

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
of the Southdown Sheep Society
held at The Sheep Centre, Malvern, Worcestershire, WR13 6PH
on Saturday September 7th 2019

PRESENT

Mrs Lesley Mead, President, in the Chair, and 50 members and friends.

APOLOGIES

Nicole Peart., Chris & Dave Rhead, Irving Pallister, Graham Ryves-Webb, G Helyer, S & J Hutley, Lynne Brooks, A Readhead-Higgins, Alison Allen, Amanda Wood, Paul Ibbott, Ben Slack & Katy Gibson, J Middleditch & J McInnes Skinner, Paul Humphrey, L & J Trumper, S & W Everdell, Alex Long, Sophie Long, Elizabeth Sargent, A Harmer, Joan Wakeham-Dawson, Catherine Wheeler, Brian Alderson & Jackie Murphy, Colin & Lorraine Kempthorne, John Hawtin, George & Sue Anstie, Sally Hayes, Victoria Chamberlin, Rosemary Drewery, Neville & Maureen Turner, Veronica Aylward

MINUTES

Minutes of the AGM held on held at Mudchute City Farm, Pier Street, Isle of Dogs, London, E14 3HP, on Saturday August 18th 2018, were previously circulated.

The Minutes were unanimously adopted. Proposer: P Goldsworthy; Seconder: L Newman.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The audited accounts for the year ending December 31st 2018 were previously circulated. The Honorary Treasurer, Mr Neil Stainthorpe, outlined the main points: total incoming resources for the year were £35137, total expenditure £28036. The accounts show a profit for the year of £7101. Total funds at 31/12/2017 amounted to £73945.

The Treasurer explained that the exceptional expenditure relating to the 125th Anniversary celebrations and the purchase of the new website in 2016 resulted in a loss at the year end, but he was pleased to report that the Society is now back to a similar position financially as it was prior to the 125th Anniversary celebrations.

The Treasurer reported that we continue to invest funds in the Cambridge & Counties Bank and COIF Charities Fund: currently, funds invested in Cambridge & Counties Bank total £40000, and in COIF Charities Fund £14020. The aim is to maintain two years of funds in reserve.

The Society has a working business reserve account and business current account with NatWest Bank. The Treasurer pointed out that interest rates have improved slightly, which should feed through to our investments, but cautioned that inflation is also 'on the move'.

Membership remains stable.

He pointed out that costs are monitored in the office and considerable saving has been made in 2018 by changing the insurance cover provider. The Society continues to review the budget going forward.

The Treasurer concluded his report by stating that he anticipates that there will be a smaller surplus for 2018.

The adoption of the accounts was proposed by P Goldsworthy, seconder: L Newman. Votes for: 40 (including 13 proxy votes), 1 abstention, 0 against.

ANNUAL REPORT OF COUNCIL

Mr Adam Brown, Chairman of Council, presented his report:

“Mr President, Ladies and Gentlemen

I am sure that you are all aware of what has been occupying a large amount of our Council’s time during the past year. The letter that you have all received from our Vice Chairman explains the situation and the events that have taken place, and what we have been able to do about it. This has taken a lot of work, time and a number of extra Council meetings, and has regrettably put us in the position of having to seek professional legal advice, which has proved to be very expensive. None of us wished for any of this to happen, and I sincerely hope that the Society can move on from this during the next year. To that end I would like to thank the Council for the time and effort that they have put in for the Society to see us through this most unfortunate time, especially Howard Wood who has stepped in so capably to act as Chairman while I have been indisposed following more hip surgery this Spring.

As for the rest of the year, the Society has had another good twelve months. We currently have 346 members, this includes three who joined this week. The breed has yet again excelled in the show ring and my congratulations go to all of those who have done well. Our Worcester sale in August attracted a strong entry of sheep and some very good prices were achieved. Let’s hope the same happens at the Melton Mowbray sale next week.

In my Chairman’s report at last year’s AGM I boldly said that “by this time next year we will have left the European Union”. Little did I know at the time how wrong I was to be. All I will say this year is that neither I nor it seems anybody else knows what will happen on that front, but one way or another change is on the way, and apart from the political threat to the UK agricultural sector, I think that farming, food production and the wider countryside is under greater threat now than it has ever been. The climate change experts seek to blame livestock production for the rise in greenhouse gases, ignoring the vast amount produced by both industry and travel and conveniently forgetting to mention the massive amount of CO2 that is sequestered and thus offset by the very grass that those livestock have been produced from. The vegans want everyone to stop eating meat on health and animal welfare grounds, claiming that we are killing the planet, whilst flying in exotic fruit and vegetables from all over the planet to live on instead. We must all be aware of what is happening in the wider world and adapt to the conditions as we find them, but one thing that we all know is that with our breed we have hardy, thrifty and adaptable sheep which are capable of producing a first class product from grass.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our retiring President, Lesley I hope you have enjoyed your term in office, and it gives me great pleasure to welcome Michael Sprake as our new President, I wish you the best of luck for your term in office, you will be a great asset to the Council during the next year as there is much work to be done.

My special thanks go as ever to Gail. Gail, we all appreciate what a difficult and at times unpleasant year you have had. We would all like to thank you for the calm, considered and professional way that you have handled the situation, and I can assure you that you still have and always have had the overwhelming support and backing of both the Council and the wider Society, you have always gone the extra mile for us and we would like to thank you for what you have done, and currently do for us all. Thank you.

So, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would just like to finish by saying thank you to you all for attending today’s AGM and let’s move the Society on to a brighter future for us all, always remembering that it is our breed and our sheep that we are here for. Thank you.”

The adoption of the Chairman's Report was proposed by D Crundwell, seconder: J Ing.
Votes for: 34 (including 13 proxy votes), 1 abstention, 01against.

PRESIDENT 2019/2020

Mrs Lesley Mead was welcomed as the incoming President. Mrs Mead thanked retiring President Mrs Jane Ing for her work during her year in office.

Mrs Ing addressed the meeting and thanked her husband for his support during her Presidential year. She explained that she had attended numerous sheep events, large and small, and had made an effort to meet beginners and new members. She stated that she was pleased that the Grassroots flock analysis was underway and provoking discussion. She advised that the report, together with the minimum standards and recommendations document, should be part of the new member pack.

A vote of thanks was recorded to the retiring President, Mrs Jane Ing, and she was appointed a Vice President of the Society. This was proposed by Mrs Lesley Mead, seconded by A Brown. All in favour.

Incoming President Mrs Lesley Mead addressed the meeting and thanked the Society for the honour bestowed upon her. She expressed concern and urged judges not to put so much store into the appearance of the exhibits, such as the trimming of them. She made the point that some exhibitors could possibly be put off by the whole trimming subject and that if it is too much trouble or money they will not bother to show. She stated that she would be pleased if more shows offered untrimmed classes. She concluded by urging judges to make a difference.

COUNCIL ELECTION

Six seats were available for election and seven nominations had been correctly received. The Chairman thanked all who had put themselves for election.

The President's and Chairman's Award

The Hugh & Mary Clark Award for outstanding service to the Southdown Sheep Society was awarded to Mr Howard Wood.

OPEN DISCUSSION

The meeting closed at 3.40pm.