

Welsh Hawking Club
18th October 2018 AGM Minutes
Meeting Start: - 22:03pm
Meeting Finish: - 23:49pm
Meeting Duration 1hr 45 Min

Nick Havemann-Mart started the meeting by thanking everyone for attending

Appologies received from:-

Dave & Jean Diamond, Nick cook, David Ridpath, Mick Cordell, Roger James, Griff, Ian Blanter no other apologies were received.

James Mason read out the previous years AGM Minutes, these were then accepted as a true and accurate record. Proposed by Mike West, seconded by Ceri Davies

James Mason then enquired about the signing on sheet, to ensure it was traversing the room and that all members present had signed it.

Matters arising from Report

There were no matters arising from the previous AGM minutes.

Presidents Report

Nick Havemann-Mart started by thanking the present committee, Anthony Roberts, Dave Sharman, James Mason & Wayne Fogg for their efforts ensuring that the club ran for the last year, and looks forward to welcoming them back onto their positions for another year including Roger James who will be very happy to serve again for another year. He also expressed his thanks all of the keepers who supplied land for us and ensured we had fantastic sport with some very good hawks and phenomenal weather.

Things that have come in during the last year is the Animal Activities Licensing, this is potentially relevant to all in England but Wales is yet to enact their version of the license, Roger has been in touch with various members of the assembly who are willing to talk to falconers and other interested parties.

In terms of the hawk board, they were not discussed at all until it was announced, only people consulted were the RSPCA and members from the Zoo federation who know nothing about what we do as falconers & commercial breeders. The hawk board went through a consultation period, which was called proposals to do with breeding cats/dogs and riding establishments. Nothing was discussed about any other pets, sale of pets, birds of prey etc. First thing we new about it was December when it was announced, that it would include all pet sales including birds and reptiles. At that stage the legislation was a complete pigs ear involved aviaries cleaned twice daily with the inmates removed. Suitable for breeding of dogs but not for falcons or other birds of prey.

The Hawk Board and Raptor Awards has fortunately had an input and alter some of these rules, they are still not good, but for the average falconer they do not impact on you at all if you just them for flying or if you are a hobbyist breeder then you do not need to register.

There are various interpretations as to what this law can mean, if more than £1000 turnover is raised from breeding & selling then you need an Animal Activities Licence same is required if you make a profit of £1000 or more .

We have a letter from Lord Gardner who is a minister apparently in charge of this that states it's its profit and these are HMRC rules. This is legislation designed to catch puppy farmers and is linked to the HMRC, but it's a catch them all net.

It will be policed by the local authority licensing officer, but if you are non commercial then it does not apply to you at all. A question was then raised from the floor asking if this is an NGO that you can refuse entry to, if you don't have a license then you can refuse entry, but once you are licensed then you can be inspected at any time as they have a right to access. It came into force on the 1st October 2018.

Following on from this several different comments and viewpoints were raised and fully discussed at length, with many comments being raised mainly from the floor some of the more relevant points are detailed below.

You should have a checklist, that you have inspected the birds twice a day, that all birds have 24hr access to water, cleaned as required etc.

Temporary accommodation (Weathering's) should be 1.5x wingspan (height, width & depth)

Falcon/Hawk Night boxes these are illegal as this is part of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, this is being re-enforced under this new legislation, but its not illegal to use them as transport boxes. For instance on this three day field meet it is illegal to place the hawk in its transport box over night, as its being placed inside an enclosed space, if the door was removed then it would be perfectly acceptable to use as a night box. It's not illegal to use a cage if there is no door on it.

This has all come about from breeders not fully declaring their incomes to HMRC. It was asked how HMRC will know and they stated that local inspectors will monitor all adverts. One comment raised from the floor by Mick Kane was - So unless you have a licence they will not grant or issue you an A10, this was replied with the following response - Article 10's could be a thing of the past as it's a European regulation that might no longer apply but you will still be issued an A10 or the UK equivalent. But in the advert, you need to declare your A10 number which is now a legal requirement and display your AAL License number.

Chairmans Report

We see a reasonably good year for the club, and membership numbers have stabilised. Which bodes well for the future.

Although I am unable to attend the A.G.M. and the Field Meet, (some of us have to work !!). In retrospect, I would like to thank the members who have asked me to stand again as chairman.

Again Anthony Roberts deserves thanks from all of us for arranging another great Field Meet. I understand that the majority of birds present are again Gosses, which was the norm when the Club was started all those years ago.

The editors of the Austringer Dave & Mick, decided on the production of a Special Edition of the magazine this year. Many old and new members have done us proud in submitting some great articles for our Flagship Magazine, and these have been handled with the professional skill that we have expected from these two gentlemen!

The main Region have still suffered from a lack of monthly speakers, but we already have a few lined up for 2019. Fortunately our open evening at the Olway Inn in the autumn was a great success. The room was filled to capacity and thanks to the members the public were made very welcome and Falconry was presented to them in a really informed way with lots of questions being answered. This year, thanks to the weather we were able to present some displays of flying in an adjacent field which seemed to be enjoyed by an even larger crowd than last year.

It is now hoped that this will be an event, which we can offer twice a year. Mick Cordell is to be congratulated on his sterling work behind the scenes, which made this possible.

It would seem that our finances have settled down somewhat and the Field Meet has not for once, cost the club any great expense.

The south wales region still needs a secretary and treasurer, and it is known that we have many suitable candidates for these jobs, so now is the time to help out this superb club by offering your time and commitment, if only for one year.

I hope that members will still consider my re-election for this coming year, as I will now have a little more time to devote to the club in 2019.

Good hawking and good health to you, your hawks and your dogs.

Roger James.

Secretaries Report

I don't really have much to report, been a fairly quiet year, we have had only one committee meeting this year held on the 10th March, the one in September was cancelled due to School Holidays and Jemima being unable to accommodate us during this busy period. Therefore I've had very little to do over the past twelve month.

I do have a letter from David Ridpath that I need to read out.

Hi Jim,

I thought that I should send a formal resignation letter so that you can add it as an agenda item at the imminent WHC AGM.

Thanks for your help since becoming club secretary: I shall miss the meetings at ICBP.

Kind regards,

David R

I will now officially read out his resignation letter.

Dear Jim,

Welsh Hawking Club Committee Elections 2018

I am writing to formally tender my resignation as Joint Austringer Editor with effect from the imminent Club AGM.

I have enjoyed my five years as editor with Mick Cordell and believe that we have been able to improve the magazine significantly over that time. We are both especially pleased with the 2018 special 50th edition. However, after five years in the post, it is time to give a younger member(s) the chance to pick up the baton.

I shall be happy to show to the newly elected editor how the last five years' issues were formatted and to hand over last year's script as a model if required.

I shall not be available for election to any other post.

Kind regards,

Dr David Ridpath

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Anthony Roberts for his sterling work behind the scenes in setting up this Field Meet and the rest of the committee for supporting me over the last twelve months.

Treasurer Report

We have loads of money so don't worry about that...

Money in Bank last year we had £6,700 this year we have £5,100, the reason for this is that last year we had most of the field meet money in before the AGM and before the end of September, most of the Income this year has come in after the 30th September so most of this will show on next year's accounts.

Field meets cost us £5,400 this is what we pay the keepers, it was intended to be subsidised by £450, that meant that for the club to afford the £450 subsidies the field meet had to be £150. There was some confusion with members only paying £120. For this year's accounts we are down £1,600. If we decide to keep the field meet at £120 then those that have paid £150 will get £30 each paid back to them. And we will be down to £450 Subside (one member not turned up so we have £150 extra) but if we stick as £120 then we will need to find another £1,480 we have the money in the bank but every year its eroding when I took this post I would regularly see £10,000 in the bank account, what I have seen in all my time doing this we are going down £1,500 every year, but this year will be over £3,000.

This was then put to the vote to see all those that feel the field meet should be £150, the vote was unanimous. The field meet was set at £150 per person.

Issue we have is falling membership (58 members) and increased field meet costs, when we had a higher membership not all those attended the field meet so therefore their subs helped subsidise the field meet.

Membership has fallen from 97 last year to 58 members, we have 34 members in the room.

Jim Mason requested that members ensure that we have their updated addresses to ensure they are receiving their membership cards & Austringer. Nick Havemann-Mart said this issue will be addressed at the next committee meeting.

Election of Club Officers

President – Nick Havemann-Mart (Proposed John Pattison, Seconded Ade Watson)

Vice President – Jemima parry Jones, Ian Blanton, Terry Large, Mike Clowes, Dave & Jean Diamond –
No objections raised from the floor

Chairman – Roger James (Proposes Nick Havemann-Mart, Seconded Chris Freeson)

Vice Chairman – Bryan Patterson – this is no longer the case and Ceri Davies was voted on (Proposed Steven Worn, Seconded John Pattison)

Honary Secretary and Press & Publicity Officer – James Mason (Proposed Micheal Kane, Seconded Wayne Fogg)

Honary Treasurer/Membership Secretary – David Sharman (Proposed Anthony Roberts, Seconded Adrian Whitehouse)

Austringer Editors: Position no longer required.

Field Meet Officer - Anthony Roberts (Proposed James Mason, Seconded Chris Freeson)

Breeding officer Colin Asquith this position is no longer required and was decided at the meeting to scrap this position (Proposed Malcolm Allison, Seconded Paul Warbles)

Legal officer – Tom Jones (that’s not unusual) (Proposed Ceri Davies, Seconded Chris Freeson)

Education Officer Griff (Proposed Ceri Davies, Seconded Paul Warbles)

Web Master – Roger James - this is no longer the case Wayne Fogg was voted on (Proposed Paul Warbles, Seconded Steve Forester)

Face Book Administrator – Howard Thomson & Gareth Owen – Position been removed as decision made later in meeting to close the public Facebook page down.

Face Book Administrator (Members Only Page) Ceri Davies & David Sharman – (Proposed James Mason, Seconded Chris Freeson)

Honary Members

Dr Nick Fox, Lyn Havemann-mart, Janice Toft, Jean & Dave Diamond, Dianne Durman Walters, Harry Robinson, Roger James – No objections were raised from the floor. No suggestions were raised for additions to the list.

Any Other Business

Public Facebook Page

We have two face book pages, the public facing page with 371 members and the members only page of 40 members, lot of discussion behind the scenes as to should we keep it. Ceri Davies stated that the whole idea of the public Facebook page was to solely promote the Welsh Hawking Club. One member on the floor said “Lets just leave it for people to enjoy it”.

The public Facebook page has not generated any new members but has generated lots of arguments, comments from the floor were rather mixed with some members seeing no harm in keeping it and asked is there any point in getting rid of it.

Anthony Roberts stated we had a member of the public page asking too many questions, about where we are you flying etc., turned up to meets, turned up poorly dressed (tracksuit bottom), taking lots of photo’s and refused to leave when requested to do so. Never heard from him again for twelve months, turned up to no regional meetings then suddenly at the start of this AGM they got into contact again.

Ceri Davies said then lets just keep the field meets off the public facebook page. Anthony Roberts stated that no other club has a public only facebook page. A comment raised from the floor was that keeping the facebook could be dangerous to the club.

James Mason commented that anyone in this room could innocently post pictures & video’s of today’s field meet to the public facebook page, that could inadvertently cause unwanted attention at the following days field meet.

Nick Havemann-Mart said that the page could be left only for public viewing with an advert on it for the New Website. The main issue that we have got, is that anyone could leave a comment on the page and that could be taken as the view of the Welsh Hawking Club even though they are not a member of the club. It could be left as a view only page, linked to the website.

A comment from the floor asked if all posts were checked before being approved, James Mason clarified the situation stating that yes all posts do need admin approval, however unless the admin approving the post then clicks "Like" he would not be notified of any comments being posted so therefore unable to fully keep track of the initial post, should the post then get out of hand the Welsh Hawking Club admin team may not be aware until notified of the situation.

Nick Havemann-Mart suggested that we stop the public Facebook page, members can still post & upload all their images to the members only page, that way we can keep it restricted to WHC Members only, with all 58 members having access to it, this allows all details of the field meets and venues and the dates etc. to be posted knowing that only the actual members of the Welsh Hawking Club have access to it. We don't want Anti's posting lots of controversial information on our page in the name of the Welsh Hawking Club.

A comment from the floor asked if there have ever been any Anti comments posted on the page, James Mason replied by saying that with 371 members on the page it's hard to police, we cannot follow every single thread, but believes that we have been lucky so far.

Comments raised from the floor then asked that if we no longer have a public facing Facebook page, how do we plan on attracting new members to the Welsh Hawking Club. James Mason replied by saying that with the Public Facebook being in operation for 2 years and it has generated no new members what's the point. This then generated several separate discussions amongst members on the floor. It was unanimously agreed to keep the club safe.

Nick Havemann-Mart agreed that we keep the page as a public presence with an advert on their linking to the new website, James Mason then added that the page should also direct potential new members to either James Mason or David Sharman.

James Mason then asked the members "Can we have a vote to delete the current Public Facebook Page and replace it with a fresh Advert for the Welsh Hawking Club" The members voted unanimously – Proposed by Adrian Whitehouse, seconded by Steven Worn.

Website

Wayne Fogg was voted in last year to take over the out dated Welsh Hawking Website, however due to unforeseen circumstances was unable to progress with the new website. After the AGM last year Roger James decided to continue as Webmaster, therefore preventing Wayne from progressing with his new website.

Wayne Fogg then listed everything that was possible with the new website, Wayne stated that he currently has all the hosting details for the current website. Members pushed him for a date that the new website will be up and running, Wayne replied that it should only take a couple of months and will be fully up and running by January 2019.

Membership Fees

James Mason raised the issue over late paying of membership fees and requested if everyone is happy paying before the end of May, this then raised a number of private discussions amongst the members. Members commented that if they received membership reminders then they will pay, others commented that they used to pay January others said they always paid at the falconers fair in May.

But certain members prefer at the start of the AGM James Mason commented that this causes us various issues as we do not know exact numbers of members attending AGM. Suggestions were raised about moving payment date to October, but this raises issues as Gamekeepers require paying earlier on in the year. Nick Havemann-Mart stated that Direct Debits cost the club a lot of Money, Wayne Fogg said that there were no charges for standing order, but David Sharman said that Bank Transfers was the better method.

It was agreed to set the Payment of the Club Membership as the 1st May each year.

Austringer.

John Pattison raised the question should we keep the Austringer going or should we finish at the 50th Edition. Nick Havemann-Mart said that in order to represent older members of the club, that during the various discussions over the website that it was pretty much decided that members can submit articles on the website or Facebook. We have members that will be deeply hurt that after 50 years we will no longer publish an Austringer are we sure that as a club this is what we wish to do. Historically we have members who have collected every single copy of the Austringer. Throwing away a part of our heritage will save the club £1100.08 per year which is a lot for a small club like ours. We need to be really sure that we are making the right decision.

Comment raised from the floor, was that we have already voted on this, if they wanted their say then they should have been here tonight. The reply to this was we have not yet really voted on the Austringer. Nick Havemann-Mart is here to duly represent the older members of the club who are unable to be here tonight. Other comments from the floor was that we have the majority of members here in the room tonight.

We normally have a minimum of 250 printed each year, as the main cost is the setting out of the magazine not the amount we purchase Nick Havemann-Mart commented that he has a container at work filled with old copies of the Austringer, that no one wants and we are giving them away at game shows.

Wayne Fogg suggested that what if we only do special editions, but this comment raised no further discussion. Mick Kane suggested that perhaps we do it as a three yearly magazine.

Nick Havemann-Mart then said that technically Wayne Fogg was now publisher of the Austringer with Anthony Roberts commenting that he can only do what we provide to him. Nick Havemann-Mart then said that if we want a virtual or digital magazine of the Austringer then we need a team setup to assist Wayne in choosing the articles to publish, as its not just about the articles it's the setting out of them to ensure we end up with something we are proud of. Perhaps James or Myself will sit down and assist Wayne in the new digital version of the Austringer.

The members voted unanimously to no longer produce the Austringer in it's current format and to if possible produce a new digital version.

Bryn Howell

Mick Kane then asked what is happening next year, Nick Havemann-Mart commented that the Bryn Howell is telling us that the Hotel is fully booked up in September & October next year. Therefore we are seeking a new venue to host the field meet AGM. Mike Kane put forward Ruthin Castle as the possible new venue as we have been there before and had great memories.

Anthony Roberts asked as it's out of season would a caravan park be an option.

Nick Havemann-Mart said that when we were looking at rooms for 90 members it was far easier than trying to find rooms for only 30 members.

Nick Havemann-Mart closed the meeting after thanking all the committee and everyone who attended.