

## **FARMER NETWORK (CUMBRIA) MINUTES OF THE TENTH ANNUAL MEETING, NEWTON RIGG COLLEGE, PENRITH 7PM, 30<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2020**

**Present:** Susan Aglionby, Charlene Bell, Roger Brown, Dean Butler, Jim Campbell, Bob Clark, Adam Day, Alan Dickinson, Steven Dixon, Andy Dyer, Chris Edmunds, Adam Fawcett, Kate Gascoyne, Donna Gough, Rob Hitch, Kevin & Martin Holliday, Tom Iredale, Chris Ladds, Carol Moffat, Chris Pears, Randal Raine, Will Rawling, Mary Robinson, Peter & Vicky Slater, Veronica Waller, David Watson.

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Randal Raine welcomed all to the meeting. He thanked Adam, Donna, Veronica, Carol, Kate and the rest of the team for their hard work during the past year. He also thanked the council and board members for their support of the Network.

### **2. Apologies**

Linda Allan, Richard Chester, Richard Martin

### **3. Minutes of the ninth annual meeting of the Farmer Network (Cumbria) AGM 2019**

The minutes were agreed as a true record; proposed by Jim Campbell, seconded by Bob Clark. All Agreed

### **4. Presentation of the draft Annual Report and Accounts for The Farmer Network Ltd**

Adam reminded those present of The Farmer Network's company aims.

Donna Gough gave the financial report.

2018/19 left the Network with £10,770 of net income over expenditure.

Membership income increased by £7.1k and sponsorship increased by £3.4k.

Income from commissions and fuel levy reduced by £1,000 on the year.

Core wages costs increased by £13.8k. This was due to a number of reasons including the formation of a Senior Management Team, more admin support for Head office and a wage increase across the team.

Grassroots Newsletter showing as breakeven after allocation of some sponsorship funds.

Accountancy and professional advice costs increased by £1,100 due to needing advice on staff contracts and VAT.

Rent increased by £1,000 due to office move in January 2019.

Donna went on to talk around membership figures.

Membership numbers had again increased across the board. Numbers as at 31.08.19:

- 921 Cumbria members (+4.4%). Currently 940 at the time of the AGM
- 211 Yorkshire Dales members (+2.9%). 214 at the time of the AGM
- 61 corporate members (+24.5%). 69 at the time of the AGM

Although membership numbers had increased, recruiting new members still needs more effort. A higher number of members are lapsing than in previous years, not due to any

fault with The Network, more to reviewing business costs including membership subscriptions.

Corporate membership is growing, pretty much of its own accord with businesses approaching the Network to find out how to join.

85% of farmer members and 43% of corporates are now paying by Direct Debit.

### **Membership Benefits**

Donna informed the meeting that The Network had ordered 4,344,705 litres of fuel over the 2018/19 financial year. 50% of Yorkshire and 36% of Cumbria members use the fuel scheme.

AD explained other member benefits.

The Network continues to work with JELF on insurance, they have recently rebranded to Marsh Commercial. Other offers are being explored with Marsh, such as Health Insurance.

Electric enquiries over £5k continue to be signposted to LSI, which lower users being passed to SoEnergy, who have started working with the Network over the last few months.

Fuel cards, for buying white diesel at the pumps, are still offered. Donna is comparing offers for various companies to make sure members are being given the best deal.

Training courses are being run where a demand has been identified. Donna is now overseeing this. The Network is a LANTRA approved training provider, which may lead to further opportunities in future.

119 of the £200 training vouchers were issued in the past year. Funding is harder to come by and Veronica works hard to manage this. Vouchers are now being issued on the basis of 2 vouchers per member business within a 5-year rolling period.

The Network continues to offer a range of consultancy services:

- Grant applications – Veronica has been doing a lot of work on this.
- BPS – The Network do a handful of these each year.
- Countryside Stewardship Applications
- Cross Check – cross compliance visits to help with farm paperwork and record keeping. Carol Moffat carries out some of this work.
- Agricultural Appraisal work – Adam has done some work on this.

### **Future Plans**

- More resources needed to increase membership.
- Keen to look for new projects.
- Continue to explore opportunities, including new networks.  
North York Moors application to the Lottery was turned down but further discussions are taking place. Northumberland are keen to progress the concept of a network and Lancashire may also be a possibility.
- Develop working relationships with LEP, CCC, LDNPA, DEFRA and other NGO's.
- Continue to support members

Randal thanked Adam and Donna.

**5. To elect the Cumbria Management Council Members for 2020**

**The following people were appointed to the Management Council:**

<b>In post for 2020</b>	<b>Nominations for 2020</b>
<b>Allerdale</b> Richard Chester, Allonby Chris Pears, Caldbeck	
<b>Carlisle</b> Richard Martin, Orton Grange	David Watson, Longtown
<b>Copeland</b> Roger Brown, Muncaster	Will Rawling, Ennerdale
<b>Eden</b> Randal Raine, Renwick	Jim Campbell, Bampton
<b>South Lakeland</b>	Chris Ladds, Kendal Steven Dixon, Selside

Proposed by Bob Clark, seconded by Chris Ladds; all in favour

Meeting closed 7.40pm.