

# **WHITE PARK CATTLE SOCIETY LIMITED**

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## **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**held on Saturday 17 June 2023 at 11.00am at**

**Chartley Hall, Stafford, ST18 0LN**

**Present:** Lawrence Alderson (President), Henry Rusch (Chair), Jane Hampson (Secretary), Dorit Albertson, Polly Alderson, Jennifer Appleyard, Jessica Bryne-Daniel, Darrel Clegg, Amy Cope Cadman, Elliot Cope Cadman, Adrian Crocker, Michael Denning, James Gill, Tim Harris, Geli Harris, David Johnson, Virginia Johnson, Archie Johnson, Sally Haslam, John Lean, Olly Martin, Louis Martin Rovik, Gem Martin Rovik, Paul Milner, Jane Milner, Wilf Milner, James Perks, Imber Nowlin, Julie Rusch, Tim Rutter, Rose Rutter, Karen Sibson, Malcolm Sibson, Frank Sutton, Anna Sutton, Angela Unsworth, Peter Unsworth, Lisa Walker, Robert Walker, David Yiend.

### **1. Welcome by the President**

The President welcomed everyone to the meeting. He told the meeting that 2017 had been the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of White Park beef being knighted Sir Loin, 2019 was the centenary of the original White Park Breed Society, 2023 was the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the re-establishment of the breed society and 2024 was the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the current registration system.

David and Virginia Johnson were thanked for hosting the AGM and Open Day at their home, Chartley Hall.

### **2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from David Bradley, John Barker, Shirley Hill, Andrew Hill, Mark Leatham, Flora Stubbs, Ann Sanders, Trevor Sanders, Richard Strudwick, Helen Clark, Mark Clark, Keith Stuart.

### **3. Minutes of the AGM held on 17 June 2022**

Adoption of the minutes was proposed by Jessica Bryne Daniel and seconded by David Yiend. All members present at the meeting were in favour of the proposal.

### **4. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **5. Annual Report for 2022**

The annual report for 2022 was taken as read. Questions on the report would be taken as part of the open forum. The President said that there had been an improvement in the

quality of White Park cattle and although there had been a slight increase in in-breeding, this was not a cause for concern. Genetic investigations into the breeding programme had now shown that the influence of the dam was much greater than the influence of the sire. Further discussion with owners about the dam's traits therefore needed to take place.

The President referred to the work of Council and their commitment to the Society. He made particular reference to Alistair Black, who had resigned from the Chair in February 2023 after 18 years' service, and to John Lean as Vice Chair, James Gill as Treasurer and Jane Hampson as Secretary.

Adoption of the annual report was proposed by Henry Rusch and seconded by Tim Harris. All members present at the meeting were in favour of the proposal.

## **6. Financial Report for 2022**

The Treasurer reported that the Society's current account held £1600, the Savings Account held £485 and the bond held £24,200. The Society always tried to break even and in 2022 had made a very small loss of £85. However, additional expenditure on SNPs DNA testing alongside Microsatellite testing had been taking place since 2020 to establish a new breed profile. £2500 had been set aside for this project which had now concluded. The Secretary was thanked for her work on the book-keeping.

Adoption of the financial report was proposed by James Gill and seconded by Jessica Byrne Daniel. All members present at the meeting were in favour of the proposal.

## **7. Appointment of Accountants for 2023**

Argents were proposed as our accountants for 2023 by James Gill and the proposal was seconded by Frank Sutton. All members present at the meeting were in favour of the proposal.

## **8. Election of Directors to the Board**

Two members of Council are due to retire by rotation: Frank Sutton and David Bradley. Council member Anthony Milner passed away in July 2022. Alistair Black resigned from Council in April 2023. Frank Sutton and David Bradley had agreed to stand for re-election to the Board. Four new Council members were standing for election:

Paul Milner had been proposed by James Gill  
Dorit Albertson had been proposed by Jessica Byrne Daniel  
Richard Strudwick had been proposed by Henry Rusch  
David Yiend had been proposed by Henry Rusch

As there were more spaces on Council than proposals for election all four of the above members were automatically elected to Council.

The President welcomed the four new Council members and said that their arrival with fresh opinions was a good step forward for Council. He paid tribute to Tony and Pat Milner who had both passed away since the previous AGM. The Milners had been huge players in the development and growth of the White Park breed. Tony Milner was a former Chair of Council and had been very supportive of new ideas.

The President then paid tribute to Alistair Black who had resigned from Council in April 2023. He said that Alistair had done a superb job as Chair for 18 years. A presentation of two White Park plates was made to Alistair by David and Virginia Johnson.

Finally, Henry Rusch announced that as well as the new Council members there were also two new co-opted members. These were Anna Sutton and Olly Martin.

The President announced the conclusion of official business and closed the AGM 11.45 am, before opening discussion in the Open Forum

### **Open Forum**

David Johnson firstly made a presentation on the history of Chartley Estate and castle. The earliest record of the castle was in 1200 when it was a wooden structure owned by the Earl of Chester. Over the centuries Queen Elizabeth 1<sup>st</sup> had stayed at Chartley and Mary Queen of Scots had been imprisoned in the hall. The estate had been owned for many years by the Ferrers family, but the 10th Earl Ferrers sold the estate in 1904 and moved to Ditchingham Estate in Norfolk. All the cattle were moved by train but were unfortunately lost in a fire. The Johnson family bought the estate in 1937 and David Johnson bought the estate in the 1990s from the official receiver, after a career in the pottery industry. The White Park cattle herd was established from 2 heifers from the Chartley herd at Ditchingham.

Henry Rusch introduced himself as the new Chair of the White Park Cattle Society. Following a career as an accountant he had purchased a farm in the Peak District for a 50<sup>th</sup> birthday present. Since then, he had established a White Park herd and sent White Park embryos to New Zealand.

Council members and co-opted members were asked to give a short presentation on their background.

Paul Milner – is the son of Tony and Pat Milner. The family bought 20 White Park cattle in 1979 and now had a herd of 30 cattle with the prefix of Smoile.

David Yiend – is a relatively new farmer of 6 years' experience. Farms on Exmoor and had a Pasture for Life and Organic White Park herd which winter inside.

John Lean – Farms in Devon and used to be a dairy farmer. Loves the White Park breed as they do not need a great deal of input. Due to TB restrictions John runs a closed herd.

Anna Sutton – comes from Monmouthshire and is in charge of the administration of the Gracedieu herd. Has a particular interest in education and young people.

Frank Sutton – runs a John Deere dealership and owns the Gracedieu herd in South Wales. Hosted the 2019 AGM.

Olly Martin – is a 4<sup>th</sup> generation farmer from East Sussex. Is using regenerative farming techniques to protect the environment and has a Pasture for Life White Park herd. He is selling his White Park meat to London hotels and high-end local customers.

Jessica Bryne-Daniel – moved to West Yorkshire from Wales in the 1980s and is a hobby farmer with 10 White Park breeding cows. Looks to breed quality cattle using AI. Has a great many footpaths across her land.

Dorit Albertsen – is a Vet who manages the Harley herd on Salisbury Plain. This is a large herd of 60 White Park cattle being used for conservation grazing in a Higher Level Stewardship agreement. The cattle calve outside without assistance.

David Bradley (not present) – was manager of the Leeds City Council farm and was also heavily involved in the Rare Breeds Survival Trust and Gloucester Cattle Society.

Richard Strudwick (not present) – following roles at Sandringham Estate and Cotswold Farm Park was now the Farm Manager at Gatcombe Estate.

Henry Rusch said that the Council members were a diverse range of people with different reasons for joining Council. He urged members to chat to them during the open day.

David Johnson urged farmers not to feed cattle nuts on the floor as this was found to encourage badgers to the land.

The President gave an explanation to the change in our DNA testing regime. For 20 years the Society had been using Microsatellite DNA testing which gave 15 markers. This system allowed analysis by the President. However, laboratories had since moved to the SNPs system of DNA testing which gave 50,000 markers and relied on the laboratories to analyse the results. We therefore had to trust the results which were given to us. In order to establish a new breed profile on SNPs the Society had been double testing for DNA results for a 3-year period.

Members were reminded that a beef certificate was available which guaranteed that the beef animal was a pedigree White Park.

Members were reminded that a higher level of compensation was available if an animal which was a TB reactor was registered or birth notified with the Society.

The issue of some abattoirs refusing animals with wide horns had been raised at the 2022 AGM. The Secretary held a list of abattoirs which still accepted horned animals which could be sent out to any member. The list was continually being updated.

Henry Rusch urged members to complete and return their annual census which allowed us to maintain accurate data. Our database currently showed that over 2000 registered females and 108 bulls were still alive. These figures were not correct. Members were also encouraged to use the online registry system for making changes to their herd.

Frank Sutton was thanked for donating a cash prize for the photographic competition. The photographs were being displayed on a loop during the AGM.

Henry Rusch said that Lawrence Alderson would be retiring as President of the Society following the AGM but would be remaining on Council. His commitment to managing the DNA testing and contribution to the development of the White Park breed and was acknowledged.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 12.15pm.