

Minutes of the Texel Sheep Society Annual General Meeting

at Crowne Plaza Hotel, Chester, CH1 2BD

Saturday 16th November 2024, 09.30AM



In attendance

John Yates – Chief Executive

Jeff Aiken[†] – Society Chair | Coniston [AXC]

Peter Mitchell[†] – Society Vice-Chair | Avon Vale [MQZ]

David McKerrow[†] | Tillycairn [DMK]

Robert Laird[†] | Cambwell [LTC]

Neil Harvey[†] | Blackadder [HNQ]

Nick Woodmass[†] | Harene [WHH]

Steve Martin[†] | Broomhall [BMO]

Dafydd Jones[†] | Kitrob [JOK]

Keith Thomas[†] | Tywi [TKT]

James Draper[†] | Claybury [DHL]

Ed Smith – Society staff | Minute taker

Ailish Ross – Society staff

Steve Richardson | Stonebridge [RSS]

Sam Beachell | Samsar [BHY]

Jennifer Aiken | Coniston [AXC]

Doug Nesbitt | Alwent [NTA]

Philip, Carol, Kiree & Tom Kermode | Orrisdale [KAO]

Keith Campbell | Overburns [KOB]

Keith Jamieson | Annan [JKA]

Graeme Knox | Haddo [KWJ]

Roy Campbell | Cowal [CKC]

Jimmy Warnock | Watchknowe [WJW]

Victor Chestnutt | Clougher [CVC]

[†]Society director

JA opened the meeting at 09.36

S & J McCollam | Carmavy [MSY]

Caroline Hastings | Courthill [HCC]

Joyce & Amy Laird | Cambwell [LTC]

Henry Gamble | Springwell [GRS]

Nigel Hamill | Ballynadrenta [HNB]

G Jones | Mabon [JGG]

J Hardwick | Abercrychan [HXA]

Gemma Brown | Brookhill [BGB]

Janice MacTaggart | Nethertown [MNN]

Brian MacTaggart | Douganhill [GCK]

Richard Wilson | Eden Valley [WEV]

N Durnford | Vashtie [DVV]

David McKerrow | Uppermill [DMN]

H Davies | Tyrcon [DLL]

J Davies | Aman [DYA]

Pete Longdin | Wellingley [LJW]

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Kenny Johnstone | Boghouse [JKE]

Graham Taylor | Parkholme [TGP]

Peter Barlow | Moorclose [BQY]

Photographer

AGENDA

AGENDA NO.	DETAILS	DELIVERY
AGM001/24	To receive apologies for absence Jenna Ballantyne Roadend [BYM] Harry & Irene Woodmass Harene [WHH] Alastair Gault Forkins [GAF] Angus Howie Millhouse [HNL]	JY
AGM002/24	RESOLUTION <i>Approval of the minutes and Matters Arising of the AGM which took place on 23rd November 2023 at Woodland Grange, Old Milverton Lane, Royal Leamington Spa CV32 6RN</i> Proposer: Keith Campbell Seconder: Neil Harvey	JY
AGM003/24	To receive the Chairman's report JA described the honour of being Society chairman in the 50 th year and how the success of the Society is due to the staff and breeders past and present. JA gave a summary of the 50 th anniversary celebrations including the club day, international workshop, and sales successes achieved this year. Would like to thank Society staff for their hard work over the last year, with all events delivered with a resounding success to date. He	JA



	thanked the board for their support during his term as Chairman, which he stated he had thoroughly enjoyed.	
AGM004/24	To receive the Chief Executive's report JY welcomed all and how it was terrific to have a large attendance. It has been a challenging year due to the extra events provided by the society and the small staff team. JY stated the Society is business focussed, if the Society is a healthy business, it can support the membership as a whole and promote the breed to the wider industry. Registry services now incorporate both genetic and genomic data. Breed promotion includes digital and hard-copy material, sales and shows have continued support with social receptions and reporting from the show ring, few can argue the success the society success over its 50 years. The YDP (youth development programme) has been running for ~10 years, the gold crown event is the 5 nations, held biannually, with the next event scheduled for the Irish Texel Society in Donegal next year. Thus, the Society supports a combination of activities. Many pressures are felt by the Society, as there are for any business. Echoes JA comments in the support of the small and hard-working team at the Society that boosts the member experience. Described how the team gets various reports and comms to members regularly, keeping both members and the wider industry abreast of all news about Texel. It is an outstanding achievement to have a 50th anniversary, the Society has issued close to 10,000 flock memberships, which probably means 40-50,000 people have helped to make the Society what it is today, when considering flock memberships include an entire family. Annual membership runs at ~2,000, 45,000 BNs and 18,000 female registrations. The Texel is the most popular terminal sire in the UK, used roughly three times more frequently than its nearest competitor. This was probably not expected by Bill Jackson and colleagues 50 years ago when the first imports were made. Texel-sired females make up 17-20% of national flock, this can sometimes conflict because the breed is traditionally viewed and promoted as a terminal sire. There is a slight decreasing trend in BNs over the years but were static this year after a decline last year, very much reflecting the contraction of the UK national flock and probably contributed to by the energy and cost of living crisis. Prime trade has been at record highs, also incentivising breeders to sell potential pedigree stock into the prime market at a young age, however this may benefit the breed by removal of bottom end animals, raising the quality of pedigree flock. There has also been a slight decline in female registrations. Overall, the breed has retained market share in a contracting industry, adding that we could easily witness 10M breeding ewes in the next decade nationally (down from 13M today), as government support mechanisms change. Male registrations are relatively static, as are transfers between members. Memberships remain consistent, texelplus fees were removed in 2021 that has resulted in an uptick in flocks engaged in texelplus and as the society invests in genomic services, and a move to a more inclusive approach to genetic improvement.	JY



	In terms of breed performance, the Texel has plateaued in influence whilst other breeds are declining. Maternally the breed has increased market share, based on AHDB data, and it will be interesting to see the next census in five years' time, as the stratified industry continues to evolve, influenced heavily by Texel genetics. JY added that promotions focus on adding value and a profit trait approach. However the Societies pedigree services biggest competitor is non-pedigree Texels, while the breed is popular, doesn't mean the Society will remain so. At NSA Builth, the average price of registered shearlings is increasing and significantly higher than non-registered animals. The total number of non-registered animals has contracted, with an increase in registered animals sold. Gross takings at the sale for registered males is increasing, the percentage sale value for registered Texels is ~30%. At the Kelso sale, not under the Society auspices, there are very similar metrics, the average price is increasing and is higher for registered than for non-registered males. Overall total sale value is approx. 25% for registered Texels and 15% non-registered Texels. There are also large numbers of stock sold privately, but these sales are used as a barometer of the industry and texel remains a major influence, with Society services as modern as they can come, with a fit for purpose database in iTexel, under pinned by data from a variety of sources providing the very best information to support Texel breeders and their decision making. Breed promotion is underpinned by the society's successful publication, now in its 14th year - Primestock magazine, that's sent to >45,000 individuals, piggy backing on national publications. Very effective initiative, which will be expanded in 2025. R&D work includes the GrassToGas project that completed last year, this project used PAC (portable accumulation chambers) to measure methane output from individual sheep. The extension to the project is 'Sustain Sheep', that involves several international partners. The Society also has a part in a GMH (Global Methane Hub) project that has similar aims to manage methane outputs. This topic will become more relevant as more pressures are put on the industry with respect to climate change. For now, the society is engaged, and whilst little impact on members or cost for the society, well positioned to utilise any findings, or adjust to government legislation. One of the proudest achievements is the launch of genomic evaluations, the first commercially relevant and large sheep breed in the UK to do so and this will bake in the tools needed to increase genetic trends and support breed improvement whilst making pedigree services more robust, not least through the provision of parentage verification, adding confidence to pedigrees issued by the society. Not possible without a great team at the office supporting all activities and services. Happy to take questions, none forthcoming. JA thanks JY for a thought provoking and thorough presentation.	
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AGM005/24	RESOLUTION <i>To receive, consider and adopt the income and expenditure account for the year ended 31st March 2024 and the balance sheet as at that date and; to receive, consider and adopt the reports of the Board of Directors and the Auditors for the year ended 31st March 2024</i> JY referred attendees to the financial statements for the period under review. Including the trustees report that sets out future vision and planning for the Society: ■ The Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with small companies Act 2006 and Charity SORP 2015 (FRS102), effective 2019. ■ The Objectives and activities of the society are detailed on page 24 (page 2 of the statements) ■ Achievements and performance, forming the “Trustees Report” are detailed from page 20 (page 2-7 of the statements) ■ Structure, governance, management and communications is stated on pages 28-29 (page 7-8) ■ Value for money measures and performance assessments are monitored and reported on a regular basis to enable the Board to oversee the operations, objectives of the organisation and ensure core services are maintained and developed. Income: ■ Reduced by £79,976 (10.3%) from £776,665 to £696,689 ■ Research grants reduced, as projects completed ■ Birth notification/registrations income reduced ■ Sales Auctions income reduced ■ Investments income increased along with Gift Aid income ■ Subscriptions (including joining fees) provided £122,048 an increase of £1,824 (1.5%), remaining stable at 2275 memberships ■ Gift Aid provided £14,000, an increase of £2,000 (16.67%) ■ Registration's income provided £407,660 a fall of £31,266 (7.12%) ■ Sales Auctions provided £117,358, a decline by £9,559 (7.53%) ■ Investments performance increased by £46,066 (2023 reduced by £10,651) Expenditure: ■ Decreased by £107,417 (13.23%) from £811,629 to £704,212 ■ Despite increased pressure on society due to supplier inflationary increases. ■ Excellent financial controls on costs helping to drive efficiency in operational delivery ■ Staff costs decreased by 13.42% (£37,017) ■ Sales, shows and publications costs decreased by 3.13% (£7,985) ■ Core services costs supporting flock book registrations decreased by 7.55% (£24,432) ■ Breed development costs decreased by 24.69% (£51,186), due to completion of some R&D projects	JY
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	■ Phase 5.0 of iTexel database incurred £56,926 planned for costs and were capitalised in the year. ■ Staffing and administrative restructure has reduced Full Time Equivalent (FTE) admin staff from 6 to 4 since 2019, with no increase in subcontracted support costs. This has lowered overheads, as result of reduced salary costs, from £311,372 to £238,775, providing a cost saving of 23.32% (£72,597/year), when comparing 2019 and 2024 performance, 2019 being the start of the iTexel database development and phased administrative restructure. Overall summary: ■ Operating performance made a net contribution of £38,543 (2023 net expenditure of £45,615), including investments performance ■ The Board considers these results acceptable, highlighting impact of: ■ Significant control and reduction in operating costs (£107,414), on a backdrop of reduced income, impacted by cost-of-living crisis on membership. ■ Continued investment in the iTexel.uk database to improve administration and member satisfaction for the long term. (£56,926 capitalised). ■ Modernisation of the society administration and registry services, providing increased efficiency, with focus on: ■ Improvements to society IT resources ■ Upskilling staff/team. ■ Investment returns positively, impacting on society financial performance contributing £46,066. ■ Financial & operational performance achieved what the Board considers acceptable. ■ Operational activity continues to include database, breed development costs. ■ Planned activity and investment to support a data rich registry and genomic service, with launch of genomic evaluations in 2024, a first for UK sheep breed, as part of a modernising of a pedigree and performance registry service. ■ Remain focused on implementing current strategies and improvements across: ■ Communications & promotions ■ Events to support sales, shows and youth programme ■ Breed development, including iTexel and mitigation costs incurred, because of management of lethal genes as part of genomic breed development programme Total Balance sheet value carried forward £1,179,875 (2023 £1,141,332) JA asked for any questions, none forthcoming.	
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	Proposer: Peter Mitchell Seconded: Jimmy Warnock	
AGM006/24	RESOLUTION <i>To confirm the appointment of Dafferns LLP as the Auditors for the Society and to authorise the Board of Directors to fix their remuneration</i> Proposer: Peter Mitchell Seconded: Dafydd Jones	JY
AGM007/24	Announcement of Board of Directors election results Area 3: South East of Scotland – Neil Harvey Blackadder [HNQ]; unopposed Area 5: North East of England – Position vacant Area 7: East of England – Steve Martin Broomhall [BMO]; unopposed JA described the results, area 5 is vacant, Sam Beachell has been a great servant to the Society and his members. Made a presentation to SB on behalf of the Board. Asked for any volunteers to consider the vacant position on the board from the region. None forthcoming.	JY
AGM008/24	Any other business that has been approved by the Chairman for discussion JA asked for any other business JY gave an update on the YDP committee, Rhian Watkins - Corras flock has been elected as the south of England representative Stuart Ferris - Bellefield flock is the Northern Ireland representative, replacing David Chestnutt – Clougher flock. Like to thank the outgoing reps for their efforts over the years on the committee. JY described the summer competition, sponsored by Bateman, over 500 entries. Winner was Rhys Williams, who has a pedigree Texel flock, the result will be promoted in the Spring Bulletin. No other comments, meeting closed at 10:19.	JY / JA