

Stalham 175th AGM, February 8, 2017

Meeting held at the Norfolk Mead Hotel, Coltishall, on Wednesday, February 8, 2017.

The chairman, Jonathan Deane, nine members and guest Dr Matt Clark, head of technology development at the Earlham Institute, Norwich Research Park, had supper before the formal meeting.

Welcome

Mr Deane welcomed 24 members and guests to the 175th annual meeting.

Apologies – The president, William Donald, Christopher Deane, Kevin Starkings, Simon and Fil Daniels, John Purling, William Randell, Luke Paterson, Geoff Beck, William Love, Louis Baugh, Sir William Cubitt, Greg Smith.

New member – George Ritchie was proposed by Thomas Love and seconded, Alan Beck.

Minutes of previous AGM – These had been on the club's website for almost a year. The secretary asked that they be accepted as a true and accurate record, proposed by Ken Leggett and seconded, Andrew Sands.

Chairman's report – Mr Deane reflected on a busy programme of activities in the 175th year, which had begun with success in the annual competition against Holt at Rossi's, North Walsham, when the club won the ten-pin challenge trophy. A successful dinner had been held in March with 168 members and guests attending, with deputy NFU president Minette Batters as the speaker. A further highlight had been the visit to Mr Robert and Charlotte Carter's Letheringsett estate before 270 members and guests celebrated in style at the 175th anniversary summer drinks party at How Hill Farm, Ludham, on one of the only sunny evenings in June. His committee raised sponsorship and support from the farming community and allied trades, which was greatly appreciated. As a result, a total of £8,000 had been raised and presented to four good causes – the YANA Project, the East Anglian Air Ambulance, Big C Cancer and Thornage Hall. A visit to the Stanford training area in July and farm walk by invitation of Henry Raker and his parents John and Melinda had been a further success. Mr Deane reflected that the tour of the training area had made it possible to visit three countries in two hours – Iraq, Afghanistan and Bavaria, Germany!

In October, there had been a fascinating visit to Pasta Foods at Longwater, near the Norfolk showground, followed by the start of the indoor season of meetings.

The Broads Authority's chief executive, John Packman, outlined the challenge of balancing competing interests in Broadland and then in December, just a few days before the actual 175th anniversary of December 17, Chief Insp Lou Provart outlined Norfolk's new rural policing strategy. Mr Deane said that his presentation, delivered without a note, had been very impressive particularly when he had been asked to speak at very short notice. Brought up in Acle, he was an officer likely to serve at the highest levels in the future. Then in January, gold had been on the menu when Vincent Thurkettle spoke about finding the largest nugget in Britain.

Secretary/ treasurer's report

Michael Pollitt said that the 175th year had been a record for activity. In financial terms, the club had made a modest surplus of £1329.32 on the year to December 31. This followed a surplus of £582.84 in the previous year but a deficit of £2226.86 in 2014. The club had made total donations to charities and good causes of £8,875 including £500 to farming's charity, the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution, £300 to the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association for the Spring Fling and £175 to Army charities following the Stanford tour.

The increase in subscriptions, which had been made on July 1, 2015, had boosted income from £1735 in 2015 to £3,225 last year. While many members had adjusted their payments to £20pa, due on January 1, a significant minority had overlooked this task. The club still had a stock of 112 silk ties, which were available from the secretary. In terms of bank interest, this had risen from £1.36 to £2.98, partly because of the sponsorship and other income banked for the 175th anniversary drinks party.

A loss of £404 on the dinner/ suppers had been made during the year, partly because the club welcomed members of Acle and also North Walsham Young Farmers' Club to the January meeting as guests for supper, and the December meal, attended by 40 members, had also been subsidised.

Mr Pollitt also thanked his wife for her help in preparation of the accounts and also many members for help with organising events throughout the year.

The website, thanks to Tim Papworth, had also attracted record numbers of visitors.

In response to a question by Mr Papworth, Mr Pollitt said that the annual charge of £70 for hosting the site had been paid in very late December 2016 but would be shown in the 2017 accounts. That account had been paid in seven days after it had been presented.

The proposal to accept the accounts was seconded by Mr Papworth and was agreed by the members.

A further proposal to pay the secretary's honorarium of £500 for 2016 was moved by Ken Leggett and Tim Papworth. This was agreed.

At the chairman's request, the secretary, Michael Pollitt, invited members to re-elect the president, William Donald, honorary life vice-president, Frank Read, and honorary vice-presidents, Hugh Crane, William Donald, Ken Leggett MBE, Michael Pollitt and Nigel Wright. This was proposed by John Grier and seconded by Andrew Sands, and agreed

Chairman – Jonathan Deane was re-elected, proposed by Thomas Love and seconded, Sally Lomax, and agreed.

Vice-chairman – Henry Alston was re-elected, proposed Guy Paterson, seconded George Gay, and agreed.

Secretary/ treasurer – Michael Pollitt was re-elected, proposed Robin Baines, and seconded, Tim Papworth, and agreed.

Membership/IT secretary – Jason Cantrill was re-elected, proposed by Thomas Love, and seconded by William Sands, and agreed.

Committee – The following members were elected Sally Lomax, Alison Ritchie, Robert Norman, John Purling, and Guy Paterson; the president, chairman, vice-chairman, secretary/treasurer, membership/IT secretary, webmaster and ex-chairman also serve. This was agreed.

Any other business – The chairman thanked the secretary and also his wife CJ Pollitt for helping with the accounts. He also thanked all those who had helped with the 175th and other events through the year.

In closing Mr Deane urged members to support the forthcoming bowls and ten-pin evening on Friday, February 24 at Rossi's (4pm), and also the annual dinner on Wednesday, March 15.

The meeting ended at 7.58pm and Mr Deane then formally welcomed the guest speaker Dr Matt Clark, of the Earlham Institute on Norwich Research Park.