

MARCH 2024 NEWSLETTER

From the White Park Cattle Society



Message from the Secretary

Hello everyone

At last we have reached spring after a very wet winter. And spring has sprung with cold, frosty mornings, but at least those lead on to sunny days.

We are busy making arrangements for our AGM and Open Day, and hope that some new members will be able to join us this year. Full details will be published in the next couple of months. In the meantime, if you have been a member for 4 years or more you may like to consider being nominated to join our Council. We have just held our first Zoom meeting which was a great success, with ten people all being able to take part in discussions from the comfort of their own home. Hopefully this new format for meetings will encourage members from far flung locations to consider joining our Council - maybe even those living outside the UK?

Best wishes, Jane

Update on the AGM

Our 2024 AGM and Open Day will be held on:

Saturday 22 June

This year we are being hosted by M D Hamilton Farm Ltd which is located at Ditchley Park, in Enstone, Oxfordshire. As well as visiting the Ditchley herd of White Park cattle we are also being treated to a tour of the house. Ditchley Park has a rich history as an idyllic retreat for royalty and power since the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. The evening meal is being held at The Holt Hotel, Steeple Aston near Bicester. The hotel has offered our members the following discounted rates for bedrooms:

Friday 21 June

Singles @ £95

Standard twins or doubles @ £120

Superior twins or doubles @ £130

Deluxe doubles @ £150

Saturday 22 June

Singles @ £135.00

Standard twins or doubles @ £165

Superior twins or doubles @ £175

Deluxe doubles @ £200

Please book directly with the hotel and tell reception that you are a member of the White Park Cattle Society. You will need to provide credit card details to secure the room.

Alternatively, the area is also well served by budget hotels such as Travelodge - just search on Chipping Norton.

A booking form for attending the AGM and Open Day will be circulated in due course.

Nominations to Council

There are currently some spaces on our Council and nominations for new members need to be received by our office by 21 April 2024.

Council members must have been a full member of the Society for 4 years, and are nominated by another Council member.

There are up to 4 meetings per year, one being prior to the AGM, and the others take place in Warwickshire. We have just experimented holding our first Zoom meeting and due to the success of that meeting, we will continue to hold at least one meeting per year via Zoom.

Do you want to become involved in discussing issues such as breed improvement, publicity, finance and bull inspections? Our Chair Henry Rusch is happy to have a chat with anyone who is thinking of joining Council and could bring some fresh skills to our team.



Volume 16 of the White Park Cattle Society Herd Book

This year is a special anniversary for White Park registrations - 2024 is the 50th continuous year of registrations, which were re-established in 1974 following a hiatus of 28 years.

2024 will also see the production of Volume 16 of the WPCS Herd Book. This book is produced every 4 years and lists all female and male registrations since the previous edition, plus transfers of bulls and females, a list of prefixes and a list of members.

Previously, we have always posted out a copy of the herd book to every member. However, mindful that many members prefer electronic copies of documents and also keen to keep our costs low, this year we have decided to ask members whether they want to receive a hard copy of the book. Copies will be available at the AGM and can be collected there, and we will post out copies to members who are unable to attend the AGM. But a pdf copy will also be available for those members who prefer to read the information electronically.

If you would like a hard copy of Volume 16 of the herd book, please Jane know this by 28 April. Your reply will help us calculate how many copies of the herd book that we need to print.

Many thanks for your help.

Advertising in Volume 16 of the Herd Book

Each herd book offers the opportunity for members, or companies which would like to reach members of our Society, to place a full page or half page colour advert.

A full page (A5) colour advert is £100 and a half page advert is £60.

If you would like to advertise your herd to other members, please send Jane your text and/or a jpeg by 20 April 2024.

Do you know of a farm shop, restaurant or local livestock mart which might like to advertise in our herd book? Please pass on their details to Jane who will contact them.



White Park bull sculpture

In late 2023 we were contacted by sculptor Edward Waites, who is planning to produce a White Park bull to add to his collection of stunning animals. Edward asked if he could visit a White Park bull in the flesh, so that he could take some photographs. We therefore arranged for him to visit Tim Harris, host of our 2022 AGM and producer of 42 registered White Park bulls. Alistair Black, our former Chair and a long-time bull inspector, accompanied Edward on his visit to talk him through the finer points of a White Park.

Edward plans to produce the final sculpture as a limited edition which will be for sale. So, watch this space and we will let you know as soon as the finished sculpture is available. In the meantime, you can take a look at Edward's work on his website.



Hair samples for bull inspections - by Lawrence Alderson CBE

The procedure for the inspection and registration of a White Park bull includes not only an evaluation of the type and merit of the bull but also DNA verification of his parentage to prove he is a purebred animal.

Parentage verification requires DNA testing at 50,000 SNP markers of an animal, and of its sire and dam, to show the recorded pedigree of the bull is correct. This is an integral and essential part of the registration process. A hair sample is taken from a young bull at his inspection to be tested. A SNP test result is already available for the sire of some young bulls, but if such a result is not available the

It is likely that a SNP test result will not be available for the dam of the young bull and therefore she must provide a sample for testing.

A possible loophole in the system is that a young bull may be parentage verified but his dam may not be purebred. Therefore, it is necessary also to test his dam to show she is purebred.

To be eligible for registration, both the bull's parents must be pure-bred. A hair sample is therefore required from the dam either before or at the inspection. The best way of ensuring that a hair sample is available from the dam is to take this at an early stage, soon after the bull is born. The sample can be sent to Jane at our office for safe keeping. We also encourage members to send a sample from the bull at the same time.

Vet Attestation Rules

Unless you are part of an assurance scheme, farmers now need a signed declaration from their vet to comply with export requirements. Even when meat from animals is not intended for export to the EU, there is a high likelihood that some of the animal products or by-products derived from them may be included in exports to the EU. Therefore, it is recommended that all farm businesses ensure a veterinary visit has taken place at their farm.

Obtaining a signed veterinary attestation must be done at **least once over a 12-month period** and can be combined with any other routine veterinary visit, such as TB testing. The vet will generate a receipt of the visit and a VAN (Vet Attestation Number).

You don't have to send paper copies of the vet attestation form with each animal or batch of animals which go to market or to a slaughterhouse, you just need to include the VAN on movement records. However, you should retain the copy of the vet attestation form and make it available on request for random verification checks.

List of abattoirs which will take horned cattle

Since our article about the recent research into which abattoirs will take horned cattle, being undertaken by student Amy Quirk, three more of the abattoirs on her original list have closed down. One of these is Long Compton abattoir in south Warwickshire. Such is the depth of feeling in the area that a group of farmers has come together to raise enough funding to buy the abattoir site and re-open it under shared ownership.

Amy is continuing her research and has been invited to sit on various panels discussing the issue of small abattoirs. She is going to keep us updated on developments.