

**Campaign to Protect Rural England
Rutland Branch
Meeting of Charity Trustees
Held at 6.00pm on Friday 23rd February 2024
At the Falcon Hotel Uppingham**

MINUTES

Present: Sir Laurence Howard (President)(LH), Ron Simpson (Chair)(RS), Rachel Burkitt (Vice-Chair) (RB), Carolyn Cartwright (CC), Annabelle Meek (AM), Giles Clifton (GC), Geoff Clyde (Admin) (GAC).

1. Chair's Welcome and Introductions.

RS welcomed all Trustees, particularly our President on this occasion.

2. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Margaret Simpson (MS) who recently had a painful fall, all Trustees joined to send their best wishes for a speedy recovery.

3. Declarations of Interest.

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6th September were approved.

5. Matters Arising.

There were no matters arising that would not be covered by the tabled agenda items.

6. National and Regional Update.

RS reported that the new CEO had settled in and that changes were slowly being made. The charity was evolving into a more business-like regime and was in the process of adopting a new database. The new National Assembly (NA) was underway, although the County Group was still in existence

which may be problematical for the future; however, it was felt that the NA should be supported and encouraged Trustees to attend the meetings which were mostly online. He continued as a member of the Nominations Committee and recruitment was underway for several vacancies for National Trustees. It was hoped that candidates would relate more to regional branches and represent a more countryside influence, rather than the current city/academic bias that seems to exist. The recent hiatus surrounding the article in the Daily Telegraph, regarding the Countryside Alliance was discussed, but was not regarded as a problematic issue in Rutland. There had been changes at Regional level. The collapse of the Lincs Branch meant that E Mids no longer existed as a viable entity. The Lincs funds had gone to National, and the Regional Fund had been distributed to remaining branches, helping our financial surplus this year. Meetings would still take place but on an as-required basis.

7. Executive Reports.

a. Chair: RS noted that this meeting had been postponed from December and that a great deal had happened since the last meeting. There remained a great deal to do in the coming year and was grateful to Trustees and others for their continued support.

b. Finance: On behalf of the Treasurer, RS presented the financial statement for the previous year, together with a summary of financial transactions for this financial year. This would form the financial statement for adoption at the AGM later in the year. The statement was approved by the Trustees. The bank statement showed a current balance of £18362.98, an excess of income over expenditure for the period, which left the Branch in good shape. RS indicated that a new auditor would be required for the coming year as Ramsey Ross was now a RCC councillor.

c. Admin: GAC stated that the Christmas Quiz had been concluded successfully with 13 winners, from which a single winner was independently drawn from a hat. Funds from the quiz were helped by the winner donating his prize to the charity.

8. Draft Local Plan Response/ Meeting with PCs.

Since the submission of our response to the Draft Local Plan Consultation in early January, nothing formal had been received from RCC as they are in the process of considering all of the responses. RS acknowledged the support he had received from members of the Executive Committee which expanded into the Local Plan Action Group with Malcolm Touchin, Cliff Bacon and Chris Donovan. The meeting with PCs, on 14 Dec 23, attended by our MP, was important and allowed a frank exchange of views. RS stated that he had received several messages of praise concerning the CPRE response.

9. Overview of significant planning matters.

RS stated that we were supporting Empingham PC regarding the proposed quarry expansion at Ketton. Also, he had attended a PC meeting at Morcott to discuss the Pilton solar project and had received good feedback. He had also been approached by a group from Lincs regarding the building of an anaerobic digester in the Colsterworth area. A planning application was awaited and RS undertook to discuss with the PC once firm proposals were received. Concerns had also been raised over proposed commercial development at Lynden Top. This had been the subject of previous discussion and CC would try to attend the upcoming Planning committee.

10. Rutland Water Partnership.

The next meeting of the Rutland Water Partnership would take place on 14 March and would be hosted by Anglian Water at the Egleton Birdwatching Centre. This will be the second meeting supported by CPRE, although RS indicated that he would offer the chair to other partners, perhaps one of the participating PCs may take up the offer. At the last meeting several PCs expressed their concern at reverting to the previous regime of RCC control. An AGM would be held in the Summer.

11. Public Meeting 17 Jan 24.

The first public meeting concerning future energy security was held in the Victoria Hall (VH) in Oakham with about 30 interested persons in attendance. The meeting was dominated by a presentation from Rolls-Royce on miniature nuclear reactors and drew a lively discussion. It is proposed to hold a second meeting to cover the topics of solar and wind turbine power, possibly in late March depending on the availability of guest speakers.

12. Membership

AM reported that she had heard nothing from National in months and acknowledged that it was a difficult environment for membership that recent publicity had not helped.

13. New Charity

RS circulated details of the new charity in the form of a draft constitution, financial regulations, code of conduct, with policies for procurement and conflicts of interest. There was discussion over the proposed name of the new charity which is aimed to align with the new constituency boundary incorporating Stamford and parts of South Kesteven. It was also queried whether a second bank account would be needed. It was agreed to accept the proposals in principle with a final check with National and the Charity Commission. The bank position would remain as existing.

RS would be attending a meeting with the Mayor and Town Council of Stamford to discuss matters of mutual cooperation. It was hoped to advertise for a new Treasurer and the Trustees agreed that someone from the Stamford area would be a good idea. Moreover, LH suggested that a potential Vice-President could be sought from Stamford. LH added that the current Lord Lieutenant, Dr Sarah Furness had responded positively to an invitation to become Branch President.

14. 2024 AGM and Members Luncheon.

It was agreed that the AGM would be held in late June and combined with a luncheon for members after the AGM. GAC would investigate suitable venues and dates and report to the Executive accordingly.

15. Any Other Business.

It was asked whether any progress had been made with a royal patron. RS stated that this was a matter for the National office and it may take some time for a successful outcome.

16. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting was proposed for the Thursday 23rd May 2024.