

# National Sheep Association

## Northern Region Annual Members Meeting



### MINUTES OF THE NSA NORTHERN REGION ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 16<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2017, at The Hired Lad, Penrith, 7.30pm

**Present:** Greg Dalton (Chairman), Eddie Eastham (Vice Chairman), Will Rawling, Ian Armstrong, Martin Hewitson, Adrian Bateson, Geoff Lawn, Graham Wilkinson, Carl Stephenson, Graeme Wood, Ruari Martin, James Raine, William Ridley, Philip Dawson, J Peter Lee, Thomas Carrick, John Stephenson, Alan Alderson, John Metcalfe, Jean Wilson, Derick Wilson, Hannah Jackson, Ellen Helliwell, Abi Swaffield (NSA), Joanne Briggs (NSA), Rob Wilson, Matt Bagley, John Geldard, Jean-Pierre Garnier (AHDB), Heather Stoney-Grayshon

Chairman Greg Dalton welcomed everyone to the meeting.

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Martin Brown, Ted Ogden, Neil Marston, Trevor Stoney, Andrew Humphries, Maurice Oxley, Paul Rogers, Fiona Lovatt, Keith & Anna Kerruish, Steve Dunkley, Tim Dunn, Robin Raine, Jayne Knowles, Adam Watson, John Bell (W), John Bell (N), Hans Porksen

- 2. To confirm the minutes of the last ARMM on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2016**

The minutes had been available to view on the NSA website and had also been circulated tonight. Proposed as a true and correct record by Alan Alderson, seconded by Graham Wilkinson. Signed by Chairman, Greg Dalton.

- 3. To consider matters arising from the above minutes – None**

- 4. Chairman's Report - Greg Dalton**

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, over the last twelve months we have seen a massive change in the political landscape which I guess will have a profound impact on the future of agriculture and especially the sheep industry. I will come back to the referendum result and the future impact it may have at the end of my report. The fat lamb trade has been pretty good with decent returns throughout 2016 until recently where it has seen a plateau and dipped below last year's prices. The weakness of the pound has obviously helped with the spring and summer trade but with a large lamb crop there does not seem to be a tightening of supply at the moment where normally by now the numbers coming forward are lessening. The breeding sheep trade was very similar but there were small variations depending on what corresponding sales were like last year.

The National Sheep Event at Malvern was a great success, I attended along other members of the northern region committee and helped in the smooth running of a successful event. The event also saw the release of the new and updated uplands report compiled by the staff at Malvern along with input from members and the regions of the NSA. It has been fantastically well received and highlighted the many benefits sheep farming does for the upland. It has been sent to many MP's and hopefully will make them realise the benefits a successful sheep industry can have on this precious landscape. The evening before we attended a formal dinner where our former regional manager Julie Sedgwick received the George Hedley award for outstanding service to the sheep industry. I'm sure no one would disagree she was hugely deserving of such an award.

We hosted Jane King, AHDB Chief Executive at Kendal mart at the end of March, we also invited other industry representatives to highlight how her organisation could try and improve performance for levy payers and how future policy could benefit everybody. Thanks must go to committee members and especially John Geldard who worked very hard to get her to attend such a meeting.

I will now go back to referendum and the ensuing result and what impact it may have on the sheep industry. I was lucky enough to attend a large agricultural show in Paris last March after I received a kind invite from AHDB along with some other NSA members. It was heartening to see so many members of the public attending an agricultural show in the middle of a city and maybe is something we could try and aspire to in the UK, as a way of educating the general public and explaining what we do and how we do it. What the trip did highlight was the importance of the EU export market and especially France. Whatever happens in future negotiations it is imperative that the NSA and agriculture as a whole highlight the economic benefits that sheep industry provide this country with and the vital importance of a tariff free trade deal with the EU alongside trying to open up new markets elsewhere in the world. On the domestic policy it is obviously going to change from what has gone before and we need to be at the forefront talking to decision makers and that is why the NSA did a tremendous job of highlighting the uplands when we showcased the organisation in the Houses of Parliament for four days last December. There was a reception hosted by George Eustice with Eddie Eastham chairing it and also Thomas Carrick giving a presentation on the importance of the uplands. Hopefully this will help in the development of a future agricultural policy and has shown sheep farming in the uplands in a good light when at this present moment we have to defend ourselves in the face of the re-wilding brigade or the absurd idea of reintroducing the lynx into Kielder Forest. Members of the committee and NSA have spent many hours questioning the validity of this idea and the many problems that we envisage. Finally I must say I have thoroughly enjoyed my two years as Chairman, it seems to have gone so fast and I hope we can continue to have many successes as we have had previously. I just want to say thank-you to the people who have helped me in so many ways. Julie Sedgwick former regional manager. Heather who in her first year as manager has excelled and proven to be a very able replacement for Julie. All the northern region committee who have shown over the last two years how fantastic they are and finally my wife Natalie and my three children Jack , Poppy and Maisie and how they have put up with me disappearing to meeting and Natalie being a very able secretary. I wish Eddie all the success in his chairmanship and I'm sure he will carry on the tradition of this region being one of the leading lights in the NSA.

- 5. To view the accounts for 2016** – Treasure Eddie Eastham gave a report on the NSA Northern Regions finances. Copies had been circulated to the room. Eddie noted that there was an item shown as miscellaneous income this included sale of tickets for Julies party and a VAT adjustment by the accountants. In the expenditure, the entertainment expenses related to Julies Party. The expenses for the secretary were up partly due to an overlap period between Julie and Heather. The committee expenses were up, put down to more meetings attended due to BREXIT discussions. The region does still have reserves but needs to have a very good North Sheep to help maintain these.

**6. Election/Re-approval of Officers:**

- a. **Chairman** - Jeff Lawn nominated to elect Eddie Eastham. Seconded by Graham Wilkinson
- b. **Vice Chairman** – John Geldard nominated to elect Thomas Carrick. Seconded by Carl Stephenson
- c. **Treasurer** – Thomas Carrick nominated to elect Ted Ogden. Seconded by Jeff Lawn
- d. **Representative to NSA English Committee** – Matt Bagley proposed to elect Greg Dalton. Seconded by John Geldard

Carl Stephenson proposed to re-approve the following representatives:

**NSA English Committee** – Eddie Eastham & Thomas Carrick

**NSA Regional Trustee** – John Geldard

The above was seconded by Jeff Lawn

- 7. Presentation of the TI Allinson Memorial Award 2017** – Will Rawling announced the winners as Jean and Derick Wilson having nominated them on behalf of the Herdwick Sheep Breeders Association. Chairman Greg Dalton presented them with the crystal rose bowl.

**8. Any Other Business** – None

The meeting continued with presentations from Jean-Pierre Garnier (AHDB) on the forecast of exports after BREXIT. Joanne Briggs (NSA) gave a report on the work of NSA, touching on how the NSA is looking to move forward with BREXIT. Hannah Jackson, NSA Next Generation Ambassador 2016 gave an insight into how she got into sheep farming and how the NSA Next Generation programme has helped her to progress her career.

Meeting closed 9.30pm