



**MINUTES OF NSA CYMRU WALES REGION ANNUAL REGIONAL MEMBERS  
MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM AND IN PERSON IN THE INTERNATIONAL PAVILION  
ON THE ROYAL WELSH SHOW GROUND TUESDAY  
22<sup>nd</sup> FEBRUARY 2022.**

**Chair- Kate Hovers**

**Present in room and via Zoom**

Margaret Dalton  
Nicola Drew  
Gwynne Davies  
John Lloyd  
Elain Gwilym  
Caryl Hughes  
Jeff Gwilliam  
James Ruggeri  
Elfyn Owen

Gaina Morgan  
Llew Thomas  
Linda Davies  
Andrew Jones  
Leisia Tudor  
Heather 1  
Janet Holt  
Mary Gittins  
Emlyn Morgan

Carys Jones  
David Pittendreigh  
Chris Adamson  
Sean Riches  
Aled Jones  
Rebekah Stuart  
John Morris  
Lucy Levinge

**In Attendance:** Helen Roberts

**1.Apologies** Paul Wozencraft, Jane Smith, Tim Ward, Lesley Wickham, Ann Grocott, Brian Davies, Mike Burley

**2. To Confirm the Minutes of last AGM held 24th February 2021.** - The minutes were confirmed by all those present.

**3. To consider matters arising from the above.** The farm walk that had been held had proved successful with a good mixture of ages. Jeff and Janet were thanked for putting this walk on for us and it was nice to see them at here today.

**4. Chairman's Report** from Kate Hovers. Kate was delighted to hear Helen Roberts had been awarded the George Hedley award. The region had held various meetings during the year, we had joined with the unions to play our part in COP Cymru. A sheep scab stakeholder group has been formed with Kate chairing, dip disposal and training of contractors were to be discussed. NSA Strategy document to be reviewed and NSA members are urged to have their say. Although sheep prices have been good we must realised that input costs have risen dramatically. First NSA Cymru newsletter produced copy attached.



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## **5. To review the accounts for 2021.**

This was again a year without an event and no income apart from the income from COIF and grant income which had been obtained due to Covid. We had held a Young Shepherds competition and were grateful for the sponsorship from the Texel Society and ABP. Attendance and sponsorship of the Royal Welsh Winter Fair had taken place with us having to pay for NSA HQ assistance for the first time, this will be kept under review.

The balance in the accounts at the end of the year was £21,085 in the current account, £45,235 in the interest account and £170,160 in the COIF account. The accounts were approved by those present.

## **6. To appoint Officers for the coming year.**

This year it was agreed that all officers should remain the same. Therefore, they are listed below.

- a) Chair – Kate Hovers
- b) Vice Chair – Caryl Hughes
- c) Treasurer - Helen Roberts was proposed by those present with Tim Ward proposed as Vice Treasurer.
- d) Secretary/Regional manager - Helen Roberts was proposed by those present.
- e) Committee Names of the committee were read out. It was agreed to keep the current members on committee and to remind Breed Societies to nominate representatives and inform the secretary of any changes. Rhodri Manon Owen would be invited to join the committee
- f) To confirm nominations to NSA Board for 2022. Llew Thomas had served his term and nominated Caryl Hughes to take his place, this was approved by those present.  
Nominations for Board were Tim Ward, Caryl Hughes and Kate Hovers.  
Policy & Technical committee John Lloyd  
F& GP committee Margaret Dalton.  
These nominations were accepted by those present.

**7. Secretary's Remuneration.** It had been agreed at a previous committee meeting that the annual amount would remain at £6,000 per year plus expenses and travel at 45ppm. However, at this meeting some wished to increase the fee. Helen Roberts was asked to step outside while the discussion took place, on return to the meeting it has been agreed to increase the fee to £6,300 per year plus expenses and travel at 45ppm. This will be reviewed again before the next annual meeting. This was agreed by those present.

**8. To consider any other business.** Gwynne Davies asked if anyone wanted to volunteer for stewarding at the Royal Welsh and if Breed Societies could be approached about taking sheep

to the main ring from the NSA building during the show, the question will be added to the application form and the response noted.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 2.45pm and thanked those for attending.

The meeting was followed by talks from Carys Jones, John Richards, Sean Riches and Chris Adamson.

A summary is below.

### **Change can Bring Opportunity says NSA**

Change can bring opportunity as well as challenge was the message at the National Sheep Association Wales/Cymru ARRM, held at the Royal Welsh Showground.

Members were told that the future is bright for those willing to adapt. And the NSA's mission is to support sheep farmers through rapidly changing times, including climate change and trade deals with Australia and New Zealand.

NSA Wales/Cymru Chair Kate Hovers said the NSA's priority was to stress the sector's importance. Sheep farming can be positioned as one of the solutions, particularly in terms of sustainability and carbon sequestration. And with the world population increasing phenomenally, it was clear that people had to be fed.

She added: "The NSA wants to defend sheep farming. We have to look at climate change.

"We're trying to get the messages over to people who don't understand the importance and role of sheep farming, not just in our uplands but in the whole of the UK. We all know that farming and land management is really affected by political change, climate change and economic change.

"And although sheep have had a good year's trading, it doesn't actually mean profits will change because inputs have changed. But I don't want to be negative.

"I am enthusiastic about the future of the sheep industry, but we do know we've got trade deals with countries that may have different standards from those we have to adhere to and may even be allowed to use different medicines from the ones we're allowed to and can market their products in our country with no mention of that."

John Richards, Hybu Cig Cymru (Meat Promotion Wales) Industry Development and Relations manager, urged the industry to focus more on individual farming systems. The primary producer actually had very little control of pricing, but spent a lot of time talking about it.

He felt there was more change coming than in the previous ten to fifteen years, but it could bring opportunities. It was important to be able and agile enough to take up opportunity. The sector needed to identify areas of improvement, but also to measure and show the improvements made in advance of Government targets.

HCC initiatives were based on intensive research and a series of documents had been produced to explain that sustainability is about more than greenhouse gas emissions and also to show how improvements could be made. The impact of greenhouse gasses on the environment was obviously important, but sustainability was also about the rural economy, sustaining its future and ensuring a constant food source. It was about land management, biodiversity and about the Welsh culture.

John Richards explained it needed to be highlighted that lowering greenhouse gas emissions by cattle and sheep production wasn't necessarily about lowering livestock numbers. It could actually be counter beneficial.

He said: "What we need to be doing is to make improvements to the system we've got and trying to make our sheep work as hard as they can for us and in the most efficient way we can.

"Increased productivity doesn't mean increased production, we mean maintaining production but using less resources or using the same amount of resources but producing more. Or, if we can, producing more from less, so less inputs but producing more.

"That is the ideal because ultimately it will make us more competitive and also increase our profitability. It's not just about producing more."

He added that it was also important to talk about the positive influences. Carbon sequestration was about far more than soil and trees. It was about hedges, shelter belts and areas of peatlands and they should all be included in the conversation. Lambs that came from a hill system actually had a lower carbon footprint than those from the upland and lowland system, so that with 50% of Wales classified as hill, it's a very positive message

The meeting was especially impressed with the presentation by Carys Jones, who farms 350 acres near Llandeilo with her parents and grandparents. Delegates were inspired by her enthusiasm and the changes she has initiated to ensure a successful future for the family sheep and beef farm in the Welsh hills.

Carys told the meeting she had introduced new breeds to try and build a sustainable future. She is part of HCC's Hill Ram Scheme and was a winner of one of the Romney rams offered through NSA last year.

The family is trying to increase output and decrease inputs to build a sustainable future. They are concentrating on four areas: genetics, health, pasture management and carbon auditing.

The NSA's Policy and Technical officer, Sean Riches, said that, going forward, promotion of the industry would focus more on people. It would highlight the role of the farmer and the shepherd, as well as the economic benefits the industry delivered.

He highlighted the wide range of initiatives the NSA was undertaking and involved in to protect the sheep industry. They included working with other stakeholders, building strong relationships across the industry, producing webinars and supporting farmer in the face of immense change.

Chair Kate Hovers and the top team were re-elected for a further two year term, to take account of Covid disruption and the postponed NSA Welsh Sheep 2021. Kate Hovers also thanked Development Officer Helen Roberts for 'the tremendous amount of work' she puts into running NSA Wales/Cymru and congratulated her on her recent George Hedley Memorial Award