

Minutes of the Country Link Members Meeting
held on
Sunday 5th October 2025
in
The Ash Suite, Yew Tree Lodge, Kegworth

Welcome

Chairman Dick Stephens welcomed everyone, old and new, to the Meeting and assumed everyone had had a good time.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Richard Rymer, Mary Davey, Amanda Doyle, Nick Forman, Henrietta Isgar, Lynne Laws, John Rowlands, Mark Tomlinson,

Introductions

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

Minutes of the Members Meeting held on Sunday 3rd November 2024

The Minutes were proposed by Wendy Sw; seconded by Charles H; signed as being a true record of the Meeting.

Matters arising if not an Agenda item

There were no matters arising.

Chairman's Report - Dick Stephens

Dick apologised that he had not visited as many groups as he had intended due to his farming commitments and illness, but he is planning to visit groups when he is able to; he apologised that he had not been to the Cornwall group's 40th anniversary celebrations. He reminded members to bring someone new to the Weekends.

Secretary's report - Liz Goodwin

Liz thanked the organisers for cascading her emails to the members, reminding them that they are a very important link between the National Committee and the members. She asked if any organisers had changed since May, and if so to let her have the new contact information. Liz thanked Phil for putting the welcome packs together, and everyone for their generous donations to the Charities.

Treasurer's report - Lesley Sheaf

Lesley presented the draft accounts to 31st August 2025.

There are currently 268 members; the trend is downwards - 330 members in 2023, 313 members in 2024.

There have been ten adverts in the Farmers Guardian.

Three groups have used the advertising budget; Lesley reminded everyone that each group has £500 to spend on advertising.

The insurance is with the NFU and includes third party public liability insurance; members are responsible for their own personal accident insurance.

The website is £75 a month plus extras eg the domain name.

The donation to charity from the Kent Weekend was rounded up to £1000.

Lesley explained the deficit would increase by the end of the year; the £2500 in the Debtors column is for Weekends; the Assets 'are more than healthy'.

The National Committee have agreed that the National Subscription for 2026 remain at £10 and the advertising at £500 per group.

There were no questions.

Web Editor's report - Vicky Hutton

Vicky reported that there are twenty one groups listed on the website; a number do not give any information about meetings or contact details. She takes the programmes down when they are out of date as she feels no information is better than out of date information. Vicky requested reports as these paint a positive picture of what the members do. Vicky reminded members how to contact her on the website address. She explained there maybe a delay in reports etc being put on the website as she checks everything through, and doesn't send anything to Helen on a Friday or over the weekend as Helen works fulltime.

Passing of the Weekend Baton

Nigel told the members that they had donated £1000 to the Kent Air Ambulance, mainly due to the generosity of members putting money in the collecting bucket. He thanked Lynda P for work behind the scenes, Albie for the report in the Farmers Weekly, Vicky for contacting the Farmers Weekly, everyone for the thank you cards and those who contributed to the website.

Lorraine thanked Maria and Pat B for re-organising the trip yesterday (the trip to Woollaton Hall had to be cancelled due to the weather)

Maria said this had been a fantastic Weekend, and the staff and the food had been great, she thanked Pat B for helping out with the trip yesterday, and Derbyshire members for running the current Weekend. She explained Derbyshire Country Link had run ten Weekends and were going to be taking a sabbatical. Dick asked everyone to thank Derbyshire Country Link.

The baton was passed to Lorraine who explained the Weekend in May 2026 would be at The Holiday Inn, Kidderminster Road, Bromsgrove, from Friday 29th May-Monday 1st June. Possible trips are to Morgan Motors, a cider farm, a guided walk around Worcester, a visit to the Cathedral and the Tower, Severn Valley Railway on the Saturday. On Sunday there may be trips to the Needle Museum, Croome House, Duffield Museum, Hanbury Hall, a glass blowing demonstration and talk. There will be a two course meal on Friday and Sunday with three choices; an a la carte menu on Saturday with three choices. The fancy dress on Friday will be 'Farming through the ages'. The raffle on Saturday night will be in aid of Kidney Research UK. The forms will be circulated at the end of October/early November.

Any other Business

Lesley explained the information about the anniversary clothing had been emailed to the organisers, but members were asking her about it; she will check the prices in the New Year and Liz will contact the organisers with the up to date information; any clothing ordered will be taken to the May Weekend. Liz told the members about Nick's suggestions for publicising Country Link eg a laminated A5 poster with information about activities, together with the local and national contact information; a year planner. Ania suggested putting Nick's paperwork on the website so that members can access it. Colin suggested having a stand at Young Farmers events; Lesley asked Colin to ask his farming friends where they advertise; he mentioned the Whitby Advertiser, which is a free paper. Drew mentioned a group called Friends of Young Farmers, which makes it difficult to advertise Country Link.

Helen suggested cattle markets; Vicky explained that this is local advertising.

Peter Hrt commented that it was lovely to see so many people at the Meeting, especially the Scottish and Cornish contingents who had travelled a long way. He thanked the top table for all they do, and Maria and the Derbyshire members for finding a lovely hotel and organising good trips.

Kirsteen suggested the National Committee book the hotels and that we have a Weekend with no trips and therefore no coaches.

Ania suggested looking for members from other places as not all of the members are farmers

Date of the next Members Meeting - to be confirmed.

The Meeting closed at 4.20pm, and Dick thanked everyone for their attendance.

