

**LANDOWNERS OF CROSTHWAITE & LYTH
MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD AT
CROSTHWAITE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL
ON WEDNESDAY 5TH FEBRUARY 2020 AT 7:00 PM**

Present: 26 Landowners were present
Mr J E Lambton and Miss D Lund of Carter Jonas were in attendance

17/2020 **Apologies**

Apologies received from R Sykes, C Hensman, M Dobson, J Park, E Cartmell, H Marshall.

18/2020 **Chairman's Opening Remarks**

The Chairman welcomed everybody to the 203rd AGM, and thanked Matthew Jessop and the school for providing the venue. The Chairman thanked all of the Trustees for their continued commitment, and particularly singled out Tony Marshall for the many hours of work he has done, along with his wife Heather, to ensuring the success of the Woodland Grant Application which is likely to yield £5,800 per annum for the next 5 years. He mentioned difficulties with the RLA resolved eventually with considerable assistance from Carter Jonas, and reminded the meeting that the Landowners will be expected to show evidence of work completed in return for receipt of the grant.

The Chairman also outlined issues with insurance and how, again, through the combined efforts of Tony Marshall and Carter Jonas a practical solution had been "cobbled together" whereby both firewood cutters and volunteers were covered for their activities either through the Landowners' own insurance, or through a separate bespoke policy provided by Beech Tree.

The Chairman expressed his thanks to Alistair Mutch and Ian Tomlinson for acting as Treasurer and Auditor respectively, and for keeping the Landowners' finances in good order.

There has been limited charitable giving during the year, although a grant of £1,000 had been made to the Memorial Hall very recently, with an expectation that there might be an application for more substantial funding in due course. The Chairman also thought that there may be a further application from the school for alterations and improvements, a matter which was agreed to in principle by the Trustees last year, although at that stage the works did not proceed.

Assisted by Carter Jonas a considerable amount of work and expense has been devoted to Whitbarrow Cottage, with this project likely to complete in summer 2020.

The Chairman mentioned the major planning application at The High which Carter Jonas had objected to on behalf of the Trustees on landscape, impact and environmental grounds. That application was subsequently refused by LDNPA.

Finally there had been a very enjoyable summer walk led by Rob Petley-Jones in June, in pursuit of butterflies and moths, as well as the usual motor cycle trial in September.

19/2020 **Minutes of Previous AGM**

These have been available via the website, as usual, and were therefore taken as read. It was proposed by R Smith and seconded by D Holmes that they should be accepted as a correct record of the meeting; all in favour.

20/2020 **Matters Arising from the AGM**

None.

21/2020 **Accounts to the 31st October 2019**

A Mutch presented the accounts and advised that they had been, for the first time, available on the website for everyone to view. Income was very similar to the previous year, but less grant expenditure, and continuing high expenditure on the cottage. It was noted that the building reserve remained unused. Investments showed an increase in £7,000 in value, and A Mutch commented that generally the Landowners' investments had increased in value from about £62,000 to £95,000 in the last 10 years. The investments are held in two charitable funds; one being a fixed income fund with a 3.3% return, the other an investment fund with a 3.4% return. The cash reserves of £65,000 were held in the Cumberland Building Society where interest was currently paid at 1.4%, with the fund placement being due for renewal in April 2020 when it was assumed this rate would change.

A query was raised about the valuation of land and buildings (note 3 to the accounts), and why this was shown as only £4,500. It was explained that this relates to the only property purchased by the Landowners, near White Scar Quarry, for which £4,500 was paid. They had also purchased the Recreation Field but its value had been written down to nil in the accounts. None of the remainder of the Landowners' extensive landholding has ever been valued, as this has never been required, and would be an unnecessary recurring expense.

22/2020 **Reports from Trustee's Meetings**

J Lambton summarised prior Trustees meeting which had been held on the 6 February 2019 (immediately after the AGM), 11 June 2019, 18 September 2019, 21 January 2020.

At the February meeting it had been agreed in principle to assist the school financially with their improvement plans, and it was agreed to proceed with the new Woodland Management Plan. At the June meeting the continuance of grey squirrel control was approved. Funding for the school was again confirmed despite the school's plans been rejected by CCC, and that this should await any further re-application. Major work had been completed at Whitbarrow Cottage, with the tenants doing internal work. The Woodland Management Plan had been submitted to the RPA. Some logs had disappeared from Township, but there had been an increase in rare

butterflies and a decline in the more common varieties. Insurance matters were discussed along with increased premiums, with the Trustees being advised that operators of firewood plots should submit a risk assessment.

At the September meeting Carter Jonas reported about the ongoing work at Whitbarrow Cottage. Sandblasting of the walls had been stopped, with revised plans for the exterior treatment of the walls costed and approved and scheduled for summer 2020.

The Woodland Management Plan was being processed with a likely yield of £5,800 per annum if approved. It was agreed that deer control should remain a priority particularly in the light of increasing tick infestation at Fellside. A proposal to collect DNA from Duke of Burgundy Butterflies was discussed and approved, as well as further discussions about insurance. A letter to Walkies concerning commercial dog walking was discussed and approved. Concern had been expressed about access and parking by Butterfly Conservation, this being resolved after a constructive meeting between J Lambton and BC. The management of firewood plots, sale of Larch trees and pricing was discussed, and an enjoyable summer walk was reported led by Rob Petley-Jones, in search of moths and butterflies. Finally a donation of £100 had been received from the motorcycle trial as usual with no problems reported.

At the January meeting after further discussion about commercial dog walking, the audited accounts were presented and approved, with a suggestion that there is a formal review of the Landowners investments and cash in the near future. A funding request had been received from the Memorial Hall, with £1,000 approved immediately, with the likelihood of more later, on application. The Woodland Management Plan had been approved by the RPA, signed on behalf of the Trustees and was now in place. A suggestion was made that a sinking fund of £2,500 per annum was set aside to deal with requirements within the WMP. Revised arrangements for insurance were discussed and approved, with additional cover for deer and squirrel control, with the likelihood of a root and branch review of insurance to take place prior to the renewal in November 2020. Carter Jonas proposed a discussion about their ongoing role coupled with their fee basis to be addressed at a later date. Progress at Whitbarrow Cottage was reported, with a conclusion that this work expected in summer 2020, at which point the level of rent should be revisited. Concerns have been expressed by Ms Willacy concerning access to Rawsons Farm, with proposals for signage. This needs to be addressed on site. T Marshall expressed his approval of the way the grazing regime on Township Allotment was managed by the Sharp family.

D Holmes enquired about the concerns regarding commercial dog walking. It was explained that walking on public footpaths was permitted so long as dogs were "under control", but dogs usually needed to be on a lead on Open Access land if livestock were about. There were issues of scale and frequency with one Landowner reporting the sighting of 19 dogs at once. J Lambton advised that this was a modern problem with increasing prevalence in the area, and not easy to manage.

23/2020

Charitable Donation

Apart from the regular grant of £500 to the Recreational Field Trust, none had been made in the last financial year. But a recent grant of £1,000 had been made to the Memorial Hall, and it was anticipated that there will be a further request for funds for this building later in 2020. It was also anticipated that the school's plans for alterations may be resurrected, and that they would revive their application for funds towards this.

24/2020

Lease Renewals and Rent Reviews

J Lambton advised that no reviews were planned in the near future, although the rent of Whitbarrow Cottage would be revisited at the appropriate time once all the improvement works have been completed. The rent review of Township Allotment is next reviewable in April 2021, but only if Notice is served before April 2020, but it was thought unlikely that the conditions would be suitable for this.

25/2020

Woodland

T Marshall presented his report explaining about the hiatus in firewood plots due to insurance issues, and then the additional requirement of Chainsaw Certificates. He explained how the last Woodland Management Grant had terminated at the end of March 2019, with a new one commencing on the 1 January 2020, albeit with the annual grant payable annually in arrears. He anticipated that some of this money would need to be spent on contractors working on site, but some of this money would be available to support other activities. The paperwork had been extensive and time consuming, with the inevitable result that actual conservation work on the ground had diminished during the year.

Butterfly Conservation had worked 3 days on the site during the year clearing glades and paths, although there had been problems of them over publicising the site, but this was brought under control. T Marshall also mentioned the problems with the Walkies dog walking service with 7 or 8 dogs running loose at a time stating this was detrimental to other people's use and enjoyment as well as disturbing wildlife. He and Heather had undertaken 3 butterfly transects on a weekly basis during the summer with generally numbers up by 50% with the Pearl-bordered Fritillary and the Duke of Burgundy particularly prevalent. The High Brown Fritillary however had declined sharply, but there were still a few sightings. He advised that grey squirrel control was continuing, and that there were still too many roe deer in the locality for healthy tree regeneration, although numbers were lower than usual. Ash Dieback disease is on the increase, but the policy is to retain as many Ash trees as possible for as long as possible and to monitor what grows naturally to replace those trees before deciding whether any tree planting is needed. Some trees may prove to be resistant, as has been shown elsewhere in the country.

There was a discussion about the complexity of conservation needs for red squirrels, butterflies and certain flora, often having different needs, but it was generally agreed that the eclectic mixture typical of the Township should be preserved, grey squirrel controlled, deer numbers limited in order to give the natural environment the best chance to flourish.

- 26/2020 **Township Allotment**
- Bill Sharp reported that he had 3 years to run on his Stewardship Scheme; in the meantime little would change, although he anticipated changes in due course with Brexit. Edward Sharp explained their grazing regime, how Township Allotment was contributing more to carbon capture, and how Tesco, for example, are asking for green credentials more frequently, awarding “green points” to guarantee their continuing custom. It was felt that this warranted further discussion, and could be the subject of a special (summer?) meeting.
- 27/2020 **Election of Trustees**
- The Chairman and the Agent advised that there had been no nominations for Trustees by the deadline of the 30 January, as specified on the Notices, so it was proposed by E Sale and seconded by C Taylforth that the existing Trustees be re-elected en bloc and this was approved by the meeting
- 28/2020 **Election to Treasurer**
- A Mutch indicated that he was happy to continue in the role of Treasurer, so it was proposed by M Casson and seconded by J Sceal that he should continue in this role for a further year, and this was approved by the meeting.
- 29/2020 **Appointment of Agent/Secretary**
- It was proposed by D Stott and seconded by J Sceal that Carter Jonas, should continue in this role of agent, represented by J Lambton and D Lund for a further year, all approved by the meeting.
- 30/2020 **Appointment of Auditor**
- Mr Ian Tomlinson was happy to continue in the role of Auditor for a further year, and it was proposed by E Sale and seconded by C Taylforth that he be re-elected into this role, and this was approve by the meeting.
- 31/2020 **Appointment of Representative to Recreational Field Trust**
- It was proposed by T Marshall and seconded by C Taylforth that M Casson should continue in the role as Recreational Field Trust representative, and this was approved by the meeting.
- 32/2020 **Appointment of Representative to Village Hall Committee**
- It was proposed by M Casson and seconded by T Marshall that J Sceal should continue in this role for a further year, and this was approved by the meeting.
- 33/2020 **Any Other Business**
- Suggestions for a summer walk in 2020 were discussed; one suggestion being to ask Mr Mike Berners-Lee to discuss environmental issues. A further suggestion would involve a discussion with the Sharps regarding their environmental credentials.
- E Jones mentioned how the woodcutting window was from October to the end of March, it is now November to the end of February, and requested some leeway so that timber could be collected in March, even if cutting has to end by the end of February. T Marshall advised that the end of February

cut-off date was recommended by Natural England, and that birds still nested in the brash, as well as trees. However it was agreed that there could be some latitude depending on the weather; if the weather is very cold the cutting season could be extended slightly.

34/2020

Date of Next Meeting

The AGM meeting Wednesday 3rd February 2021, at 7.00pm, venue to be advised but probably Crosthwaite Memorial Hall.

There being no other business the meeting concluded at 8.05 pm

Signed Date
(Chairman)