



## **WHITE PARK CATTLE SOCIETY LTD REPORT ON AGM AND OPEN DAY 2023**

### **Message from the Secretary**

Hello everyone

It was so lovely to meet some of you during our AGM and Open Day on 17 June in Staffordshire. As well as seeing some familiar faces, several members were attending an Open Day for the first time.

The event was memorable for so many reasons, including showing our appreciation to two members who have dedicated so much of their time to the Society over a great many years. A full report on the day appears below.

Best wishes, Jane



## **Report on 2023 AGM and Open Day**

Chartley Estate near Stafford was the location for our 2023 Open Day, kindly hosted by David and Virginia Johnson. Over 40 members attended the event. The estate is home to the Castle herd of White Park cattle, which was established following the arrival of two heifers from the Chartley herd from Ditchingham Estate in Norfolk. The Ferres family, who live at Ditchingham, once owned Chartley Estate, hence the connection between the two locations.

The event commenced with the AGM, chaired for the final time by our President, Lawrence Alderson. Lawrence 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.

Following the approval of the 2022 AGM minutes, the Director's report and financial report for 2022 were adopted. Treasurer James Gill informed the meeting that we always tried to break even financially, but in 2022 we had made a small loss of £85. However, additional expenditure had been spent on DNA testing, as we were currently creating a new breed profile on the SNPs system which is now being used by laboratories. Argents was re-appointed as our accountants for 2023.

Following the appointment of Directors (details on our directors appear later in the newsletter) the President acknowledged the work of ex-Chair of Council, Alistair Black, who had stepped down from the role after 18 years' service. Alistair has also resigned from Council. A presentation to Alistair followed (details later in the newsletter).

An open forum followed the AGM when members were reminded about the beef certificate which is available, asked to complete and return their herd surveys and reminded that TB reactors which are registered or birth notified attract a higher level of compensation.

At the end of the Open Forum Chair of Council, Henry Rusch, announced that Lawrence Alderson would be stepping down from his role of President, but would remain on Council. Lawrence's commitment to managing the DNA testing programme and his contribution to the development of the White Park breed over more than 50 years was acknowledged by the meeting. Details of a presentation to Lawrence appear later in the newsletter.

### **2023 - the 40th anniversary of our breed society**

As mentioned during the AGM 2023 is the 40th anniversary of the re-establishment of the modern day White Park Cattle Society.

To mark this event Farmer's Guardian will shortly be visiting one of our heritage herds to interview Lawrence Alderson CBE.

Once this article appears in Farmers' Guardian we will be undertaking some further promotion of our own.



Presentation of plates to Alistair Black (right) during the 2023 AGM.

### **Thank you to Alistair Black**

In February 2023 Alistair Black resigned as Chair of the White Park Cattle Society following 18 years in the role, and in April Alistair took the decision to step down from Council.

As Chair of our Society, Alistair led our Council members on their discussions surrounding our strategic direction. He also sourced our AGM locations and made all the arrangements for the open day, along with the help of our Treasurer James Gill and the host members. Alistair is also a bull inspector and has travelled the breadth of the UK visiting White Park herds to visually inspect bulls and offer advice to members on the management of their herds. And his support and advice for the Secretary, Jane, has been instrumental for the running of the Society.

During the AGM President Lawrence Alderson made tribute to Alistair's contribution and arranged for two plates bearing an image of a White Park to be presented to him by David and Virginia Johnson. David also showed the meeting a print of White Park cattle which was display in Chartley Hall.

The Society has also bought Alistair a garden bench, for him to sit down and enjoy a wee dram with his wife Ella. However, knowing Alistair he will not be sitting on the bench for long periods of time! His energy knows no bounds.

Alistair will still be acting as one of the Society's bull inspectors, so members will still be able to meet him and benefit from his knowledge and advice.



Alistair Black (right) shakes hands with Lawrence Alderson

## **Thank you to Lawrence Alderson CBE**

In 2023 Lawrence Alderson announced that he would retire from the role of President of the White Park Cattle Society, a role he has held for 35

years. Lawrence will remain as a member of our Council.

Lawrence's contribution to the Society and the White Park breed is inestimable - he is a fount of knowledge on the genetics of the White Park and has been analysing DNA results for many years. Lawrence is an author of several books on the breed and is also the subject of a biography entitled "Anarchy or Establishment" - the story of the journey of a shy boy from a remote Pennine hill farm to a man who is now a renowned international consultant on conservation genetics with a CBE for services to rare breeds.

To show our gratitude to Lawrence, the Society purchased him a menu voucher for a Michelin starred restaurant in Henley in Arden which was presented by Alistair Black.

We look forward to seeing Lawrence and his partner Polly at future open days.

### **Information on our Council members**

At the 2023 two members of Council retired by rotation: Frank Sutton and David Bradley. Both Frank and David agreed to stand for re-election to the Board. Four new Council members were also proposed for election to Council:

Paul Milner proposed by James Gill

Dorit Albertsen proposed by Jessica Byrne Daniel

Richard Strudwick proposed by Henry Rusch

David Yiend 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.

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.

A brief background to all of your Council members appears below:

**Henry Rusch** (Chair of Council). Following a career as an accountant he purchased a farm in the Peak District for a 50<sup>th</sup> birthday present. Since then, he has established a White Park herd and sent White Park embryos to New Zealand.

**John Lean** (Vice Chair) – 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.

**James Gill** (Treasurer) - Was the owner of the Springland herd and has worked closely alongside Alistair Black for many years. Offers great support to the Secretary, Jane

**Lawrence Alderson** - former President of the Society. Is an expert on the White Park breed and its genetics. Former CEO of the Rare Breed Survival Trust. Owner of the Dynevor herd of White Park cattle.

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

**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.

**David Bradley** – is manager of the Leeds City Council farm and is also heavily involved in the Rare Breeds Survival Trust and Gloucester Cattle Society.

**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 has a Pasture for Life and Organic White Park herd

which winter inside.

**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.

**Richard Strudwick** – following roles at Sandringham Estate and Cotswold Farm Park is now the Farm Manager at Gatcombe Estate.

### **Co-opted members**

**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.



### **Tour of Chartley Estate**

After the AGM and Open Forum members enjoyed lunch before splitting into two groups to tour Chartley Estate. Both groups visited Chartley Castle and the White Park cattle on foot as well as having a tour of the estate by trailer.

Chartley Castle is motte and bailey castle which is also a grade 2 listed building. As it is situated on private land with no public access the castle is only open to privately organised tours. We were led on our tour by a local archaeologist who is an expert on the history of the



castle. We heard that the castle was originally built around 1100 and would have had two baileys. It was used as a residence until the late 1400s when Chartley Manor house was first built. After the tour of the castle, we visited the Castle herd of White Park cattle quietly grazing in the fields below and saw bull Cadzow Qeith keeping watch over his ladies.

The tour of the remainder of the 2,500 acre estate took place on a tractor and trailer with the tenant farmer. After the two tours we returned to the farm buildings for tea and cake.

The Open Day concluded with an evening meal at the White Hart Inn hotel in Uttoxeter with White Park beef supplied by Henry Rusch on the menu. Following the meal there was an auction of a toy tractor and trailer, donated by Frank Sutton. Julie Rusch soon snapped up the tractor for her grandson. Unfortunately, David Johnson was late for the meal as one of the estate's peacocks had decided to go on a visit to a local airfield, and David was understandably keen to get him back safely home again.

We would like to extend our grateful thanks to David and Virginia Johnson, and their grandson Archie, for hosting our 2023 AGM and Open Day. It was a wonderful event allowing long-standing and new members of the Society from around the UK to come together.