

Larkrise Community Farm

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Held online at 7pm on 14th October 2020

- 1 Chair of Trustees, Rosie Fell, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Because of covid the meeting was held online via Zoom with the following attending;
Trustees – Rosie Fell (Chair), Rob Ham (Vice Chair), Paul Simms (Treasurer), Ali Rasey (Secretary), Sarah Creed, Jane Wallis
Staff – Wendy Self (Farm Manager), Ashley Wicks (Assistant Farm Manager)
Apologies were received from Trustee Cathy Kavanagh (who also represents the RDA on the Board)
- 2 Minutes of the last AGM held 15th August 2019 were signed by Ali Rasey, on behalf of Rosie Fell, as a true and correct record. There were no matters arising.

- 3 **Chair's report;**

Rosie Fell gave her report. She thanked all staff, volunteers and trustees for the way they have dealt with the covid pandemic. Despite no client income, the Govt's furlough scheme and other grants enabled LCF to close for several months, with just a core team of staff and volunteers employed to ensure the health and welfare of the livestock; we are all very relieved that no staff have been made redundant, and we wish to thank both employed and furloughed staff for their understanding and support through what has been a very difficult time. Thanks also to the Farm's valued and dedicated volunteers who undertake so much work and help make LCF the success it is.

Thanks must be recorded to Trustee Rob Ham and staff Wendy and Ashley for their hard work in assessing risks and working within strict controls. Thanks also to Trustee Paul Simms who has assisted greatly with all matters finance. Thanks also to all LCF's grant funders, including the National Lottery Coronavirus Community Fund, Wiltshire Community Foundation, Wiltshire Council and Taylor Wimpey (our landlord). Our landlords at Ashton Meadows have also been very kind to give us some months of rent relief during lockdown when our income was vastly reduced. Thanks also to Alex Hill Electrical and Gareth O'Neil. All LCF users and their families have been very supportive during lockdown.

Special thanks must go to Wendy for her 25 years of service to LCF, overseeing its development and growth, it is a credit to her that LCF is held in such high esteem. Also huge thanks to Ashley for her commitment, drive and attention to detail which we also couldn't do without.

Sadly for us we said goodbye to Peter Gale who has resigned as Trustee after 20 years, but promised to keep in touch and continue to assist especially with agricultural advice or if farm machinery is needed to undertake tasks. We have leaving gifts for Peter which we will get to him somehow!

We are expecting a visit from our MP Dr Andrew Murrison on 17th October 2020; he has been very supportive of LCF in the past, and we look forward to welcoming him and showing him around the farm. The Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire, Mrs Sarah Rose Troughton, has also recognised the importance of LCF's work.

4 **Treasurer's report;**

Paul Simms summarised the Financial Report which had been circulated previously and put on the website. Income for 2019/20 was similar to that of 2018/19. Expenditure was greater and reflects the withdrawal of a long term investment at the start of the pandemic as the stock market was declining:

2018/19	surplus = £51,225	income = £302,914	expenditure = £251,689
2019/20	surplus = £5,380	income = £299,843	expenditure = £294,463

2018/19	fixed assets = £388,693	net current assets = £123,548
2019/20	fixed assets = £319,986	net current assets = £197,635

Fixed assets were reduced in 2019/20, but cash increased because LCF's long term investment was withdrawn and moved to cash to prevent further losses due to stock market declines at the start of covid in March 2020; this was also to make funds more accessible should they be needed to get the Farm through covid.

April-October 2020 update – the overall forecast shows that we should end up with a net surplus of £26K by March 2021 thanks to grant income achieved and the furlough scheme, meaning that LCF's savings/reserves have not been eroded. Looking at the graph, it is clear that the books are balancing, even though lockdown meant no client income between March and the beginning of June.

5 **Covid report;**

Rob Ham has overseen covid risk assessments and safe working. LCF was in lockdown between March and the beginning of June, and this time was taken to prepare for safe re-opening. Procedures for working safely under a Covid-19 risk assessment included social distancing, extra hygiene measures, extra cleaning measures, bubbles, highly managed arrival and departures, all paperwork in place to assist with test and trace if needed, temperatures being taken on arrival.

It was a great relief to be able to accept back adult students at the start of June, and more staff, and in September school aged children returned with the rest of the staff. Currently there are up to six bubbles each day with four people in each bubble. Measures will continue to be kept under review and in line with government guidance.

6 **Election of trustees;**

All trustees indicated they were willing to stand again. Rob Ham temporarily took the Chair to nominate Rosie Fell as Chair of the Trustees, which was agreed unanimously. Rosie Fell took back the Chair, nominated that the remainder of the trustees take back en bloc their existing roles, this was agreed unanimously.

7 **Farm Manager's report;**

Covid meant that all staff and volunteers had to change their ways of working and adapt. Priorities were to keep the Farm going so that students could return once the pandemic was over. Skeleton staff of four, plus three volunteers, managed to keep the animals fed, mucked out and healthy, whilst the trustees worked hard on securing LCF financially and setting out H&S requirements.

Gradually things have returned to a little more like normality, but during lockdown all activities were put on hold, including RDA and Equine Assisted Learning. One of the RDA horses went

out on loan to a lovely family, but sadly after around three months he developed a degenerative bone disease and had to be put down. He is much missed.

Because of the pandemic it was not possible to hold the student and volunteer awards this year. However, huge thanks are conveyed to staff, volunteers, students and all our supporters.

8 **Education report;**

- Before lockdown there were 56 clients and students.
- From 26th March until 14th June there were no clients or students, but thanks to the Education Co-ordinator the Farm ran a successful pilot for a distance learning scheme using skype for four ASDAN students. This may be used again in future.
- From 15th June seven adult clients had returned.
- By September 2020 there were 12 adult clients attending.
- On 7th September LCF opened for school-aged students, and currently there are 36 adults and students attending LCF, which is around two-thirds of the number pre-lockdown.

Thanks must go to Amanda the Education Co-ordinator for establishing and developing school and LEA relationships.

9 **AOB;**

The Vice Chair, Rob Ham, wished to place on record trustees' thanks to Chair of Trustees Rosie Fell, for steering the Farm through the pandemic.

The meeting ended at 19.52
