

# Report of the 177th annual meeting

February 13th, 2019

The 177<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of Stalham Farmers' Club was held at Vera's Coffee Shop, Wayford Nursery, Stalham, on Wednesday, February 13, 2019. A total of 50 members and guests attended including the evening's speaker, Peter Garbutt, global sustainable policy manager for McDonalds. Earlier, 14 had shared an enjoyable two-course supper with the chairman, Henry Alston.

Mr Alston opened the 177<sup>th</sup> annual meeting at 7.35pm.

**Minutes** – Mr Alston reported that the full minutes had been published on the club's website for almost exactly a year. He invited the meeting to accept the record as true and accurate, which was agreed. Accordingly, he signed the minutes.

**Apologies** - These had been received from Geoff Beck, Louis Baugh, Jason Cantrill, Trevor Colman, Robert Cooke, Nick Deane, Christopher Deane, Sarah Ellero, Ryan Snowden, Kevin Starkings, Ian and Jo Willetts, Nigel Wright.

**New member** – Ruth Harvey, of Waxham, was proposed by Clifford Colman, and agreed. The chairman thanked Ruth, who was well-known in the shooting community for her skills as a picker-up, for having already paid her annual subscription.

## **Chairman's report** -

The club has welcomed a total of 15 new members during the year, which was one of the highest number for some years. At the opening meeting of the winter season in November, he had reported on the club's activities during the summer including the highly-successful visit to Strumpshaw and the tour of the museum, which had delighted the 70-strong gathering in a joint event with the East Norfolk NFU branch. On the trophy front, the club had claimed a half-share in the Norfolk Livestock Club's annual quiz trophy last October when two members had joined Holt & District Farmers' Club and had secured a narrow victory. He thanked Nigel Cooke and the secretary, Michael Pollitt. So, the club's trophy cabinet, which had seen the departure of the 10-pin cup to Holt, was not wholly empty. He urged members to support the forthcoming bowls/ 10-pin evening at Rossi's on Friday, February 22. The club had continued its tradition of encouraging the next generation into potential membership by welcoming 17 members from North Walsham and Acle YFCs as our guests earlier last year. And again, 13 YFC members had attended the supper as our guest last month when there was a near-record attendance of 72. Mr Alston said that the move to Vera's in a more central location for the club's membership had encouraged more members and guests to attend. He thanked members for their support during the year. And, the club also had a presence on twitter, thanks to Sarah Ellero, and of course, a growing audience on the web, thanks to the efforts of webmaster Tim Papworth. Finally, he thanked the secretary, Michael Pollitt, for his keeping the show on the road!

## **Secretary/ treasurer's report** -

Copies of the club's complete accounts for the year to December 31, 2018 were given to members and will be included in the minutes for future reference. In summary, the club has prudent reserves of more than £3,300 generating £6.39 in interest last year – an increase from 53p in 2017. Further, there was a satisfactory balance in the current account. A deficit for the year of £223.06 was recorded while last year, there was a surplus of £491.11. The subscription income was £60 down on the previous year at £2,715 – including one member who has been paying £5pa since 1991. There were 21 members, who were still paying the old £10 subscription and had not increased their standing orders to £20 on January 2. These members would be urged, again, to contact their bank and ease the burden on the treasurer. Other highlights included the hospitality to members of North Walsham and Acle YFCs, £300 donation to the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association for the 19<sup>th</sup> Spring Fling last year. In terms of expenditure, printing and postage at £230 (£70) – largely represented the cost of the programme; competitions at £384 (£267) included new plinths and engraving of trophies. The report was seconded by Ken Leggett and accepted.

**Honorarium** – The treasurer asked members to agree the payment of the annual honorarium, currently £500. This was agreed. And members also accepted a proposal by the treasurer that for the first time in about 10 years that the honorarium should be increased to £600pa.

## **Elections:**

President – Thomas Love. It was noted that the president was elected last year to serve a five-year term.

Officers – The chairman, Henry Alston, who was elected last year to serve a two-year term, proposed that the current office holders and committee members, should continue for a further year. This was agreed.

Honorary vice-president: Hugh Crane, Jonathan Deane, Ken Leggett MBE, Michael Pollitt and Nigel Wright.

Vice-chairman – Chris Borrett.

Treasurer/ secretary – Michael Pollitt.

Committee – Robert Norman, Alastair Ross, Jason Cantrill, Sally Lomax, Christopher Deane, Guy Paterson, John Lockhart, Sarah Ellero.

In closing the formal part of the meeting at 7.48pm, Mr Alston urged members to support the forthcoming bowls/ 10-pin evening on Friday, February 22.

He then introduced the guest speaker, Peter Garbutt, of McDonalds, who had recently been promoted to a global sustainability role with particular European responsibilities. One of two sons of a Yorkshire farmer, Mr Garbutt said that when the family's dairy herd had been lost in the 2001 foot-and-mouth outbreak, it had been re-stocked from Stokesby. He worked for Andersons for three years and then joined the National Farmers' Union, where during his six-and-a-half years he led on livestock policy issues. Then about four years ago, he joined McDonalds as UK and Ireland agricultural manager, sourcing some £1bn of food from about 23,000 farmers. Today, McDonalds had operations in 120 countries, served from more than 30,000 restaurants. Since 1955, when it became a quoted company, and headquartered in Illinois, it was now served about six million customers each and every day – roughly one per cent of the global population. In Britain, since the first McDonalds opened in 1974, there were now 1,300 restaurants, of which 80pc were run by franchisees. A total of 120,000 staff were employed. And its purchases from farmers had been equally dramatic since that first year when 4,000 tonnes of beef and 25,000 tonnes of potatoes were supplied. Currently, McDonalds bought 48,000 tonnes of beef or about a tenth of total annual production and 280,000 tonnes of potatoes. McDonalds was continuing to grow sales with increasing, quarter on quarter for 12 years. Mr Garbutt spoke for almost 40 minutes, then spent a further half an hour answering more than 20 questions from members. He said that key to success had been an absolute determination to build trust with customers and to work closely with suppliers. For example, McDonalds was still buying beef from the same producers for more than 40 years and the same potato growers for 30 years and so on. It was also working closely with the farming community – by sponsoring Nuffield Farming Scholarships – and by launching an innovative scheme to give young graduates a chance to get a foothold in the industry. At the same time, it had also moved to source free-range eggs in 1998 and was always looking to innovate and refresh its menus to reflect changing tastes and habits. Mr Garbutt, who answered some tough questions from members, said that McDonalds was working with great determination to source foods and materials responsibly. He was taken to task by one member, Joe Mitchell, of Repps, who brought along a bag of McDonalds packaging including cups and other wrappers. This was just one bag of litter collected from his fields in a day. It was a challenge that Mr Garbutt recognised especially given the prominent branding on every item. He stressed that efforts were being made to introduce more environmentally-friendly packaging. In closing Mr Garbutt said that the latest McDonalds advertising had been shot on several Norfolk farms. Had any members seen or recognised their farms, he asked. Tim Papworth, who asked members to thank the speaker for an impressive presentation, thanked Mr Garbutt for coming to the heart of Norfolk to talk to the club. He was presented with a club tie and also a history of Norfolk agriculture by retired grain merchant Alec Douet.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm