

**Minutes of the Country Link Annual General Meeting**  
**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2024**  
**The Reynolds Suite, The Holiday Inn, Telford**

Peter Hunt welcomed everyone to the meeting, and the National Committee introduced themselves.

**Apologies:** Apologies were received from Vicky Hutton, Mike Wright

**The Minutes of the AGM held on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

The Minutes were signed as a true record of the Meeting.

**Chairman's Report – Peter Hunt**

Peter hoped everyone had had a good Weekend, and thanked Caroline, Roy and Robyn for an excellent Weekend, especially organising the weather. He said there are currently around eighteen Country Link groups, and most have programmes with a good selection of events. Derbyshire Country Link are organising the Weekend in the Autumn, but Peter made a request for volunteers to come forward for future Weekends. Peter talked about recruitment and how difficult it is. We are advertising nationally but local advertising is the best option. Peter encouraged the groups to use the money available from National for advertising. The website is our window to the world, and Peter made a request for up-to-date programmes, reports and photographs. Peter finished by explaining that he had spent two years as National Chairman, he had enjoyed the role, but felt it was time to stand down. He thanked the National Committee for their support, especially Liz G, Lesley S and Vicky H.

**Treasurer's Report – Lesley Sheaf**

Lesley reported she had received subs for 320 members in 2023, which was an increase of 23 on the 2022 figures. Lesley asked members to encourage others to join.

Country Link has benefited from the increase in the interest rate.

Advertising: in 2023, the National Committee spent £2,170 on advertising in the NFU magazine, and there had been some enquiries.

in 2024, the National Committee plan to advertise in fifteen issues of the Farmers Guardian. There have been some enquiries.

Four groups claimed the advertising budget in 2023. Lesley reminded members that they can claim up to £500.

Lesley reminded members that the insurance is product, public and employer liability. Personal insurance is the individual's responsibility.

The costs for the website are for the domain name and managing the website.

There is a deficit of £1,408.09. Country Link can bear a deficit, and Lesley anticipates another deficit in 2024.

Weekends: Essex/Suffolk donated £973.35 to Parkinsons

Ayshire had more members attending. There was a surplus of £3,100. They are retaining £500 in their

Weekend Account and £2,600 has been paid to National. Those who went to the Irvine Weekend will receive a refund from the surplus. There will be an extra line on the booking form for the next Weekend, and those who went to Irvine will receive a deduction of £28.00.

There are no deposits with hotels for forthcoming Weekends.

Lesley explained the £330.97 for Debtors Weekends is money held in the bank for Weekends.

Net assets are £20,525.68

Lesley said the accounts had been audited by Kate Greaves, and she asked Liz to thank Kate. Kate has offered to audit the accounts for 2024.

Lesley proposed the adoption of these accounts – seconded by Tim R, carried, none against.

Lesley proposed the National subscription remain at £10 for 2025 – seconded by Graham V, carried, none against.

Lesley proposed £500 for advertising after approval by the individual groups – seconded by Maria G, carried, none against.

Lesley thanked the Committee for their help.

**Secretary's report – Liz Goodwin**

Liz thanked Caroline, Robyn and Roy for photocopying the Minutes from the 2023 AGM and the Agenda for the 2024 AGM, and for putting them in the welcome packs.

Liz had bought biscuits as she was celebrating 25 years of attending Country Link Weekends, the first being in hot and sunny Woolacombe in Spring 1999.

She asked members to sign the attendance sheet.

### **President's comments – Peter Hurt**

Peter thanked the National Committee for taking on the roles. It is a very good Committee who run things smoothly. There will be new Committee members being elected shortly and he hoped things would continue to run as smoothly. He said it was good to see people at the Weekend as he had been worried the numbers would not recover after Covid, and he thanked the members for attending the AGM.

### **Election of Officers to the National Committee**

Position	Nominee	Nominated by	Carried
Chairman	Dick Stephens	Kirsteen Henry (Ayrshire)/ Jimmy Young (Ayrshire)	Eight abstentions/Yes
Vice Chairman	Nigel Swain	Nominated from the floor Lynda Pearce (Somerset)/ Gordon Shears (Somerset)	No abstentions/Yes
Treasurer	Lesley Sheaf	Jane Salmon (Essex & Suffolk)/ Michelle Robson (Nottinghamshire)	No abstentions/Yes
Secretary	Liz Goodwin	David Pilkington (Essex & Suffolk)/ Jenny Atkin (National member)	No abstentions/Yes

Dick thanked Peter for being Vice Chairman and Chairman and commented that he didn't know how Peter fitted it all in. Dick explained his history. He had been in Country Link since it had started, and is the organiser for Oxfordshire. He has a son, a daughter, and a granddaughter. He talked about his farming background and employment history. Going forward, Dick wants to encourage new members, and suggested everyone bring a friend to a meeting. He suggested having baseball caps printed with the Country Link logo. He is planning to visit all the groups in the next twelve months. He admitted to struggling with social media but said the website is useful and looked at by people e.g. programmes and reports.

### **President/Vice Presidents**

Lesley advised that the President – Peter H - and the Vice Presidents - Phil C, Maria G, Jerry W – had been asked by the National Committee to stand for the next twelve months. All had agreed. Lesley thanked them for their support and help throughout 2023. Lesley also advised that Charles H had been invited to stand as a Vice President.

### **Forthcoming weekends**

Phil C told the members that Derbyshire Country Link would be organising a Weekend at The Hand Hotel in Llangollen during the weekend of Friday 1<sup>st</sup> - Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November. There are 58 rooms in the hotel, which is a very different hotel to the Holiday Inn. There will be one form/one payment, and the forms will be out later in the year.

Wendy Swain thanked Phil and the team for stepping into the void.

Dick asked members to think about organising a Weekend for Spring 2025.

Caroline H handed the key to Maria G.

### **Any other business**

Lorraine told the members about the days out she is organising. Studley Water Gardens, Steam Railway/Heartbeat Rally/1950s and 1960s night in Goathland, Peak Mining Museum, and Matlock.

Lorraine agreed to talk to new members at the Weekend about her days out, and about the Weekends in general.

Wendy Swain suggested adding a 'This is my first Weekend' box to the booking forms so that organisers/members are aware of any new members at the Weekend.

Sue C told members that Tim Raw, a founder member of Yorkshire Country Link, had passed away.

President Peter announced Warwickshire Country Link had won the President's Cup, and he explained the Cup was for the increase in membership during the year. He finished the Meeting by thanking the very, very small team who had organised the Weekend. It was a fantastic hotel and the trips had been enjoyable.

Date of the next AGM – at the Spring 2025 weekend

The Meeting closed at 5.05pm