



National Sheep Association
South East Region

Minutes of the NSA South East Region Annual Regional Members' Meeting 2024

**Held at The Angel Hotel, Privett, Hants. GU34 3NN
Tuesday 6th February at 6.30pm**

1. Apologies for absence. Yann Le Du, NSA South East Region Chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting and accepted apologies from Tony Cave-Penny, James Goffin, Phil Hart, George Horne, Ian Lockwood, Sharmina Lockwood, Les Morris, Marie Prebble and Nerys Wright.

2. Minutes of the 2023 ARMM. With the minutes having been made available before the meeting, Yann asked if they could be accepted as a true and correct record. This was proposed by Andrew Barr and seconded by David Barber with no objections.

3. Matters arising, not otherwise on the agenda

There were no matters arising.

4. Reports from regional officers

Chairman's report:

This year we have had a mixed bag of Regional activities/events, with an equal mixed bag of degrees of success!!

At this meeting last year I said that we had been invited by Southern Shears to make our Young Shepherds' competition held there an annual event...despite our enthusiasm to comply with this request, we had to cancel due to very poor uptake of entrants. We are rejigging our offering this year with the prize, not just of cash on the day, but for the winners, entry to the national competition at Malvern at the end of July. Save the date for this year, Sunday 12th May at Heathfield!

Similarly, I said we were hoping to run a Field Day in 2023...again this was put on hold.

That's got the negatives out of the way...now to the events that we did have!!

At the end of February a small group of members attended a DEFRA presentation on the situation with ELMS at that time...suffice it to say that it is incredible to see how far the SFI offerings have moved forward in the last 12 months since then !! I would urge everyone to look at them really seriously & take up whatever fits in with your system!!

Chronologically we then have a gap in activities with the lambing season lasting well into May across our region.

In early June, following a request from the SoE Agricultural Society for it's Show, a shearing and fleece demonstration headlining "The Journey of Wool", was put on over 3 days thanks to the

incredible work put in by James Goffin and his partner, assisted by daily commentaries from our committee members. So successful was this that the Show have requested a repeat performance this year and have put some money up to support it. Unfortunately, James has moved out of the region into Suffolk to a full- on shepherding job and so we will be working with another shearer on this project.

At the end of June we held the first of our two farm walks, at Hugh Passmore's farm next to Lancing College in Sussex. A fascinating farm tour and discussion on a traditional mixed farm - arable, beef and sheep managed truly regeneratively/holistically over a number of generations since long before these terms were invented showing just what is possible with productive agriculture working hand in hand with incredible biodiversityit was not lost on attendees that Groundswell was held on the day we visited Hugh.

For our second farm walk, in September, we crept over the border into the Marches region, for a joint walk on the farm managed by Rich Taylor, one of our Young Ambassadors from a few years back who is with us here tonight. Following a change of ownership, the farm is progressing in a regenerative direction, and we saw this in the herbal leys being grazed by weaned lambs. The farm is also home to the largest flock of Cotswold sheep in the country. Many thanks to Rich and his team for showing us round (and we had their lamb burgers for lunch at the local pub!).

The 1st of September saw our second Ram Sale held in conjunction with Thame Farmers' Auction Mart. Whilst entries were well up on the inaugural sale in 2022 at 125 and with prices slightly ahead clearance rate was disappointing. The sale did however leave us with a useful profit from entry fees and sponsorship. Due to constraints in space at the market, with the need for MV biosecurity, we may need to limit entries to 100 for this year's sale. Once again many thanks to the work put in by Simon Draper and his Market team, and by our ram inspectors, stewards and particularly Sale Chairman James Goffin, again his moving leaves big shoes to fill!!

At the end of September, we joined the West Sussex branch of NFU at Patching in West Sussex for a round table discussion on the Sea Eagle introduction on the Isle of Wight led by Steve Egerton-Reid, the resident Project Officer. He gave us a fascinating insight into the studies being carried out on the Eagles dietary preferences...work soon to be published with hopefully full coverage in our Sheep Farmer magazine.

The last week of October saw our showcase event of the year SHWAP 2024. The SHEEP HEALTH WEALTH & PRODUCTION online conference kicked off "Sheep Farmers Conference Week" on Monday 23rd, with further presentations on Wednesday 25th and Thursday 26th. Each evening was extremely well supported with attendees not just from the home nations but from across Europe and beyond!

The facility to watch or rewatch all presentations at least doubled the audience reached. If anyone wants to see any of these again go to the NSA website and follow links to Events/webinars. Once again sponsorship of this event helped greatly in bolstering the Regional finances.

That covers the events in the past year. In 2024 we will definitely have the Young Shepherds' competition at Southern Shears on 12th May, a couple of Farm Walks and our major event being two Field Days, one in late June and one in September - watch out for announcements on these.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity, especially as I'm stepping down as chairman of the region in a few minutes, to thank all my fellow committee members for their help and support

throughout my period of tenure, particularly John, Matt & Susie, but also Andrew for his sage voice of experience across offices within NSA!

I must also thank Phil and all those at Malvern for their always cheerful demeanour in response to my, I'm sure, often irritating requests but most of all I must say a huge thank you to Sarah for all her support, both secretarial and moral, throughout my tenure....THANK YOU ALL

5. Treasurer's report: John Britton, NSA South East Region Honorary Treasurer, gave a report for his sixth year in the role, referring those present to copies of a profit-and-loss sheet and a balance sheet to 31st December 2023 previously circulated and available on screen.

Treasurer's Report

- Regional membership stands at 559, comprising 493 individual members, 41 joint memberships and 25 under 27s members (if it is assumed that joint membership is for a minimum of 2 people an additional 41 members could be added to that category)
- John was pleased to report that the Region's finances were in a very good position. The last 6 years have seen a change from a deficit of £890 at the end of 2019 to a surplus of £2,734.93 at the end of 2023
- Due to the successful procurement of sponsorship, particularly for SHWAP and the Field Days the finances are in a healthy position
- In recognition of the region's hard work and determination to address the financial position over the past 4 years and in the development of the Field Day model (adopted by other regions) NSA have written off the £5,000 grant/loan drawn down in 2020 for which John thanked CEO NSA Phil Stocker
- John outlined the income and expenditure for each of the events held in 2023 as well as the overall expenditure including admin and travel costs etc
- Total Current Assets stand at £12,526.69. Of that £1,658.33 is deferred income already given for Field Day 2024 sponsorship resulting in net assets of £10,532.74
- The region has budgeted for a slight deficit in 2024 but an overall balanced budget by the end of 2025.

John asked that his thanks to Karen Sumner and Alexandra Abbott at NSA be recorded, for their support and patience this year and Yann Le Du and Sarah Bake for drawing up the budget.

John asked if his report was to be adopted. This was proposed by Bob Blanden and seconded by Andrew Barr with no objections.

5. Election and/or confirmation of regional officers:-

Position	Current holder	Action taken
Trustee	Yann Le Du, beginning first year of second three-year term. REAPPROVAL	Proposed by John Britton, seconded by Anrew Barr, approved en-bloc by all.
Chairman	Susie beginning first year of two-year term. ELECTED	
Vice Chairman	Matt beginning first year of two-year term. ELECTED	
Treasurer	Yann Le Du beginning first year ELECTED	
English Committee reps	Susie Parish starting first year of first three year term APPROVAL Matt Blyth starting first year of second three year term REAPPROVAL Andrew Barr – starting first year of second three year term REAPPROVAL	
Committee	All existing members eligible to continue.	Committee approved en-bloc by all.

6. Election of any new committee members: There were no new committee members

7. Any other business:

Susie Parish gave a vote of thanks to Yann Le Du for his hard work throughout the year, always going above and beyond. Especially thanks for continuing for a further two years than intended making a four year tenure in total. His work in establishing the Field Days in 2022 and his determination in pursuing sponsorship means that the region is in a much stronger position as he steps down. All present agreed and showed their appreciation in the usual way.

8. Date of the next meeting: This was set for 4th February 2025.

As there was no further business, Yann closed the meeting at 6.55pm and introduced guest speakers kindly sponsored by Farm & Country.

Dr Laura Tennant (Young Animal Feed Technical Advisor – Trouw Nutrition) spoke about "The benefits of Energised Lamb Milk Replacer" and Leara Proctor (Technical Specialist – Thompsons of York) on "Meeting efficiency & productivity on farm to achieve today's ever changing targets".

NSA CEO Phil Stocker followed with an update on all things NSA.