

FEDERATION OF CUMBRIAN COMMONERS

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT Newton Rigg on 22nd February 2013

PRESENT

Dave Smith – Chair, A Barrass, D Dobson, L Haynes, M Hutchinson, J Mitchell, F Capstick, J Capstick, EJ Thomas, G Robinson, M Hall, A Ivinson, J Hopwood, M Sanderson, M Curry, M Eccles. E Titterington, T Winder, J Rowland, M Mawson, R Benson, C Raine, P Blair, J Atkinson, E Coulthard, C Walters, J Wilson, W Steele, M Stephenson, A Davis, A Benn, A Humphries, J Jackson, F Jackson, R Fraser, H Fraser, S Ridley, G Wilkinson, S Humphries, J Darrell, J Ellerby, T Douglass, G Bowness, R Baxter, A Morton, G Heelis, W I Gorst, WH Hutchinson, D Ellwood, W Johnson, J Aglionby, V Lewis - Administrator

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from J Turner, Lord Inglewood, R Connard, P Beckwith

MINUTES OF THE 2012 AGM

Agreed, that the minutes of the previous AGM held on 2nd March 2012 be confirmed as a correct record.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman, Dave Smith, started by thanking everyone for attending the meeting.

The Federation of Cumbria Commoners was started by commoners 10 years ago and is run by commoners for commoners. Our overall aim is to maintain and improve the viability of hill farming on common land. The Federation represent 34 local commons associations in Cumbria covering 61,500 ha of common land which is nearly 60% of the total common land in Cumbria. The Federation has affiliated members in Northumberland from 2 local commons associations covering 9,650 ha of common land (95% of all common land in Northumberland) and 3 local associations in Lancashire covering 2,500 ha. In total our members manage nearly 20% of the common land in England. We also have nearly 70 associate members who support our aims. We are a small organisation with very low overheads. We are self-financing through the membership fee; this enables us to be independent. We are known as one of the very few authentic bodies speaking for the commons of the country.

The ongoing work of the Federation includes:

- Ensure the commoners' voice is heard by government and all the various agencies and conservation bodies that have an involvement in common land at a national, regional and local level
- Respond to Defra and Natural England consultations based on our practical, hands on experience of commoning
- Explain to the outside world how pastoral commoning works and it's integral role in hill farming
- Inform our members about pertinent issues in commoning through our newsletter, website, AGM and conference
- Respond to members' enquiries

Some of the activities undertaken by the Federation over the last 12 months included:

- Attendance at Defra's National Common Land Stakeholder Group and CAP reform and SPS on common land; Lake District Farming and Forestry Task Force; Cumbria, North and east Lancashire Rural and Farming Network
- Submitted evidence to Natural England's Upland Evidence Review
- Support the Hill Farming Training for conservation professionals project
- Convene the Cumbria Grazing Group
- Host a visit from Irish government and NGO staff and a visit from a group of Welsh commoners

- Legal updates on issues relevant to commons
- Meetings with local MPs, LDNP, RSPB
- Continue the process to establish a Commons Council for Cumbria

The Chairman ended his report by thanking the Committee for the all the work they have undertaken over the year and to Viv Lewis, the Administrator for all her hard work.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Viv Lewis gave the Treasurers report on behalf of John Turner (Treasurer). Attendees were given copies of the Income of Expenditure Account and the Balance Sheet produced by Accountants Dodd and Co. Income has remained level and we continue to build up a reasonable level of reserves.

Approval was sought to approve the accounts – Agreed

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER OF ACCOUNTS

Approval was sought to re-appoints Dodd and Co to examine the accounts – Agreed.

COMMITTEE for 2013

There was no need for elections to the committee this year and all current committee members agreed to stand again. The Committee for 2013 is as follows:

Chairman	Dave Smith	Eastern Fells
Vice Chair	Pauline Blair	Non-regional
Treasurer	John Turner	Owner Rep co-opted
	John Atkinson	Lakes South West
	Ernest Coulthard	Kirkby Stephen
	Duncan Ellwood	Lakes West
	Harry Hutchinson	Howgills
	Joe Relph	Lakes South Central
	John Rowland	Lakes North
	Carl Walters	Lakes North Central
	John Jackson	Non-regional
	William Steele	Non-regional
	Marianne Teasdale	Non-regional
	Charles Raine	Northumberland co-opted
	Ian Gorst	Lancashire co-opted
	Robert Benson	Owner Rep co-opted
	Andrew Humphries	Co-opted
	Julia Aglionby	Co-opted

There are vacancies for Crosby and Coastal

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the AGM part of the meeting.

There followed a practical session on the “Effective running of HLS agreements on commons— potential pitfalls and challenges”, with Tim Cartmell, Cartmell Shepherd Solicitors and Julia Aglionby, Chairman, Foundation for Common Land. Also Margaret Read, Head of Commons and Access Implementation, Defra gave a presentation on “Defra’s commitment to a sustainable future for common land” followed by a question and answer session.