

**Annual General Meeting of the Suffolk Agricultural Association**  
**Meeting held on Monday 13 February 2017 at 11.30 am at Trinity Park**

**68 Members attended**

**2 Guests**

**5 Staff**

The President and chairman of the meeting, John Wall, reported that a quorum was present and declared the meeting open. He began by asking all to stand in remembrance of VPs and Members who had died since the last AGM, particularly Dennis Dyball (a past Chairman and President of the SAA) Charles Lofts, Roger Leggett, Ed Orlopp, Malcolm Easey, Andy Ruffle, Robert Bull, Barry Squirrel, John Cross and Arthur Diaper.

The President asked the Company Secretary, Loudon Greenlees, to report on the voting procedures for the meeting and the proxy votes.

**1. 23 Apologies were received**

**2. To Adopt the Minutes of the 2016 AGM**

The President reported that the minutes of the 2016 meeting had been approved and adopted by the Trustee Board and had also been posted on the Association's website for the benefit of Members. He asked if the Members were happy that the Minutes as posted represent an accurate record of the meeting. The Minutes were accepted by all at the meeting. The treasurer confirmed that the proxy votes were unanimously in favour.

**3. Special Resolution to approve the proposed changes to the Articles of Association.**

The President invited the Secretary to propose the Special Resolution.

Mr Greenlees noted that since the adoption of the SAA's amended Articles of Association in September 2014, various new changes now needed to be made. The most significant change was to remove a conflict of interest by making the immediate past Chairman of the Association chairman of the Nominations Committee in place of the Vice Chairman. He also noted that there was a proposed new Article 15.7 which provided that all Nominations Committee proposals must be approved by the Trustee Board before submission to Council or the membership.

There were various other small proposed changes:

- a) to correct typographical errors,
- b) to remove the details of transitional measures which are now no longer required and
- c) To delete lists of officers and stewards as these will frequently become out of date.

All of these changes had been shown in detail in the marked-up version of the Articles on the Association's website and had been summarised in the supporting documentation with the notice for the meeting.

Mr Greenlees also advised that all the proposed changes had been approved by both the Trustee Board and by Council

The Secretary reported that 50 valid Proxy Forms had been returned and had unanimously approved the proposed changes.

In the absence of any questions the Special Resolution was seconded by Mr Christopher Clarke and on a unanimous vote by a show of hands, the President declared the Special Resolution **“To approve the proposed changes to the Articles of Association”** carried.

#### **4. To Receive and Adopt the Trustees Report and Audited Financial Statements of the Year ended 30 September 2016**

The Chairman began by commending the Annual Report which had been produced in house by the team. He was pleased, as Chairman to see Phillip Ainsworth, the new Chief Executive grow in confidence as he became familiar with this unique position. He has appreciated learning from meetings with other Agricultural Association chief executives but every County has a difference and so it is a unique position. He commented on the signs of change – sheep grazing in the President’s ring; fewer portacabins; improvement of presentation as you enter Trinity Park; and a tidy workshop area with its own office and rest room.

These were also some of the “outward and visible signs” of “significant inward changes”. A new improved relationship with our landbased college at EastonOtley who own the sheep; an economic imperative to save unnecessary cost ( fewer portacabins); the importance of presentation to earn income from Trinity Park (the entrance); and changes in reporting lines as the Chief Executive takes direct responsibility for the Association’s estate and the various teams working here. The estates team as an example operate directly under Phillip and have moved to their work base.

The Chairman continued that Phillip led a wonderful team at the SAA who were passionate about the work that they did for the Association. Over the last three years a lot had been asked of but they have just got on with laying on an excellent show, producing first class events and keeping people on both sides of the fence happy. He gave all the staff at the SAA a big thank you, commenting that he could start listing all but would undoubtedly miss someone out but he wished to commend Sue Bennitt whose patience, calmness, wisdom, and determination had really helped to keep the show on the road in so many ways. . Because of recent circumstances, the Chairman and Trustees have had to work at the coal face over the last three years. It was now time to step back and allow Phillip to lead his team while the Board sets the strategy.

The recently completed Council meeting has just been discussing the SAA’s Strategic Plan for 2017-22. It is not the moment to report on this now other than to say that it is underway and will enhance the EFP Strategic Review Document presented to the AGM in 2013.

The Chairman continued that the next 5 years were going to be “interesting” and would emphasize the importance for rural businesses to keep in the public eye. Farming will get less automatic support and therefore needs to reconnect with the public. The SAA is one of the conduits for this to happen. Aled Jones, the assistant chief executive of the Royal Welsh Show and a Nuffield Scholar has written in his wide ranging report on “The role of agricultural societies and shows in promoting, developing and innovating the agricultural industry” of the

importance of “edutainment”. Mixing education with fun- something that the Show directors at Suffolk are continually developing.

The Chairman commented that it was, of course, a shame he could not report a trading surplus but a tight year had made it imperative to look at the costs in Trinity Park Events and this has led to a change in structure which will be beneficial for the long term management of the SAA. I am expecting positive outcomes for next year’s AGM!

In my first report I mentioned the importance of Community and make no apology for returning to this theme. Suffolk, if it is to be tangible, needs to look out for itself. We have fine local Newspapers – in particular the EADT that promotes Suffolk, supports its charities and publicizes local concerns and success; Radio Suffolk does the same, The Councils lead by the County Council, The Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich; Of Course the Lord Lieutenant representing the Queen in Suffolk and the High Sheriff; The Judiciary; the Suffolk Preservation Society. The Suffolk Wildlife Trust; The range of Further and Higher education establishments; a vast collection of businesses from BT to one man bands. Where can all these meet together – THE SUFFOLK SHOW.

Presence in the County show brings a huge sense of pride to all members of a business involved in the show and I would ask all of you to both be involved if you are not and to get others to come.

The change of name from Suffolk Showground to Trinity Park was a bold move in 2008 but is now very much part of the Suffolk scene. As I drive into Trinity Park I usually listen to Radio Suffolk and more often than not Trinity Park will be mentioned for some charity event. It is remarkable how much money for Suffolk Charities has been raised on this site. I do not have a figure but believe that this should be one of our k.p.i’s in the future. At the same time the SAA is a charity and so money spent here is ploughed back into making the Association even better. So please encourage businesses, charities or private events to use our facilities.

I would just return to Education which is clearly a major part of our DNA. It is wonderful that Suffolk now has its own University and we look forward to working with the University. We have fine centres of Further education with whom we enjoy a close relationship. West Suffolk College provided helpful information from last year’s show from exit polls , Over the years Suffolk New College have provided great help in maintenance and with EastonOtley and Lowestoft , the colleges compete at the Suffolk Show in various classes. But EastonOtley is a landbased college and my personal view is that we need to encourage that college to provide the technical training that an apprentice going into agriculture needs. So I am glad that we have a special relationship with EastonOtley. It was great that under Nicola Currie’s guidance we presented an award for the best apprentice at the Show – a sign of things to come.

I have not run through the mass of successes which are reported in the Review But they all happen and having thanked the SAA’s paid employees , I must thank our army of volunteers – Tractors into Schools, School Farm and Country Fair, Student day, Potato competition, Schools competition and of course the Suffolk Show all depend on volunteers and some of these involve a huge amount of time. Thank you all.

Which leads me to the Trustees. As trustees of a charity we receive no remuneration but I am sure that I speak for all in saying how proud we are to be involved with such a special association that we feel makes a real contribution and difference to life in Suffolk. Loudon

Greenlees as Honorary Treasurer goes way beyond the call of duty and much that has been achieved in recent years has been due to his expertise. The Directors of TPEL, Nick Mills and Helena Packshaw have been asked to attend more meetings and are making important contributions. Eric Morton joined the Board after last year's AGM. David Wybar will be leaving the Board in the summer and we thank him for his knowledge of governance and the law.

More of Bill and Bee in a moment but my thanks to all the Trustee Board.

It was with some glee that I was able to wheel out Stephen Fletcher from retirement to take the Chairmanship of our nominations committee- the last laugh may yet be on me as I will be taking over from him! Stephen has been assiduous in the process to appoint my successor and I am delighted to announce that Council has approved David Nunn to take over as Chairman after the Show when he will be joined as Vice Chairman by Peter Over. Both very well known to you all and showing the undoubted commitment of the SAA to the Suffolk Show. David has a particular interest in education and has of course been a Show Director and for the last 4 years my Vice Chairman. I thank him for his support over the last 4 years and wish him every success as Chairman.

This concluded the Chairman's report. As there were no questions the President asked the Treasurer to report on the Annual Accounts. The Treasurer commented that Robert Rous' contribution to the SAA over the past four years had been exceptional.

## **5. To Elect the President for the 2017 Show**

The current President, John Wall, proposed that Lord Iveagh be elected as President. Mr Wall noted that at his first Show he attended in 1969, Lord Iveagh was President, and this was the current Lord Iveagh's great grandfather. He commented that the family had a very long association with the SAA.

Edward Iveagh was born in Ireland and attended University College London and the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester. He was married to Clare with two sons ages 14 and 11. In 1992 Edward became the custodian of Elveden Estate, at the time thought to be the largest lowland farm in the UK. The farm has been consolidated to focus on field scale vegetables, including potatoes and onions which also includes marketing and branding expertise. The innovation of supplying fully grown hedges was developed and this can be witnessed at the entrance to Trinity Park. Elveden has probably become the market leader in supplying town centre Christmas trees and has successful retailing and hospitality businesses. Since the closure of The Chadacre Institute, Edward has chaired the Chadacre Agricultural Trust, a perennial donor to the SAA

The proposal was seconded by Terry Hunt and agreed by those present unanimously. The Treasurer confirmed that the proxy votes received for this resolution were unanimously in favour.

Lord Iveagh replied he was very grateful and privileged to have been voted as President. His Great grandfather was 87 when he became President so Lord Iveagh had 'fast tracked' his forbearers to the position. He looked forward to his year ahead.

#### **6. To Elect Baroness Byford as President elect of the Suffolk Agricultural Association.**

Lord Iveagh proposed Baroness Byford as President Elect for 2017. He continued that the Byford family had farmed at Acton for five generations; David Simpkin was farm manager for many years, following his retirement Stephen Cobbald contracted the work for the family. He has been recently succeeded by Martin Bowers. Baroness Byford had attended Moulton Agricultural College completing a one year general farming course, specialising in poultry. She was contracted with Thornbers to produce parent stock which continued until her marriage to Barrie in 1962. Baroness Byford had been a working Peer in the House of Lords for the past 20 years, was Shadow Minister for MAFF, then DEFRA from 1998 – 2008. She was also a Past Master of the Worshipful Company of Farmers, past President of Leaf, and the current President of RASE.

John Wall seconded the proposal and the meeting agreed unanimously with the proposal. The Treasurer confirmed that the proxy votes received for the resolution were all in favour with two abstentions.

Baroness Byford thanked the meeting for voting her as President Elect. It was a huge privilege to have been asked. He valued the Association enormously and would do her best to support Lord Iveagh.

#### **7. Election and reelection of members of Council.**

The Chairman moved to the fourth Ordinary Resolution which was to re-elect various members of Council who have retired in accordance with Article 11.1 and have offered themselves for re-election. In accordance with Article 11.1, all the elected members of Council who had served a five year term shall retire and may offer themselves for re-election. He reported that sadly Anne Woodward and Alastair Kerr had decided not to offer themselves for re-election. Christopher Clarke was also not standing for re-election because he is a member of Council by virtue of being a Trustee.

Although the proxy forms have required this Ordinary Resolution to be voted on in four parts, there is such a strong majority of proxy votes in favour of the election of each individual, and to keep the process moving along, I would like to propose that, as in previous years, the meeting should vote on all the candidates as one resolution.

The candidates for re-election were: James Blyth, Sir Michael Bunbury, Nicola Currie and Geoffrey Mayhew. The meeting voted unanimously to elect the above. The Treasurer reported that the proxy votes received for this were all in favour with very few abstentions.

In addition, Edward Binder, Roderick Law, Alexander Scott-Barrett and Edward Wild have all been nominated as new elected members of Council. I would again like to propose that these Resolutions be voted on by the meeting as one Resolution. The meeting agreed the new members unanimously. The Treasurer confirmed that the Proxy votes were all in favour with only a few abstentions.

**8. To re-appoint Price Bailey as auditors of the Association to take office with immediate effect and to hold office until the conclusion of the next AGM.**

The Treasurer proposed that Price Bailey were re-appointed as auditors commenting they had been very helpful, I and helped to bring some improvements to the Association. James Black seconded the proposal commented that he believed they had done a good job and moved things forward. The meeting agreed unanimously. The treasurer reported that the proxy votes were unanimously in favour. The President declared the motion carried.

**9. To propose a vote of thanks to the 2016 Show Director.**

The Chairman, Robert Rous, commented that he could not have asked for a better team to lead the Show than Bill Baker and Bee Kemball, the Deputy Show Director. Bill had a tower of strength for the three years that he has been Show Director. He has put in a huge amount of thought, had great attention to detail and had led both volunteers and the show team at the SAA with great patience and understanding. At a time with really no executive leadership, Bill led the show team and the SAA really owes him a great debt of gratitude

He continued that the weather had not been kind to Bill but he has brought the “feel good Factor” back to the Suffolk Show and so many improvements that will become more obvious as time goes by including Wifi, E ticket sales, entrance changes, signage, satellite marking of the site- to mention a few. He commented that Bee Kemball, with her commercial experience and from stewarding in hospitality was a great deputy for Bill. He commented that Bill was a great trainer for Bee and he wished her every success as Bill’s successor.

Bill Baker thanked Robert Rous for his kind words. Bill continued that he was very humbled by the excellent team – both staff and volunteers who worked together to put on the Show. Whenever there was a crisis there was always someone to help. He was delighted to be handing over to Bee Kemball who was a great ambassador for the SAA and he wished her well. He commented that although the weather cannot be guaranteed, under Bee’s

leadership a first class show could.

## **10. To receive a report on arrangements for the 2017 Show**

Bee Kemball reported on arrangements for the 2017 Suffolk Show which included:

- Confirmation of the displays – the main ring display will be Atkinsons Horses. Unfortunately, there was not a military display this year.
- A new Horse and Country Ring had been erected.
- Vintage Tractors would be taking on a different format this year with a new display showing farming through the ages and would be located near the VP entrance.
- Tradestand sales were going well, with the Foodhall particularly popular.
- There would be layout changes to the Flower and Garden Show. The Lifestyle Pavilion is moving to a new location.
- There were changes to the Sports Village .
- James Blyth, the Deputy Director was taking a lead on all the maintenance projects.
- Sponsorship was looking very favourable.
- Catering had been reviewed and there would be changes to the Stockmans this year.
- Most of the contracts were now in place.
- There would be a ball this year held on 20 May. Information had been sent out with the AGM notification.

There being no questions the meeting moved onto the final item.

## **11. AOB**

Tory Lugsden thanked the SAA on behalf of the Young Farmers for all the support given over the past year. The organisation is continuing to grown. Plans were advanced for their presence at the Show and, which this year would include some more serious elements including some debates.

Roy Barker thanks Anne Woodward and Alistair Kerr for their input over the many years they had sat on Council.

Finally, the Chairman thanked the President John Wall whose term of office concluded at this meeting. From his years of involvement at the Show John knew exactly what he wanted to do as President and got on with it. It has been great to reinforce connections with Newmarket and the Suffolk/Essex farming families! He knew who needed a President's lunch invitation and money for his charity. We are fortunate in our Show Presidents at the SAA and John and Sue Wall continued the fine tradition of kindness, thoughtfulness, enthusiasm and - something that I have been reprimanded for by John-smartness!

John Wall thanked him for his kind words. He and Sue had greatly enjoyed their year. He particularly mentioned the School Farm and Country Fair, which had begun in John's first year as Show Director in 2001 when the Show was cancelled. He Thanked Bill Baker and Bee Kemball for putting on such a fantastic Show.

The meeting closed at 12.50 pm.