

Minutes of the Country Link Members Meeting held on Sunday 17th October 2021
at the Best Western Rockingham Forest Hotel, Corby

Charles Humby welcomed everyone to the Meeting.

Apologies - were received from Gill Tweddle, Iain Dingle, Pat Guest, Pat Massey, Mary Davey, Andrew Bryson

The Meeting began with a talk by Alison from Farming Community Network, the charity Northamptonshire Country Link had chosen to support this weekend. She thanked Country Link for the invitation to the Meeting, and for raising money for FCN. The organisation was founded in 1995, and supports the farming community with pastoral and practical support; it is run by volunteers who have an understanding of farming and who give free and impartial advice. There is a confidential helpline, and the volunteers have links with other support groups.

Charles Humby welcomed everyone, and thanked everyone for giving up their time to come to the Meeting.

There was a minute's silence to remember those members no longer with us.

Charles introduced himself; members of the National Committee (Lesley Sheaf, Peter Hunt, Liz Goodwin), Regional Reps (Andrew Smith, Sarah Thompson, Lorraine Clark), and President (Nigel Swain)/Vice Presidents (Peter Hurt, Phil Charles) introduced themselves

Minutes of the Members Meeting held on Sunday 20th October 2019 were signed as being correct.

Matters arising - there were no matters arising.

Chairman's report - Charles thanked everyone for attending the Meeting.

He explained that eighty members of the one hundred and five who had attended the Weymouth weekend replied to the questionnaire; he discovered that members wished to continue the weekends away, and that not everyone looks at the website.

The website was improved last year, to make it more user friendly for i-pad and smartphone users; he felt the website was a good promotional tool for Country Link, and also cheaper than advertising in print. He explained that Country Link needs to do some advertising at a local level, drip feeding over a longer period of time.

He commented that Group Organisers must be made aware of their responsibilities to pass on information to their members; if anyone would like to be a Group Organiser, please speak to any member of the National Committee.

Secretary's report - Liz thanked Claire and her team for photocopying the Agenda for today and the Minutes; she asked if members had seen these prior to the Members Meeting.

This has been the first Internet based weekend, and the website has been an important means of communication; she asked members to support it by looking at it regularly and sending in reports/photographs - these will show prospective members what a great bunch we are!

Liz had forward information about the weekend to the group organisers with the request for them to cascade it to the members. She knew there had been some changes in some groups in the last two years and that there may have been changes of Organisers - if this was so, she asked if people could let her know so that she could update the records.

Finally, she asked everyone to sign the attendance sheet.

Treasurer's report - Lesley has received subscriptions from one hundred and seventy six people.
Expenses: £890 for the website, which is money well spent; £828 for the insurance; £87 for the hire of the Hall for National Committee Meetings.

There has been no income from weekends.

The National Committee are looking to advertise locally in 2022; this will be regional advertising because there are areas where there are no groups. There is money available for the groups to advertise this year and in 2022; Lesley requested the invoices by the end of November, or an idea of what the costs would be. She advised that it is best to drip feed the advertising over a period of months.

Lesley requested the National Subscription from those members who had not yet paid.

Website - Lesley explained that reports etc go through Maria to Helen, the editor. Helen is going to monitor the hits to the website to see what people are looking at eg programmes, reports, and prepare a report for the National Committee Meeting.

Passing of the Weekend Baton - Phil explained the Spring 2022 weekend will be held at the Palace Hotel, Buxton, on the weekend of Friday 29th April-Monday 2nd May 2022. The cost for the weekend will be £210. Derbyshire Country Link are holding a number of deposits for their weekends planned for 2020 and 2021; Phil had new forms for the 2022 weekend, and the final booking form will be sent out in January 2022.

President's Cup - this was presented to Cheshire Country Link for the increase in members in 2019.

Date of the next Members Meeting - to be confirmed.

Nigel asked members to think about organising a weekend next Autumn; the groups rely on a small number of members to organise the weekends. He said if anyone was interested in organising a weekend, then to talk to the National Committee after this meeting.

Any other business - Wendy reminded members that the bulk of enquiries come through the website, and that only six out of twenty two clubs have a programme on the website; it is important that the clubs have a presence on the website.

Dick wondered about information being put on the website more quickly; Lesley explained that Helen had been on holiday.

Lorraine said a new member had come to this weekend, she had been made most welcome and hopefully will continue to come in the future.

Lesley reminded everyone to complete the questionnaires.

The Meeting finished at 3.30pm; Charles thanked everyone for attending, and thanked Claire and her team.