

North Downs YFC

Minutes of General Meeting

Thursday, 13th December 2007, 8.30pm
Running Horse. Taken by Steve Paine

1. Apologies for absence

Carl, Louise

2. Matters arising from minutes

Nia asked if Clive has had chance to sort out how much grant money is left over for spending. Clive has now finished his uni work and is working his way through a large "to-do" pile.

Rag week stands for "Raise and Give". This will not now be happening this side of Christmas due to time constraints.

3. Correspondence

Jo McNamara thanked us for our letter (thanking her for re-printing our report at the AGM), and said she would love to come along to a future North Downs event so that we can thank her in person.

4. Club news and upcoming events

Publicity and Fundraising

Posters will be going up on school buses when schools go back in January. Steve needs to give Lottie club photos for this, so it gives the kids something to look at.

Events

A provisional date for Lazer has been drawn up - Thursday 20th December (probably in the late evening).

Date for county ball is 16th February. It will be at the Ramada hotel. Tickets are on sale now for £30. It will be a masquerade ball, with a prize for the best home-made mask, although masks will be optional. There is a "Kentish Produce" theme for tables, and North Downs have been asked to organise Whitstable (i.e. Oysters). Money must be paid ASAP. Although it is just YFC, there is less capacity than usual.

Sports and Competitions

No update

Kent Show

Darren (from Meopham) may be getting us some animals this year, maybe. Adam has three or four chicks too. We can't get sheep from the Anthonys' this year, because they violated Texel Society rules last year by letting their animals go to another show.

Website

Steve said that he hasn't had an opportunity to update the website for a while, because he is moving house and still doesn't have the internet. This means he also doesn't get e-mails, so people need to phone or txt him for the next week or so. Clive points out that Steve can update the website, he just can't upload it. Steve agrees, but tells Clive to stop being technical!

5. a. Congratulations letter to Philippa

Nia asks for a letter to Philippa, or a congratulations card on her new baby. Clubs votes for Steve to write this letter as part of his secretarial duties.

5 b. Secret Santa

A quick vote shows that everyone but Sam and Adam want to do the Secret Santa. Presents will be given out at next Thursday's meeting before/after Lazer. If people aren't coming to Lazer, pressies can be passed on. Prizes should be up to £5 each. The draw was made by Sam Stevens, who then let each person know who they had to buy for. Steve will take Louise's slip to her, and Rosie will give Carl his.

5. c. Kent Subcommittee meeting

KENT SHOW SUBCOMMITTEE

Our letter to the Kent Show Committee [see end of minutes] was slated by the Kent Show Committee. They may not have realised that we would be showing up. A member of the committee claimed to be "diplomatic", before launching into a tirade of anything but diplomacy! The letter we wrote was passed around, and it was agreed that it was well-written and unoffensive. Eve is the new Kent Show person.

Kent Show Committee's complaints about our letter include:

- It was not written within 7 days of the show, therefore not valid.
- "North Downs were not wearing appropriate footwear and should have known better" (on investigation, this was directed at one person, on one occasion, on the night before animals had arrived, when the person in question had locked his steel toe caps in a car and was off to get them).
- Small pets complaint - they claimed to have been in the commentary box and that we didn't go to them straight away. In fact they were in the caravan, and we went there

immediately. They could not have read the letter properly, because we did not complain about this...

- White coats - Eve and Haggis said that these were not, and have never been compulsory in the grand presentation. We were told by stewards and members of the committee at the show that they were. Eve was quite offensive by accusing us of trying to "pass the blame" for a member collapsing. Everyone agreed that the letter did no such thing. Haggis told us that white coats were the best things to wear in muggy weather, because "that is what Arabs wear." Steve disagreed with this, and pointed out that a nurse had said they were inappropriate because the material was too thick.

Steve asks the club what we should do about this - should we pursue it further, and face it being ignored or stirred up even more, or shall we leave it and just hope things improve. Kelly-Anne suggested we wait for the committee's official reply, and decide what to do then.

Nia said that two clubs will be starting on negative points. Someone wanted us to make a point that we were the last ones to leave the showground, but received no thanks.

Zoe asked everyone what animal they would ideally like to show this year, and began making a note of this.

Further show points - Nia said the 3 days will be different. This year Friday will be confirmation, Saturday will be fun day, and Sunday will be turnout. Every cow will be walked around this year as opposed to just the spacko ones.

Adam wants to get rid of the stuff stored round his house, but nothing is decided. Steve offers to look at his house for Sam's mum's special fork, which she is very upset to have lost. Sam asks for the club to buy her a new one if it doesn't show up. It's a little black one.

Zoe doesn't want to bother with rabbits this year. Steve says that after the upset last year, do we really want to anyway?

Lottie will drop leftover camping stuff around Steve's ASAP to sort out and store. Then people can reclaim stuff, or it will be donated or thrown away.

SOCIAL SUBCOMMITTEE

Kent YFC generally are also organising a County Fayre which will be a really big event. It will be a weekend on the 6th September with camping, a big party, a "mini show", lots of stalls, and the majority of the competitions which are usually scattered throughout the year.

5. Any other business?

Subs and ball tickets want paying up front. Clive said this could be done as of now, and there will be an e-mail going round later. Guest tickets will be on the online payment system too. Tables will be for 8 to 10 people, depending on the room available.

Sam Stevens asked whether the club would like a trip to the pantomime. Steve asked whether these would be sold out, but Lottie said they run into January.

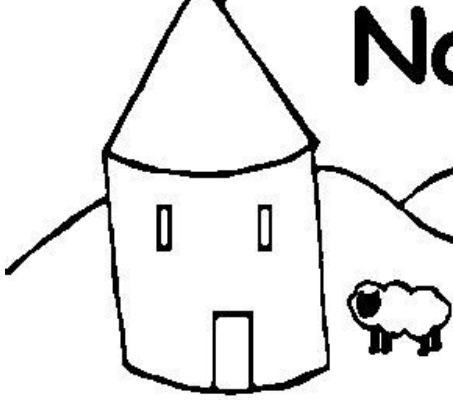
Steve handed out surveys he has put together on behalf of the Farming and Rural Issues Group (FRIG) and SEEDA. Members filled these in and returned them to him with constructive criticism.

Nia asked whether members would be interested in going to Essex YFC one Friday after the new year. This could be a club trip, and would allow us to see how other federations do their socials. Everyone was keen.

Gib asked whether anyone was going to Blackpool. Three people said they would like to go. Nia said if nobody did go, she would be going as Essex YFC anyway.

Meeting adjourned at 9.56pm.

North Downs YFC



3 Gatland Lane, Maidstone
Kent. ME16 8PG

Monday, 19 November 2007

Dear Eve,

Congratulations on your co-option to the post of Kent Show chairperson. This letter was originally intended for Steph, but a change of club secretary and a lack of quoracy at club meetings meant it took a little longer for us to write it than expected.

We discussed the Kent Show at our AGM in October, and it was decided that this letter should be written to provide some (we hope, useful) feedback from a relatively new club on the showing scene.

We all had a great time this year. Many new members, without farming backgrounds, came along and showed for the first time. They, and us more experienced showers, had an immense time. We particularly liked the new marquees, and the fun competitions, and want to express our thanks to a fantastic job done by everyone on the show committee.

At our AGM, members also voted to raise a couple of concerns that we hope you will consider addressing next year.

Whilst acknowledging that the incident in the rabbit marquee has now been dealt with by the committee, we felt it was still proper to write and make our concerns official.

The small pets' class was very big, and was undoubtedly difficult to steward because of this. A decision made by a steward to tell our member that "it was too late to be judged", rather than raising the problem with the judge, was unwise and caused a lot of upset for several of our members (not least Louise, our youngest member, who was showing for her very first time). The further decision, following her tears, to confiscate a rosette from another young girl and give it to Louise was equally naïve - Louise did not feel she had earned the award, and felt bad for

effectively taking someone else's prize. The other girl was equally devastated, if not more so, which further upset Louise, and in turn upset her brother, mother, and friends in the club. I'm sure everyone can sympathise with how both parties felt at the mess-up.

In future, we ask that stewards are trained how to act in such a situation. It may be wise, for example, to have extra rosettes for such an eventuality (then a NEW one could be given to the child left out, and not confiscated from someone else who had rightfully earned it). Certainly, confiscation should never be used again. Furthermore, it may be wise to look at using a register in the small pets' class - to ensure no one is missed off in future.

It was also voted to raise our concern about the compulsory wearing of white coats at the Grand Presentation. You may have noticed one of our members being taken away by St. John's ambulance shortly after the ceremony began. She suffered from heat stroke, induced by the horrible and muggy weather we suffered at this year's show. This was despite her eating and drinking plenty throughout the day. It was the clinical opinion of a nurse, the first person on the scene, that the white coats were highly unsuitable in such weather. We are grateful that the show committee acknowledged this after the ambulance arrived, but ask the committee to consider making coats optional in future (especially if the weather is hot, like this year).

Thank you again for all the hard work that you, Steph, and the rest of the show committee put in at the show. We appreciate how tiring and difficult the job can be at times, but are extremely grateful that you do it - the show is certainly the highlight of our club calendar.

Whilst this letter was written on behalf of our club, I would ask that you direct any replies or future show correspondence to our Show Co-ordinator, Nia Atkinson (address below).

Kind Regards,

North Downs YFC

Nia Atkinson, 35 St. Peters Road, Ditton, Nr Maidstone, Kent. ME20 6PJ