

### Annual meeting 2015 qualifies for BASIS points

For the first time members of Stalham Farmers' Club were able to claim professional qualification attendance points at a meeting.

It was also agreed to increase the annual subscription to £20 from July 1 – the first increase for 16 years.

The chairman, Neil Jordan, was the first to sign the official BASIS register at the club's 174<sup>th</sup> annual meeting at the Sutton Staithe Hotel on Wednesday, February 11, 2015.

Although only one point for professional development could be claimed, seven other members also signed the register.

The guest speaker, Dr Belinda Clarke, director of Agri-Tech East, was welcomed.

Apologies - William Donald, Christopher Deane, Tim Papworth, Peter Boardman, Michael Holliday, Sarah Bebb, Roy Houlden, Louis Baugh, Russell Corfield, Alistair Wright, Will More, Ian Deane, Tom Hume, Graham Duncanson.

President – The chairman invited Nigel Wright, who was a former secretary, to propose the president. He said that a great friend, David Ritchie, who had died in office last November, had been hugely respected in the farming industry – as a farmer, stockman and countryman in Norfolk, East Anglia and across the country. He had made a great contribution to the club over many decades.

Mr Wright said another great friend William Donald, who was recovering from illness, had been a member of the club for a remarkable 58 years. A former club chairman in 1971, he had also been one of the youngest chairmen of Norfolk National Farmers' Union in 1978 and then been county treasurer for many years too. He asked fellow members to support his proposal, which was seconded by Neal Sands. And there was unanimous support for the nomination of club president, who would be invited to serve for up to five years.

Mr Donald had earlier told the secretary that he would be delighted to serve if elected.

Chairman's report. In summary, Neil Jordan said that the club highlights had included a first success in the inter-club barley competition against Holt & District Farmers' Club. A first-time entrant, William Sands, of HBS Farms, has won with a sample of Cassata.

For full report – see chairman's report 2014.

He said that plans and proposals to mark the forthcoming 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary were being discussed.

It was also planned to repeat the chairman's away visit in June. He moved his report, which was seconded by John Lockhart.

Alternative venue – The chairman said that the committee had considered alternative venues for the annual dinner and meetings. Initial discussions had supported a possible move to the Norfolk Mead, Coltishall, subject to agreement of satisfactory terms.

A further committee meeting will be held soon to make a decision.

Minutes of previous annual meeting – A summary was read. The full minutes are on the club's website, 2014 AGM minutes. A proposal to sign the minutes was made by Neil Jordan, seconded by Jonathan Deane.

New Members - The following were duly elected:

Charles Lockhart, proposed by Kevin Starkings, seconded Jonathan Deane.

John Newton, proposed by Michael Pollitt, seconded Thomas Love.

Secretary/ Treasurer's report. Michael Pollitt summarised the year's activities including the purchase of a range of new silk ties, with larger "Stalham" swan-neck hoe design.

Full reports can also seen on the website.

The launch of the website has been a great success, with a total of 13,050 visitors in the 11 months to just before the meeting. Although it had cost a total of £528, including £360 one-off set-up, it was clearly attracting traffic.

The autumn programme had been published by mid-September, the earliest ever. The core of next year's programme was also taking shape with meetings arranged until January 2016.

The support of the members during the secretary's illness in the spring had been greatly appreciated.

In financial terms, the club had made a deficit of £2226 – partly because of the replenished stock of ties (£1965), the hospitality for YFC members costing a net £458 and the cost of the website. The support of the East Norfolk NFU branch was greatly appreciated – for insurance of trophies and postage to the value of more than £275.

The club's reserves remain strong - £2558.92 in deposit and interest of £1.89, 3p more the previous year, had been received.

The proposal was seconded by Thomas Love and accepted.

Mr Pollitt proposed a new post of membership and IT secretary, who would to help to develop new means of communicating with members through social media. Jason Cantrill had agreed to take on the role. This proposal, seconded by Luke Paterson, was accepted.

Honoraria. A proposal was made by Mr Pollitt for payment of £500pa for the 2014 year.

This was also seconded by Ken Leggett and accepted.

Subscription increase. A recommendation from the committee that the annual subscription be increased to £20 from July 1. (It was last increased to £10 in 1999). Kevin Starkings asked whether it was strictly necessary but understood the reasoning behind the proposal.

Proposed by Neil Jordan, it was seconded by Luke Paterson, and agreed.

Re-election of club officers. It was proposed en-block by James Paterson, seconded by Kevin Starkings that the honorary life vice-presidents – Roger Beck and Frank Read, and honorary vice-presidents – Hugh Crane, William Donald, Ken Leggett MBE, Michael Pollitt and Nigel Wright were re-elected.

Chairman – Neil Jordan proposed Luke Paterson for the post – noting that the committee had proposed a two-year term. It was seconded by Thomas Love and agreed.

Vice-chairman – Luke Paterson proposed Jonathan Deane, seconded by Kevin Starkings.

Secretary/ treasurer – Michael Pollitt was proposed by Luke Paterson, and seconded by Alistair Ross. This was accepted.

Committee. The committee has proposed that existing members be re-elected and would include the retiring chairman – Helen Gibb (Boast), Robert Norman, Alistair Ross, John Purling, Jonathan Deane, Peter Gardiner, Sally Lomax, Alison Ritchie and Christopher Deane.

Vote of thanks – The secretary asked to record formal vote of thanks to members, speakers and the hosts of events, and also thanked web master Tim Papworth, and Neal Sands for his help in arranging the chairman's first trip, and Alan Beck for standing as interim vice-chairman.

In any other business, Nigel Wright suggested that the club's records be deposited with the Norfolk Record Office. The secretary said that extracts from these records would be published on the club's website first.

Next meeting – Annual dinner on Wednesday, March 11 at the Sutton Staithe, 7pm for 7.30pm.

After the meeting formally closed at 8.12pm, the guest speaker Dr Belinda Clarke was introduced by the chairman.