

**MINUTES OF NSA CYMRU WALES REGION ANNUAL REGIONAL MEMBERS MEETING HELD AT HAFOD Y HENDRE, ROYAL WELSH SHOWGROUND ON TUESDAY**

**22nd FEBRUARY 2018.**

# Chairman Llew Thomas

**Present**

Alun Davies Michael Roberts Mary Gittins

John Lloyd Huw Alun Evans Margaret Griffiths

David Pittendreigh James Ruggeri (HCC) Margaret Dalton

Gwynne Davies Caryl Hughes Ron Mounsey

Linda Davies Sion Ifans Lorraine Howells

Andrew Jones Tim Ward Kate Hovers

Catherine Roberts Gaina Morgan Tanya Rogers

Bryan James Sarah James Will Hughes

Paul Wozencraft Dave Gregory

**In Attendance:**  Helen Davies, Mr Phil Stocker

**1. Apologies** Jacob Anthony, Nicola Drew, Tim Tyne, Liz Price, Arthur George, Edwin Harris, Geraint Davies, Lesley Wickham, Delyth Williams, Jane Smith, Roger Davies, Brian Eagles, Edwin Roderick

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**2. To Confirm the Minutes of last AGM held 23rd February 2017.** - The minutes were confirmed by all those present.

**3. To consider matters arising from the above.** No Matters arising

**4. Chairman’s Report** A lot has happened since I took over as Chairman of NSA Cymru/Wales from Paul Wozencraft in February 2016.

The most significant event in the last two years was the vote for BREXIT together with the subsequent drop in the value of the pound, compared to the Euro. This has reduced the cost of buying British lambs in the Euro Zone. What the situation will be in two years’ time is anyone’s guess now, so all we can do is prepare ourselves for change.

NSA Cymru/Wales is working hard with other industry bodies to influence the policy makers to achieve the best outcome for our industry. It is accepted that a hard BREXIT would hit the sheep industry hard with high tariffs to export to the Euro Zone.

It is essential that (HCC) Hybu Cig Cymru and AHDB (Agricultural & Horticultural Development Board) do their best to open new markets abroad and to expand the market for lamb and sheep meat within the UK. With the probable reduction in price after BREXIT cheap cuts of lamb and sheep meat may become attractive to the fast food outlets and other non-traditional outlets in the United Kingdom. Also, we hope to see premium lamb cuts as an option on more pub and restaurant menus. We must be prepared to take advantage of change in the market place.

We had a very successful NSA Welsh Sheep event at Llwynbedw, Talybont on Usk, Near Brecon in May 2017, which was the highlight of my term in office, everyone involved worked very hard to ensure its success, thank you to everybody who helped.

NSA Cymru/Wales continues to work on many fronts, the place of sheep in the environment, expanding the home and export market for sheep meat, carcass splitting, TSE (Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies) Regulations, skin on sheep (Smokies), quarantine units to name but a few. Other issues which have been addressed include dog attacks on sheep, problems that rewilding using Lynx could cause the industry.

Our Next Generation programme has been very successful in supporting the next generation to get onto the sheep farming ladder, we must look to the future with renewed confidence because whatever happens people still need to eat and those providing the food have to make a living.

I congratulate Richard Roderick on winning the John Gittins award he is a great ambassador for the industry.

The progress with Quarantine Units is slow and a joint industry letter has been written to the OVCO and we await the response.

Finally, I would like to offer thanks to our staff in Malvern, Phil and Helen, my fellow office holders and committee members for their work

**5. To review the accounts for 2017.**

The secretary/treasurer presented the accounts and reported that the accounts showed a healthy balance of £41,289 at the bank and £121,890 invested in COIF. Sponsorship of the Royal Welsh and Winter Fair continued plus the sponsorship of Sheep Breeders Round Table. Committee expenses covers the £800 paid to Malvern NSA Cymru members to attend meetings etc. The overall net profit for the year was £42,379. NSA Welsh Sheep had an income of £104,591 and expenditure of £58,350. The accounts were approved by those present.

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

1. Chairman – Llew had enjoyed his time as Chairman and asked for nominations for a new Chair. Gwynne Davies proposed Tim Ward, Tim is well known and respected throughout the industry. Paul Wozencraft seconded this nomination. Agreed by those present.
2. Vice Chairman – David Pittendreigh proposed Kate Hovers and Margaret Dalton seconded this. Agreed by those present
3. Treasurer - Helen Davies was proposed by those present with Tim Ward proposed as Vice Treasurer.
4. Secretary/Regional manager - Helen Davies was proposed by those present.
5. 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. Caryl Hughes and Nicola Drew were added to the committee.
6. To confirm nominations to NSA Board for 2018.

Nominations for Board were Tim Ward, Llew Thomas and Paul Wozencraft.

Policy & Technical committee John Lloyd

F& GP committee Margaret Dalton.

These nominations were accepted by those present.

**7. Secretary’s Remuneration.**  The annual amount would remain at £5,500 per year plus expenses and travel at 45ppm. This agreed by those present.

**8. To consider any other business.** It was again noted the concerns of QU’s

Dog worrying was also discussed as it is on the increase. Phil informed us that an all-party group were working to try to change the law. Paul Wozencraft expressed his thanks to Llew for been Chairman for the last two years.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 2.30pm and thanked those for attending.

The meeting was followed by talks from the following people. The challenge facing sheep farmers, as Brexit looms and the younger generation seek out ever more exciting and convenient eating experiences, is to come up with a marketable new product. The message to NSA Cymru members was delivered separately by McDonalds franchisee, Ron Mounsey, a former dairy farmer, and by National Sheep Association Chief Executive Phil Stocker.

Speaking at the NSA Cymru Annual Meeting, Mr Mounsey who runs 15 McDonalds restaurants, employing 1200 people, stretching from Pembroke Dock to Newport, Gwent, challenged the industry ‘to come up with the product’. He said lamb had been used a few years ago in a McDonalds promotion called ‘Great Tastes of the World’, an Indian burger, which had only ‘gone down OK’, with it quite difficult to get the cooking right.

He added:” I’ve always challenged it back to the industry, if you can come up with a product then we will probably look at it. It depends on the market of course.

“The challenge is out there to show something that we can perhaps use. No promises obviously, because we have a Tasting Panel and what’s called a Chef’s Council, a group of top chefs who develop our tastes and our burgers.”

Phil Stocker picked up on the theme and addressed the challenge of ‘putting some excitement and interest’ into the 20 to 40 age group market. It was important to tap into international cuisine options and taste experiences.

He said: “We believe we can do something in that more artisan end of the market, linked with our British Heritage and traditional sheep farming, and creating interest in both local and global markets alongside the industry’s core offering.”

The challenges posed by Brexit were also highlighted by Phil Stocker. He warned that the sheep industry is probably more at risk than any other sector. Prices and trade are crucial, but sheep farmers generally are heavily reliant on Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 payments.

He added: “We export somewhere in the region of 30/35% of our product each year and 96% of that goes into the European Union. So, if we end up crashing out of the EU and we fall back onto WTO tariffs we could be facing tariffs of up to 50% of the value and that could add another £2 or £2.50 a kilogram onto lamb going into Europe.

“That is not all going to be absorbed within the market place. There will be pressure on farmgate prices if it happens. And then you’ve got the future of farm support, you’ve got not just this Government but the previous Government, the Conservative and Liberal coalition and previously the Labour Government, so all three of our leading political parties have all pushed and tried to drive support to agriculture down in this last 15/20 years.

“The Treasury wants to see less money going into agriculture, so we’ve got a job on our hands if we want to keep the budget going into agriculture and rural development. We’ve got a job on our hands if we want to keep that money going to active farmers to do what they need to do.”

He urged that public expenditure on sheep farming could be justified. It was about teasing out the public good, but there had to be a more intelligent argument to show what the public gained in return for the money paid to farming.

He also urged farming organisations to ‘grow up’ and recognise the value of working with other organisations. He stressed that there is more to be gained by working collaboratively.

NSA Young Ambassador, Caryl Hughes, who farms near Llangollen stressed the value of the scheme. She particularly valued the networking opportunities it had created within the group of 12. They remained on What’s App, Snapchat and Facebook, sharing problems and experiences, with almost instantaneous responses.

Sion Ifans of Welsh Lamb and Beef Promotion illustrated how members could benefit from software to help with record keeping for Farm Assurance. The Farm Records facility is available to all 7,500 members and easily accessed from the mobile phone.

The new NSA Cymru Chairman is Tim Ward. The Vice Chairman is Sennybridge based Kate Hovers, sheep farmer and past president of the Sheep Veterinary Society, a consultant and flock health advisor since 2004.