

FARMER NETWORK (YORKSHIRE DALES) MINUTES OF THE TENTH ANNUAL MEETING, THE CRAVEN HEIFER, SKIPTON 7PM, 21ST JANUARY 2020

Present: David Airey, Matt Barker, Norman Bradley, Frank Carr, Steven Crabtree, Adam Day, Claire Foster, Donna Gough, Richard & Christine Grange, Richard Harker, Derek Harker, Malcolm Lund, Carol Moffat, Ted Ogden, Chris & Caroline Prince, Randal Raine, Liz Stewart, Richard Stockdale, David Verity, Veronica Waller, Robert Weatherhead

1. Welcome and Introductions

Derek Harker welcomed all to the tenth annual meeting. Randal Raine reiterated the welcome and went on to thank Derek, the board members, council members, staff and coordinators for their work over the past year. He pointed out the Yorkshire Dales Farmer Network will have been operating for 10 years this year.

2. Apologies

John Dawson, Steven Dixon, James Hodgson, Adam Hunter, Allen Kirkbride, Jill & Steve Pennock

3. Minutes of the ninth annual meeting of the Farmer Network (Yorkshire Dales) AGM 2019

The minutes were agreed as a true record; proposed by Carol Moffat, seconded by Malcolm Lund.

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.

Adam thanked Donna and Veronica for stepping into their new roles. He said that more resource needs to be put into the Yorkshire Dales network

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. The Yorkshire fuel has been ordered through Head Office for almost a year and is working well. Carol and Claire still receive some orders, which they pass on.

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. 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

- Membership Growth is key – working on this in YD
- 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 the Yorkshire LEP and Grow Yorkshire.

5. Discuss item 5 on the Company AGM Agenda and make recommendations to take to the meeting.

The recommendation from the Yorkshire meeting was to Keep membership fees the same in 2020.

6. To elect the Yorkshire Dales Management Council Members for 2020

The following people were appointed to the Management Council:

In post for 2020	Nominations for 2020
LA6, LA2, BD24, Horton, Chapel-le-Dale, Settle, Burton in Lonsdale	Malcolm Lund, Ingleton Carol Moffat, Sedbergh
DL11, DL10, DL9, (Swaledale, east to border)	Matthew Barker, Ellerton Abbey
Adam Hunter, Gunnerside DL8, Wensleydale	
Allen Kirkbride, Askrigg James Hodgson, Askrigg	
BD23, Wharfedale down to Skipton	
Christine Grange, Beamsley Richard Stockdale, Burnsall	
HG3, HG4, LS21, LS29, Masham, Nidderdale, south to Otley/Ilkely	Derek Harker, Middlesmoor David Verity, Bouthwaite

Proposed by Chris Prince, seconded by Steven Crabtree; all in favour

7. Presentations from FN project team – Veronica Waller, Carol Moffat & Claire Foster

Veronica, Carol and Claire gave short presentations on the projects that Network is involved with. Veronica and Claire also spoke about Greenhouse Gas Mitigation and their findings/experiences so far.

Veronica thanked Claire and Carol for their hard work in the Yorkshire Dales.

Adam thanked the team for attending and presenting. Derek Harker added his thanks.

Meeting closed 9pm.