



Minutes of the Country Link Members Meeting
held on
Sunday 5th November 2023
at The Riverside Lodge Hotel, Irvine, Ayrshire

Welcome - Chairman Peter Hunt welcomed everyone to the Meeting.

Apologies-Apologies were received from Sarah Thompson, Graham Vaughan, Tony Paul, Karen Lee, Anthony Withers

Introductions - (Made later in the Meeting) Peter introduced himself. Members of the National Committee (Lesley Sheaf, Liz Goodwin, Vicky Hutton), Regional Reps (Andrew Smith, Lorraine Clark, Sue Chilton), President (Peter Hurt) and Vice Presidents (Maria Guest, Phil Charles) introduced themselves.

Minutes of the Members Meeting held on Sunday 30th October 2022 were signed as being a true record of the Meeting.

Matters arising - Liz Goodwin thanked Lorraine Clark for organising the days out, taking photos and writing reports for the website. Lorraine explained to everyone about her days out.

Chairman's Report - Peter thanked the Ayrshire group for organising an excellent Weekend. There are currently about eighteen clubs, and the clubs are putting on a good selection of events for members, he asked that programmes be sent to Vicky for inclusion on the website. Shropshire Country Link are hosting the Spring 2024 weekend, and said that weekends are an excellent opportunity to showcase your area. Weekends are important as they hold Country Link together, and there is a lot of help available. The current membership is about 280, and the website is the initial contact for new members. The National Committee would welcome suggestions for advertising, which can be made through your Regional Rep. Peter explained there were some concerns about the contacts for the different clubs, and he asked the members to ask their organiser to email Liz Goodwin to confirm that the details she holds are correct.

Secretary's report - Liz thanked Kirsteen and Jimmy for photocopying the paperwork and for putting the welcome packs together. She asked everyone to sign the attendance sheet.

Treasurer's report - Lesley ran through the accounts for the nine months to 30th September 2023. She said it was good to see some new faces at the Weekend. She has received subscriptions from about twenty members this weekend. The increase in the bank rate has given us a significant increase in the interest on our bank balance. £1628.00 spent on the advert in the NFU Country magazine has resulted in enquiries but limited conversion to members. Lesley reminded everyone that each club can claim up to £500 for advertising, and this has been taken up by four groups. Overall deficit to date of £1067.00. Derbyshire Country Link raised £780.86 in the raffle, and had a surplus of £634.64 which they will keep, to put toward their next weekend. The money from the Weekend organised by the Essex/Suffolk and Norfolk groups has been sent to Parkinsons UK; there was no surplus to National.

Overall net assets of £22,866.77. She expects the loss to increase in the next three months but the Committee is happy with this because we consider it important to spend to increase the membership and awareness of our organisation.

Carolyn D asked about the advertising in the NFU Countryside magazine. Lesley will check if it is available in Scotland.

Lesley explained the National Committee are looking into advertising in the Farmer's Guardian. This is available in Scotland. Lesley asked for suggestions as to where to advertise in Scotland.

Phil Stubbs suggested free advertising e.g. Farmart, and word of mouth.

John Rowlands suggested the Farmer's Weekly. Vicky Hutton said that it is too expensive, and Lesley said it does not have a wide enough readership.

Lesley confirmed that the National Subscription would remain at £10.00 per person for 2024, and the advertising will remain at £500.00 per club assuming the AGM in 2024 agreed.

Web Editor's report - Vicky reported that the website is up to date, is regularly updated, and that a lot of the groups have their programmes on the website. There are also reports and photos from members e.g. Sue Chilton, Dawn le Gros. Vicky asked for up to date contact information.

Up to date contact information - Peter asked that the correct contact information be sent to Liz Goodwin

Passing of the Weekend Baton - Kirsteen passed the baton to Robyn, who explained that the Weekend will be at The Holiday Inn, Telford, from Friday 10th May - Monday 13th May. The hotel is cashless. There is a lift, and a leisure centre with a pool. The cost will be £295.00 plus £94.00 single supplement for the three nights. He requested a deposit of £150.00 by 14th January 2024, with the balance being paid by 1st March. It is possible to book extra nights at the hotel. The fancy dress theme will be cowboys/cowgirls, and the money raised will be donated to a local cancer charity.

Any other Business - Nigel Swain commented on the empty chair at the top table; Vice Chairman Dick Stephens came forward and introduced himself.

President Peter Hurt thanked the National Committee, and said the Committee were looking for new members as there is a need to plan for the future. There is money in the account, which can be used for advertising, and he asked the members to think about advertising locally and also nationally.

Date of the next Members Meeting - to be confirmed.

The Meeting finished at 5.45pm.