposed and this was seconded by Carrie Green. All were in favour.

9. Any Other Business

There was a query over the catering arrangements for the Members Enclosure and it was confirmed this will be the same as in 2025.

Simon Pallett thanked Paul and Steve for standing as board members but noted he was disappointed that no-one else put their name forward. He encouraged members to come forward and join the board.

It was noted that the showground looks immaculate and thanks for passed to Mick Crockford and his team of Saturday volunteers.

The meeting closed at 1934 hours.

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