

Minutes of the Country Link Members Meeting  
Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2024  
The Hand Hotel, Llangollen

**Welcome** - Chairman Dick Stephens welcomed everyone to the Meeting.

**Apologies** – Apologies were received from Tony Paul, Charles Humby, Jerry White

**Introductions** – Dick introduced himself, and members of the National Committee (Nigel S, Lesley S, Liz G, Vicky H), Regional Reps (Lorraine C, Richard R, Andrew S, Sarah T), President (Peter H) and Vice Presidents (Maria G, Phil C).

**Minutes** of the Members Meeting held on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2023 were signed as being a true record of the Meeting.

**Matters arising** – There were no matters arising.

**Chairman's Report** – Dick explained he had had a very busy six months both as Chairman and at home. He has visited a number of groups - Staffordshire, Nottinghamshire, Somerset, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, and Northamptonshire. He will be making a determined effort to get around to the other groups.

Dick understands there are 19 groups and 276 paid-up members, with a number of semi-permanent guests at some groups. Dick asked everyone to make sure subscriptions were collected as the National Committee has a number of expenses e.g. the website and insurance.

At Telford, Dick had asked everyone to take someone new to a Country Link event, and he thanked those who had made the effort to do so. He has introduced three new people to Country Link this year, and hoped everyone else would do so as we need to build up the membership.

He reminded members that the organisers of a Weekend need to be informed of any changes to their bookings e.g. bringing a dog.

Dick finished by saying that he hoped everyone agreed that it had been a brilliant Weekend, and he thanked Maria, Phil, Liz and David for all their hard work.

**Secretary's report** – Liz thanked the organisers for cascading the Minutes, Agendas, and information about Lorraine's days out to the members either by email or by hard copy. It is so important that all members know what is happening within the organisation as a whole. Like the Regional Reps, the organisers are a link between the National Committee and the members. Liz thanked Phil for putting together the welcome packs. She asked everyone to sign John C's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday card, and the attendance record.

**Treasurer's report** – Lesley presented the draft accounts to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

There are currently 276 members. Lesley reminded everyone to collect the subs from their members. Last year, we had 320 members, so we are down 12% to date this year.

There has been national advertising in the Farmers Guardian.

A number of groups are using the advertising budget. Lesley reminded everyone that each group has £500 to spend on advertising, and they must send the invoices to her for reimbursement.

The insurance with the NFU has been reduced due to there being less groups/members.

Lesley advised members to contact Vicky H regarding the website address to use if setting up new advertising as we have acquired the previous country-link.org.uk web address. This will gradually be re-introduced and the .co.uk address will be linked

The deficit is likely to be nearer to £1,000 rather than £670, and it could be up to £1,800 by the end of the year. The net assets are £19,855.

Wendy Swain commented that there is a lot of money with creditors. Lesley explained that this account includes money from the Weekend in Irvine which has to be paid out. The money is to go to Phil C for those members who had the refund deducted from their payment for this Weekend, and cheques will go to members not at this Weekend.

Lesley said the National membership will remain at £10 and she hoped that everyone would pay that. The group advertising will remain at £500. This will be discussed at the AGM.

National advertising – it was agreed to reduce the number of adverts in the Farmers Guardian from fifteen issues to ten in 2025.

All things Country – six issues per year at a cost of £30 per issue.

Lesley finished by asking for suggestions for advertising.

**Web Editor's report** – Vicky reported that there are twenty one groups, and twelve have programmes on the website. She made a request for reports, and thanked Lorraine for the reports of her days out. Vicky tries to keep the website as up to date as possible, but does need more reports.

**Passing of the Weekend Baton** – Nigel S told members that the Spring 2025 Weekend will be at The Inn on the Lake, Gravesend, from Friday 9<sup>th</sup> - Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May. The cost is £250 for three nights, the single supplement is £60 for three nights. There is one form per couple, and the whole payment is due by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025. There will be two coaches on Saturday, and there will be trips to Chatham Dockyard, a walking tour of Rochester and a walk from the hotel. On Sunday there will be visits to Chartwell and other National Trust properties.

Lorraine C asked about future Weekends. There are none planned after Autumn 2025.

Maria explained to the members that three people had cancelled their bookings for this Weekend at short notice. It is not up to the organisers to refund the costs, and she reminded members to check their own insurance.

**Any other Business** – Janet W asked about Karen L, Liz G explained Karen had suffered with a heart attack, and said a number of members had attended Karen's funeral. It was agreed to have a moment's silence before dinner that evening.

President Peter H thanked the Derbyshire team for organising the Weekend. The catering and staff were exceptional. He thanked the National Committee for taking on their roles.

The Jerry White Cup was presented to John Rowlands of Warwickshire Country Link for the increase in membership as it had not been available at the AGM.

**Date of the next Members Meeting** – to be confirmed.

The Meeting finished at 5.15pm.