

Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting of the National Pigeon Association of Great Britain held on Sunday 24th April 2016 at the Premier Inn, Rugby

Meeting commenced at 10:00

Present:

M Rudd (MR) President, J Surridge (JS) Vice President, E Murray (EM) Chairman, Ms H Seed (HS), Messrs G R Bates (GRB), G Giddings (GG), R Greenwood (RG), R Henderson (RH), P Littlewood (PL), C Ronald (CR)

In Attendance: J S Harrison, Secretary.

Item 1

Chairman's Welcome:

Evan Murray as Chairman welcomed all members to the meeting.

Item 2

Apologies for Absence:

Apologies were received from Gary Eaton

Item 3

Minutes of Meeting held 14-02-2016

CR said that it was he, and not RH, who had asked the income received from Patrons. The minute was corrected. GG proposed that the minutes be accepted. Seconder - CR. Carried.

Item 4

Matters arising

HS asked if there had been any response from the LFCL Tumbler Club, the Secretary pointed to the two letters in the meeting bundle. RH commented that the LFCL Tumbler Club Show was at Pickering, and members had not been consulted or informed about classes at the proposed Tumbler Show at Hurworth Grange in January.

RG said that his offer to assist the Secretary with checking schedules still stood. The Secretary accepted the offer and said that schedules could be sent either by email or in the post.

HS asked if a list of judges had been put forward by the American Show Racer Society, the Secretary confirmed no list had been received. The Committee agreed that the list of Judges for the breed needs to be itemised on the Judges Register. The Secretary to write to the ASRS requesting a list of judges at the earliest opportunity.

The Secretary queried whether the ASR was to be regarded as a show breed or as a flying breed, RH said that it was definitely a Show Breed and should NOT be included in the Flying Section, the committee agreed. NPA certificates had been awarded to ASR at the 2015 Southern Counties Show Racer & Flying Breeds Club, CR said that this had been a mistake. After discussion it was agreed to let the certificates stand, but in future the show would not be able to offer certificates for the breed.

HS asked whether NCTTS had been written to regarding their show date, the Secretary confirmed that a letter had been sent but no response had been received.

CR apologised and said that he had not had time to write guidelines on the formation of breed clubs, but would do so before the next meeting.

Item 6

Committee decisions made between meetings:

ESFT Club Advert – the committee had agreed by email to an advert in a special yearbook commemorating the 130th anniversary of the formation of the club. CR as Hon Secretary of ESFTC, said that the Club would include an equal size advert for the NPA.

The Secretary asked for clarification of the Committee's earlier agreement to allow the sale of large quantities of rings to breeders in Vietnam and other countries. After discussion it was agreed that it was acceptable to sell rings to countries where there was not an organised Pigeon Fancy.

Item 7

Secretary/Treasurer's Report:

The Secretary presented a financial report showing income & expenditure for Jan – April, including details of all payments by cheque, cash, PO and PayPal. The Bank Balance at April 18th was £35,770.

The Secretary provided a Membership Summary showing total membership of 492 with an additional 27 FPW only members. The Committee agreed that this was worrying and would require considerable discussion to understand the fall in membership. The Secretary also presented a breakdown of Ring Sales for the years to date, a list of additions to the Judges Register, and a list of Champions. The Secretary said that he had not received Show Returns for Airdrie & Coatbridge and so could not authenticate some champion claims. Discussion with Charlie Muir revealed that the returns and cheques had been sent, though the cheques had not been presented for payment. Committee agreed that in the interim the Secretary would accept scanned copies of certificates for authenticating champion claims.

The Secretary said that, as agreed, HS had provided templates in Microsoft Publisher™ for printing Champion Certificates, unfortunately the quality of print was substandard and they could not be used. It was agreed to return to hand written certificates until an alternative could be found. HS agreed to source 50 black Owner Certificates and 200 red Breeder Certificates.

Item 7

7a/ The role & duties of the Secretary

The Chairman said that he had asked for this item to be included on the agenda, adding that he had always supported the secretaries of the NPA, and after telephone conversations with the current Secretary was aware that there was a problem, he asked the Secretary to explain. The Secretary said that if he had realised that the NPA would take up so much of his time he would never have applied for the post, he said he wanted "his life back". The secretary outlined the number of roles he was expected to fill with messages coming in from numerous sources and the need to check not only emails and the post, but also Facebook, eBay, the website and PayPal. The phone he said had become unmanageable with the number of calls increasing dramatically as a consequence of the fact that mobile calls have become virtually free to callers. He said that many of the calls were unnecessary and gave some examples. The voicemail had 20-30 messages left each day, many of them repeat calls and he said that several callers had become increasingly abusive when leaving multiple messages. The Secretary advised the Committee that he was considering resigning and would advise the Committee in September.

RG noted that formerly there was a Secretary, a Ring Secretary, and a Treasurer, and that these roles along with other duties were all rolled into one post. PL said it was essential to set 'office hours' when the Secretary was available to take phone calls and at other times the phone should be switched off. GRB commented that there were far too many lines of communication. MR said that the Committee were there to help the Secretary where possible and that he must delegate. HS commented that we were in an age where people expected instant communication but agreed with GRB that the NPA was not in a position to satisfy this expectation. PL proposed that the voicemail is switched off so that messages cannot be left, and that the phone is switched off other than during the previously agreed hours. Seconded by RH and carried. The Committee were agreed that they would support the Secretary in this action and would deal with any complaints that arise. The Secretary was asked to write a notice for publication, following agreement by the committee.

Following discussion MR proposed that it be publicised that all Committee Members are contactable by phone, and that their phone numbers be made available on the website. Seconded by GRB and carried unanimously. HS said that all the phone numbers except for JS & GE would be added to the website.

The Committee made its support for the Secretary clear and all offered to do whatever they could to help and make the role more manageable. John thanked them for their support.

GG offered to take any phone calls and deal with lost birds whilst the Secretary was on holiday.

CR added his support to the Secretary and welcomed the actions agreed but commented that whilst he and Leila had been Secretaries they had not been accorded such support from the Committee.

7b/ Item 10.3 Minutes of Meeting held February 2013

EM said that the minute was factually incorrect, HS said the minutes for this meeting had been removed from the website pending discussion at this meeting. RH noted that historically this had only applied to Show Racer judges. CR proposed, Secunder RH that the minute be amended by the removal of the words "and show secretaries".

The Secretary queried that there were no written rules for the appointment of judges. The Chairman said that the Committee has formerly agreed on various actions in the past but that these had never been formalised. The Secretary suggest that such arrangements be formalised into Standing Orders which would not need to be added to the Rules and could be amended as and when required by the Committee without resort to an EGM or AGM. GRB said the Working Party had already agreed that there was a need for a set of rules relating to judges and the Judges Register, they would try and formalise this before August 31st.

7c/ EE Report

GG advised that the new EE website was now live and was a great improvement on the old website. HS, MR & PL all asked why the EE-List of the breeds of fancy pigeons (ELFP) had not been updated since 01-10-2014? GG said that he would raise the matter. The Secretary commented that the NPA was not listed as a member of the EE.

MR questioned whether a vote to leave the EEC in the forthcoming referendum would have any impact on NPA membership of the EE? There was general agreement that membership of the EEC had no bearing on membership of the EE.

MR advised that he had received an email the previous week from Jean-Louis Frindell (Vice President, Pigeon Section & President of the Standards Commission), the email had been very supportive giving no indication of there being any problems. HS said that the letter from Hans Schipper (Secretary of the Standard Commission and the Pigeon Section) submitted by JS to the last committee meeting had obviously been a 'blip' and it was clear from other communications that there were no issues between the NPA and the EE Standards Commission.

GG said that he will be attending the EE Congress 4th / 8th May 2016. HS expressed surprise at this as she thought the NPA Committee had agreed previously that there was no need to send representation to all meetings, and attendance at the Vienna meeting was not previously minuted. GG advised that the next EE Show would be held in Denmark in 2018.

7d/ Use non-approved rings on show breeds

MR said that he had received a telephone call from a member regarding the use of rings issued by Flying Breed clubs for show breeds and questioning how a non-NPA ringed bird was able to win NPA certificates. It was agreed that show breed carrying a Flying Breed club ring should be disqualified, and that the issuing clubs be asked to advise their members that rings were only for use on flying breeds. PL said that there was a need to carry out random checks at shows to ensure that only NPA rings or EE member country rings are used on show breeds.

Following further discussion GRB proposed that all the affiliated Flying Breed clubs which issue rings should be written to and advised that as affiliated clubs they must adhere to NPA and EE rules and rings must not be issued before January 10th. Seconded by RH. Carried with no dissent. The Secretary was instructed to write to all relevant Flying Breed Clubs affiliated to the NPA.

RH said that if any Flying Breed club decided not to re-affiliate the NPA would potentially lose revenue, but he suggested that the members of that club would still show at championship shows. EM stressed that the NPA Committee did not want to put any section 'out on a limb'.

MR noted that it is once again evidence that some members consider the NPA Rules apply to the Committee rather than apply to all affiliate and associate members. PL suggested that there is a far wider issue and maybe is why membership is falling, he said that fanciers who use flying club rings or buy overseas rings, but do not join the NPA benefit from the NPA by entering shows, winning certificates and rosettes without putting anything back. RG asked if PL had any evidence of how many fanciers buy foreign rings but are not members of the NPA? GRB said he was more worried about the declining membership, but ring issues couldn't be ignored.

7e/ Working Party

PL chair of Working Party reported that though they had not had a meeting there had been a good exchange of ideas. They were looking at improving the image, judging workshops, judges register, show classification, and encouraging new fanciers. He added that they now needed to have a meeting and formalise some of their ideas. RG said that the offer of his home for a meeting was still open.

7f/ Membership

The Chairman opened up the discussion by suggesting that the Committee needs to look at the bigger picture behind the decline in membership and to look for any ways the Committee can halt the decline. He said that when FPW was introduced some people said it would kill the Fancy, but the many donations received in the first year of publication suggested differently. He said that there is still resentment at the combining of NPA membership and FPW subscription, and some members are still complaining at the loss of 10 free rings. PL said that NPA membership worked out at a mere £2.50 per month, and questioned why so many people considered this to be expensive.

RH said that he believed that the magazine should be included in the NPA Membership and sent to all members, if FPW was sold separately and there was a low uptake it would dramatically affect print costs. Members were in general agreement. GRB stated that a print run of 450 was required for the magazine to be viable.

RH said that historically every year there are large numbers of new members, but a larger number of existing members fall by the wayside, he said we need to keep them all and questioned why this happens. EM agreed that we need to attract more members and retain

existing members. PL wondered why some exhibitors show at NPA shows but aren't members? MR said that he would go to Stafford and take a table at his own cost to try and recruit members.

CR suggested that if the Secretary could produce a list of members who have left in the past 2 or 3 years, it would be possible to write to them and ascertain why they had left. RG suggest it would be better for someone to phone, rather than write. EM suggested that the Secretary send the details of 20 lapsed members to each of the committee to make phone contact with. All members of the Committee expressed their support. The Secretary to circulate the details.

EM commented that there was a large pool of Eastern European pigeon fanciers residing in the UK, yet they don't show or join the NPA – the question is how do we engage these fanciers? CR suggested that the NPA needed to widen its appeal to include all people who keep pigeons rather than just exhibitors. It was agreed that this be placed on the agenda of the next meeting for further discussion.

7g Fancy Pigeon World.

HS said she was concerned that “we say we're going to do stuff and then don't do it” and then at deadline date there was a frantic scurry to get items submitted to Claire. HS said that the Committee needs to encourage members to submit articles and said that the deadline dates were widely known (16 Jan, 16 April, 16 July, 16 Oct) and yet there was always a panic. HS said that the committee were all aware that the following items were required:

March Issue: Opening Committee Piece. List of NPA affiliated Agricultural shows. Minutes from the September Committee meeting. Award winners article. Life Members. Patrons.

June Issue: Opening Committee Piece. Request for Committee nominees and proposals. List of Championship Shows and contacts. Request for nominees for NPA awards. Minutes from the February Committee Meeting. Life Members. Patrons.

September Issue: Opening Committee Piece. Membership Form. Champion Birds. Minutes from the April Committee meeting. Ring Nomination promotion. Life Members. Patrons.

December Issue: Opening Committee Piece. Ballots and voting papers. (Loose Leaf) Notification of the AGM. Previous AGM minutes. Minutes from the July Committee meeting. Life Members. Patrons.

She added that it was the responsibility of all the committee to ensure that these items were all included. EM asked if she could give examples, HS said in the current issue there were articles on Hall of Fame, Life Member, Master Breeder award winners, minutes etc. MR asked the committee “are we all behind the success of FPW?” RG asked Helen what she wanted which led to discussion on who was to write articles on award winners. RG said he would write on John Elsdon Lifetime Award. RH said that he was going up to see Mrs Anne Ison and would take the Master Breeder award made to Dennis with him. He suggested that as the current issue of FPW would contain many obituary letters it would be better to leave an article on him to a future edition. PL said that he had already written the item on Alan Roscoe. GRB said he would contact Paul Allen and ask if he would write the item on Dennis Ison's Master Breeder award. CR said he

would write on John Walker. It was agreed that the Lifetime Awards resumes should be printed as one item and would need to be collated and submitted to Claire as one item. HS said that she would circulate the piece on Alan Roscoe to RG and GRB. It was agreed that all these items would be printed in the September issue, with the exception of that on Dennis Ison which would appear in the December issue. The Secretary said that he had sent the last approved minutes and the notice on transfers to Claire before the deadline date.

7h/ John Elsdon Booklet

There was discussion on the revision to John Elsdon's booklet. JS confirmed that he had revised and updated the booklet. Whilst John Elsdon was aware that the booklet was being updated he was not aware of the changes, GRB said that he would contact John Elsdon and provide him with a copy of the revision for his approval. The Committee agreed to defer this to the next meeting.

Shows

8a/ Championship Show dates

The Tumbler Show Jan 7th. The Secretary reported that he had not had a reply from the Muffed Tumbler Club, but that the LFCL Tumbler Club had written requesting NPA certificates for the Show. RH said that the LFCL Tumbler Club club-show was being held at Pickering and queried why the club membership had not been consulted. CR said that the ESFT Club club-show was also being staged at Pickering. RG said that as the show did not clash with any all-breed he could not see why NPA certificates could not be offered for ESFT and LFCL. MR proposed that NPA certificates be offered to Muffed Tumblers only, seconded by CR and carried without dissent. Secretary to advise the club.

Fantail Club Dec 17th The committee approved the show date and granted NPA certificates. RH said that the Fantail Club club-show was being held at Pickering, he added that many fanciers only exhibited at the Fantail Club Show, Regional Show at Stafford, and the Scottish Fantail Club Show. It was agreed that the Fantail Club had traditionally staged a regional show at Stafford and granted championship status on this basis. The Secretary was asked to discuss this with Neil Newman.

Coatbridge & Airdrie The Secretary confirmed that the proposed change of date to October 29th was for 2016 only. The Committee approved this change.

Show List The Committee approved all Championship Show Dates on the appended Show List with the exception of Bideford & SW Tippler & Tumbler Society and the Southern Counties Show Racer & Flying Breeds Society which had not confirmed their date; and Reading Fancy Pigeon Club which was provisionally asking for January 14 but could not confirm that date with the venue until August.

8b/ Blackpool Show of the Year.

There was a full and frank discussion on the response received from the RPRA SoY Show Secretary, Stewart Wardrop.

MR expressed the view that the show was the 'face of the fancy' but it had to be run correctly. EM asked whether, in light of discussion at the last Committee meeting, Blackpool was still had championship status? RH was of the opinion that the show, like all other shows, had to apply for a date and for NPA certificates; from the evidence they had applied for neither and would need to do so before the Committee could make a decision. The Secretary asked if anyone knew the date of the show, RH confirmed that it was January 21st/22nd 2017.

PL said that based on how the show was run in 2016, with the same management he could envisage there would be little change in 2017. EM said that he had been very much involved in the Blackpool show, and over a period of 10 years it had grown into a prestigious show, however the 2016 show with a very low entry was abysmal and had undone much of the good work of previous 10 shows. The Committee as of the view that there could be little confidence in there being any improvement with the same Show Organiser.

It was agreed that the Secretary, with the assistance of the President MR and Chairman EM, write to the SoY Committee. It was agreed that the finalised letter, due to the sensitive nature, be circulated to the Committee for approval before sending.

8c/ Show Representative Reports

The Secretary said that he had received no additional reports. JS asked whether the Reports had any real value if they simply reported that 'everything was rosy'. Following discussion, it was agreed that the reports were of value as they offered constructive criticism and many shows saw them as a means of improving aspects of their show. HS said that the reports 'help keep up standards and create the right image'.

Item 11

Correspondence

Northern Ireland Variety Pigeon Club. The Secretary gave details of the club. GRB proposed, seconded by GG that the club be granted affiliation. Carried unanimously. There was a wish from the committee that eventually this could lead to a championship show in Northern Ireland.

Email from Aberdeen & District Show Pigeon Society. Proposed by MR, seconder CR that the Society be granted affiliation. Carried unanimously. It was agreed that the Society needed more experience before championship status could be granted. The Committee wished to express their support and looked forward in the future to it becoming a championship show. The Secretary was asked to refer the Society to the Guidance Notes on the website.

Letter from Kevin Reynolds. The Secretary was asked to reply to the letter pointing out that the decision was the result of a democratic ballot of members, it was not a Committee decision.

Item 12

Dates & venue for committee meetings to February 2017

The Committee made no change to the previously agreed dates:

June 12th - Premier Inn, Rugby

Sept 18th - Premier Inn, Rugby

Feb 12th - Venue in M62 corridor,

HS said that she had received a quote of £128 for Premier Inn at Junction 32, M62 (Ferrybridge); Stoke on Trent £88 + VAT, and St Helens £38 +VAT. PL suggested that Table Table had a meeting room at Junction 26.

Any Other Business

EM said that he had been asked why John Elsdon was not a Life Member. GRB asked what was the procedure for nominating Life Members because it was not covered in the rules. PL suggested that nominations should be made before August and be in line with the other awards, this was agreed.

MR said that the National Homer Show had a bounced cheque for £25 from an exhibitor, he said he would send the name to the Secretary to see if he was a current NPA member. If he was a paid member of the NPA then the Secretary would formally write to him.

CR as Hon Secretary of the ESFT Club thanked the Committee for placing an advert in the Commemorative yearbook.

HS had received an enquiry regarding the presentation of the Master Breeder award to John Walker. HS said that although the Committee decided on the awards at the September meeting they were presented, where possible, at the AGM or thereafter. It was agreed that in accordance with past practice this would be presented at a show, CR suggested that this be done at Peterborough.

HS suggested that some way be found to 'give something back' to the members and encourage new fanciers and suggested that a £100 donation divided between two or three show selected by 'pulling out of a hat'. PL suggested that a £100 grant be made to a show as in the past. EM thought this would simply be offsetting the costs of the show. RG suggested a voucher for FPW subscription be offered. It was agreed that the item be referred to the next meeting.

RG said that members experiencing illness in their loft must be encouraged to seek veterinary guidance. JS supported this.

RH asked if the NPA would sponsor the prize cards for the BPSS/NPA National Show at Pickering. The committee agreed to do so. RH outlined future plans for the BPSS show.

There being no other business the meeting closed 15:50