

Chairman's Report 2024

Support for tree planting project -

A bold plan to encourage members to plant virus-resistant Dutch elm trees has received a warm response from Stalham Farmers' Club members.

Jon Pye, chairman, told a sell-out dinner at Salhouse Lodge, that an initiative backed by The Tree Council could "spark a mini revival of this wonderful native species."

He told the 122 members and guests including the Lord Lieutenant of Norfolk, the Lady Dannatt, and the chairman and secretary of Holt & District Farmers' Club that Adam Curtis, of The Tree Council, had suggested the idea at a meeting earlier this year.

To date more than 20 members have expressed willingness to plant Dutch elm disease resistant trees on their farms across east Norfolk. It was hoped to further the scheme in the coming months with a view to planting trees in next planting season.

Mr Pye thanked speakers, vice-chairman Jason Cantrill and the committee for support in the past year. On a more serious note, he added: "The continued slump in commodity prices hardly fills us with optimism.

"The issues that we now face since October's Budget are going to be devastating not just for agriculture but also for businesses as a whole.

"Who would have thought a year ago after months of battling wet weather and events around the world that it would be domestic political challenges that would be foremost in our minds.

"In a world when things change so quickly, it is reassuring that there are still some constants.

Stalham Farmers' Club has been in existence since 1841, so we are within sight of a 200th anniversary.

"At a time when farmers are held in seemingly such disregard by the government and despite the level of public support, it is easy to feel very unappreciated both as individuals and as an industry," said Mr Pye.

"We need to stand together and support each other, and this club is an invaluable network of friendships which has never been more important to have."

He then introduced the guest speaker, Lady Dannatt and later invited her to present the club's awards and trophies.