

Minutes of the meeting of the National Committee of the National Pigeon Association of Great Britain held on Sunday 12th June 2016 at the Premier Inn, Rugby

Meeting commenced at 10:00

Present:

Graham Giddings (**GG**); Richard Greenwood (**RG**); Paul Littlewood (**PL**); Evan Murray, Chairman (**EM**); Mark Rudd, President (**MR**); Helen Seed (**HS**); John Surrridge, Vice President (**JS**)

In attendance: John S Harrison, Secretary.

1/ Chairman's Welcome:

The Chairman **EM** welcomed members to the meeting and commented that it was unfortunate that one third of the elected Committee Members were absent. He asked that Members put aside any personal issues and act in the best interest of the Fancy.

2/ Apologies for Absence:

Graham Bates (**GRB**); Gary Eaton; Richard Henderson (**RH**); and Colin Ronald.

3/ Minutes of meeting held April 24th 2016:

Item 7h/ JS said that it was **GRB** who was going to contact John Elsdon, the minutes were amended.

Item 8b/ MR asked that "due to the sensitive nature" be inserted in the final sentence, the minutes were amended.

MR proposed that the minutes be accepted, seconded by **RG** and agreed

4/ Matters Arising:

Item 8a/ The Tumbler Show (Hurworth Grange): **PL** said that Richard Henderson had discussed this with Adrian Twidale and that the LFCL Tumbler Club had asked for their request for NPA certificates for LFCL at the show to be withdrawn. **RG** asked if NPA Certificates were on offer at the Jacobin Club Show at Hurworth Grange, **HS** and the Secretary confirmed that NPA certs were on offer.

Item 8a/ The Fantail Club Show: The Secretary confirmed that he had discussed this with Neil Newman by telephone and had clarified the matter, the Fantail 'Club Show' is held at Stafford and the 'Trophy Show' is held at BPSS/NPA National Show. **PL** said that Richard Henderson had received a letter from the Fantail Club confirming that the Trophy Show would be held at the BPSS/NPA National Show.

Item 7a/ Role & duties of the Secretary: **PL** asked the Secretary if many of the issues had now been resolved and asked if he was now more settled. The Secretary confirmed that he was far happier with the situation, he said that most weekdays he was available by telephone within the prescribed times, and frequently did take calls at other times as well. He said that whilst the number of calls had dramatically reduced, and in the absence of answer-phone/voicemail, he had seen little increase in either email or letter. He commented that he had received no adverse comments as a consequence, and asked the Committee if they had received comment. **MR** said he had received 2 phone calls which he had passed to the Secretary and had been resolved. No other members had received any comment.

5/ Committee decisions made between meetings.

There were no such decisions.

6/ Secretary/Treasurer/Ring Secretary's Report.

The secretary had included income/expenditure accounts for Jan-June, Membership details, and Ring sales for the same period in the 'committee bundle'. The Bank Balance at 31st May 2016 was £34,543. **HS** queried why income from Patrons showed as £450 indicating 9 Patrons, the Secretary said that 2 had paid prior to January 2016.

GG asked for confirmation that Adult/Partnership membership included FPW subscription, the Secretary confirmed this. The Secretary advised members that in June (not included in the financial statement circulated) Stengel-Fussring had been paid for the supply of the 2016 rings (£2,344) and payment had been made for the printing of the June issue of FPW (£518). He said that other than the distribution of FPW and printing of the September issue, insurance, and BHW advert renewal there were no large expenses in the current financial year.

The Secretary advised members that the information that they had would be updated and at the next committee meeting they would have detail of 8 full months and accordingly there would be no surprises or 'unexplained' items in the year-end accounts. He said that the year-end accounts would clearly show a much reduced income and that it must be made clear to members that it was an 8 month financial year and that a sizeable percentage of 2016 membership and ring orders were included in the 2015 accounts.

EM referring to the expenditure of £570 asked **GG** how many EE meetings were held in a year, **GG** responded that there was only 1. **EM** said that **GG** pays for 25% of the travel expenses and for his own expenses attached to attending the meeting. **HS** said that the costs represented in the region of £1/member. **EM** said that he was happy with the expenditure, the committee agreed, **HS** added the rider that as long as attendance was productive it was beneficial to the NPA. aksarli

The Secretary advised that total membership at 07/06/16 was 506 (5 Life Members, 478 Adult/Partnership and 23 Junior) of these 79 were new members. Additionally, there were a further 32 subscriptions to FPW.

The Secretary said that in the past July 31st had been the cut-off date for the sale of rings and asked if this was still the case. There was agreement that this was no longer the case. **GG** said that the last date for ordering rings from Stengel-Fussring was June 31st. It was agreed, in view of the number of 2016 rings in stock not to purchase further rings this year, but that remaining rings could be sold until the end of the year. **RG** asked if someone ordered a significant quantity of rings before June 31st which were not in stock would it be possible to order them from the manufacturers? It was agreed that this could be done.

7/ NPA Management

7/ (a) Ring Transfers

HS said that the Secretary was inserting a transfer form into each magazine in the June mailing so that no member could say that they did not have a transfer form. **HS** said that during a conversation she had asked the Secretary if various of her imported birds were included in the Foreign Register and he had advised her that they were not, she said that she believed had transferred them. The Secretary was asked how many Foreign rings were included in the register, he replied that when he took over there were only about 100+. **GG** asked if he had the Foreign Ring ledger which he had used during his period as Secretary, the Secretary confirmed that he did not, adding that current list included in the region of 400 birds dating back to about 2013. **RG** asked what would happen if a Foreign ringed bird bred in 2011 won

an NPA certificate and was not included in the register even though the owner had transferred them? Following discussion **PL** proposed that in the absence of Foreign ring transfer records any foreign ringed bird up to 2015 be accepted, but that 2016 ringed birds would have to be included in the register. This was agreed.

7/ (b) EE Report

GG reported in the 3 day EE Meeting he had attended in Vienna. He advised that the EE was now controlled by the website and that each member country EE Rep was responsible for updating and maintaining its own 'ledger'. **GG** advised that he was changing all areas relating to the UK as GB, currently there were references to UK, GB and England. The NPA rings will continue to bear UK to avoid confusion with RPRA rings which are identified as GB.

GG informed the Committee of the Judges Seminar to be held on Sept 16-18 2016 and related to the European system entirely different to the NPA system, he asked if the Committee wished to send anyone, the cost being in the region of £500. **EM** said that spending in excess of £1000 on two EE meetings was too much, especially as it did not relate to the UK system. **RG** said that he believed that someone should attend, commenting that "if we don't take part we are annexing ourselves again". **HS** asked what was on the agenda for the meeting and after discussion **RG** agreed that as it was so specialised, relating largely to Swiss Breeds, that it was not of benefit to attend. **GG** added that as the meeting would be conducted in German it was often difficult to follow the finer details. **HS** said that it would be interesting to attend, but would be of little benefit to the NPA. It was agreed that if subsequent meetings related to breeds popular within the UK it may be beneficial to advise the relevant breed club and request a delegate. It was agreed not to send representation to the September meeting, **GG** to advise the EE.

7/ (c) Working Party Report

PL said that the sub-committee had met in May attended by **PL**, **MR** and **GRB**. He said the meeting had been constructive and wide ranging but as a starting point they had looked at the existing show rules and as there was no cohesion or logic in their order had transferred them into a more logical sequence. **MR** distributed copies of the Show Rules in a revised formation, stating they were the same rules in a different. **EM** said that as the wordings were the same the revision did not constitute a change to the rules and would not need to go before members for approval. The Secretary said that in his opinion a change of order and change to clause numbers did in fact constitute a change to the rules. **EM** proposed that they be brought back to the next committee meeting, **PL** said that there were some changes that would need be included on the ballot (i.e. before August 31st) he said that he would work on these and circulate them to the Committee for approval before placing on a ballot. **MR** said he would send the Secretary a Word file of the revised order of the Show Rules.

MR said that a main focus had been on the 'need to be better and to publicise better' stating that we give little credit to Champion Certificates, simply sending them out in the post. **PL** agreed that not enough was made of champion birds. **MR** had asked **HS** if it would be possible to add Champions to the website giving picture, background, BIS wins etc. **HS** said that she had looked at this and presented a mock website page showing photos and details of champions scrolling on the front page of the website. **EM** said that it was very impressive but would make extra work and asked who would do it as so many things already 'land at Helens door'. **HS** confirmed that she would be happy to do it. **PL** said that it would be necessary to finalise everything before it could go live on the website and said that photos should also be printed in FPW. **EM** said that not enough was made of BiS wins, on the day of the show many people did not bother to take part, and of those that did many could not hear what was being said! **MR** suggested that Champion Certificates could be presented at the AGM rather than posting them. **EM**

asked why they could not be presented at shows? **PL** said that presenting them at the AGM would make it much more of an event. The Secretary asked what would happen to claims made after the AGM, **PL** suggested that they could be posted. **PL** said that the question had been raised by GRB as to whether the Secretary would be able to identify birds qualifying as Champion from the Show Returns rather than members having to make a claim. The Secretary said that at the present time it would not be possible to do this until at least 5 or 6 years Show Returns were input onto a spreadsheet and that after that it would be a possibility. **HS** agreed that at present it was not possible.

7/ (d) Membership – to widen appeal

HS said that in many communities such as the Polish there was no interest in showing or ringing birds and wondered how the NPA could attract their interest. **EM** commented that he was amazed how many people had no idea that there were Fancy Pigeons or shows and said that there was a need to publicise fancy pigeons at grass roots level. **PL** agreed but wondered how the NPA could do this unless people were interested. **EM** said that there were so many restrictions on keeping pigeons that the odds were stacked against potential fanciers. **RG** highlighted that there is a perception of a potential risk to human health by keeping pigeons.

GG said that at Royal Bath & West Show BBC4 had filmed for a documentary to be shown in the autumn adding that this could be beneficial publicity. **GG** suggested that the NPA should target on ex-racing fanciers, **EM** agreed with this. **EM** added that it was regrettable but with the decline in younger members he felt that 'we are probably the last full generation of pigeon fanciers'.

HS said that she didn't join the Fancy until 2009 and at that time didn't feel that she would 'fit in'. She said that many people don't know how to enter a show, how to prepare birds, or simply what to do at shows. **RG** said that we all had to start somewhere, and it was no different now. **HS** said that whilst she agreed it was true, there were now far less fanciers and potential fanciers didn't know where to go. **EM** added that fanciers aren't as trusting today and don't take people to see their birds. **RG** agreed and said that many fanciers prefer not to share or help novices. **JS** said that on the continent pigeon fanciers are very visible in towns and villages and very keen to invite people to see their birds. **PL** said that keeping pigeons used to be an acceptable pastime, whereas now it's not and is considered 'not PC to breed birds for show'.

After a very lengthy discussion **EM** suggested it was not bringing forward any positive ways to help promote interest in the hobby. **RG** suggested that a large advert in BHW giving dates of Fancy Pigeon shows may attract new blood into the fancy. He suggested that a 2page advert be placed in BHW before the start of the show season. **EM** asked what this would cost, **HS** said it was £168 per page. The Secretary was asked to contact BHW and ask the price of a 2 page spread. After some discussion it was agreed to proceed with an advert. After further discussion it was agreed that the NPA would pay the full cost and not ask for contributions from the all-breed championship shows. **HS** agreed to formulate the advert with input from all the Committee.

It was agreed that a full page advert would be taken out in the BHW Stud Book, the cost being £80 for a black and red advert. **HS** to supply the advert format as in the ESFT Handbook.

7/ (e) Membership – lapsed Members

HS said that she had sent out the details of lapsed members from 2013 & 2014 provided by the Secretary and had received returns from **GG, MR, GRB, EM, HS** and **CR**, the remainder were outstanding. The survey included 271 names, so far only 143 had been returned. Of this 143 48% had ben uncontactable,

of the remainder 7% deceased, 9% illness or infirmity, 8% no where to keep pigeons, 4% expense/cost, 8% lost interest, 2% membership too high (2 individuals), 3% didn't want magazine, 40% some other reason.

It was agreed that Committee members must return the survey results to HS before July 1st so that **HS** could collate the information. PL said that there would have to be a breakdown of the "40% some other reason". Following discussion on the matter **HS** agreed to add further categories covering the 40% including 'Will re-join', 'Flying Breed club, RPRA etc membership', 'Don't show or ring birds', 'Other'

There was discussion on the date of payment of NPA affiliation fees, it was agreed that the Secretary would send out invoices to all clubs in January with a Club Returns form, requesting payment of affiliation fees not later than April 31st so that the June National Committee meeting would have full information from all clubs.

There was discussion on the membership year. It was formally proposed by **GG** that in accord with the ballot of members that the membership ran from 1st September to 31st August. Seconded by **RG** and carried.

7/ (f) Paperwork for Ballot

There had been discussion on possible ballot items under **7/ (c) Working Party Report**.

7/ (g) 'Fancy Pigeon World'

HS stressed the need for all the committee to help with the magazine **PL** said that he would advise **RH & GRB**. For the September issue the following were required: Opening remarks – **EM**; Champion List - Secretary; Ring Nomination Scheme GRB. **HS** said that not all Breed Clubs were advertising in FPW despite the fact that B3 (d) states that "Any Show granted Championship Status must be advertised in the official journal of the NPA" **HS** said she would liaise with the Secretary on advert payments.

7/ (h) John Elsdon' Booklet

HS said that dimensions used in the book should be standardised in metric measurement rather than a mixture of metric and imperial. **MR** referred to the use of feeders with SF breeds and said that as this was intended as an introduction for complete beginners it would be better if this was omitted. **GG** said that the lines referring to this should be deleted, **EM** concurred with this and it was agreed that this reference be deleted. **JS** agreed to discuss the booklet with John Elsdon.

8/ NPA Management

8/ (a) Championship Shows

Schedules. **MR** asked what schedules had been submitted for approval, the Secretary confirmed that only that of the National Modena Club had been received. **EM** was concerned that no other schedules had been submitted.

BPSS/NPA National Show. **PL** said that the BPSS had been advised by the hall owners on May 30th that the booking for the BPSS had been cancelled. Numerous attempts to make contact with the hall owners had failed and as a result BPSS had to decide either to cancel the BPSS/NPA National Show or find an alternative venue. **PL** advised that the Society had booked a hall in York Livestock Auctions for the same weekend, he said that the venue was not ideal, but was the best they could find. He asked if a flyer could be included in the June FPW mailing, Richard Henderson would supply the details to the Secretary. **MR** said that the information needed putting on the NPA Website to quell rumours that the show had been

cancelled. **PL** agreed to forward text to **HS**. **PL** also confirmed that the Barnsley Metrodome had been booked for the BPSS/NPA National Show in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

8/ (b) Blackpool and RPR

MR said that he was very disappointed that decisions made in National Committee meetings had been so quickly spread to the wider fancy, he suggested if anyone was uncomfortable discussing this matter then they should leave the room. **JS** said that if items were formally designated as confidential at a meeting should not be discussed outside that meeting. **MR** said that he was told that discussions on Blackpool at the previous meeting were in the public domain later the same day. **EM** agreed that the item had not been declared as 'confidential' at the meeting and also that by the Sunday night the details of the discussion had been passed on to others, though he was unaware who had discussed the matter. **EM** said that "whilst we have to be transparent and we need to let members know what is going on we need to be aware of sensitive issues". After some discussion **MR** asked the members present "are we all happy discussing this matter?" **EM** said 'there is a split in the Committee, and always has, and it's not benefiting the Fancy' adding 'it builds up mistrust If we want to build up the Fancy then we need to treat each other with respect and trust'.

There was a full and frank discussion on the letter received from the RPR regarding the Blackpool Show and the NPA response to it. There was a consensus amongst the Committee that the RPR SoY committee had not taken note of the contents of the letter sent after the previous meeting. The members were in agreement that the Show Organiser has made it abundantly clear over the past two years that he is not prepared to adhere to NPA show rules, and had been given no indication that this would change. It was agreed that the Secretary draft out a response to the Blackpool SoY and circulate to **EM** and **MR** for comment prior to circulation to all Committee members for amendment and final approval. **RG** said that this discussion should be "kept in house" until the letter had been sent, the committee were in agreement with this.

8/ (c) NPA Specials

There was considerable discussion on various options. **HS** suggested that the NPA offer specials for BiS at 1 or 2 championship shows, maybe £100 or £5 x 2. **HS** said that it needs to be something given back to the membership, **EM** said that it needed to be something different rather than BiS. **GG** suggested offering a special of a year's free membership.

MR suggested the specials be for 'Best Young Bird', **JS** & **GG** agreed with this option. **RG** suggested that the Committee divide the shows into North and South and make awards in both areas.

PL suggested that more be made of Lifetime Awards. **RG** suggested a cut glass decanter or engraved whisky glass would be appropriate. **EM** suggested that a club could be selected and that the club secretary be asked to nominate someone for the award. This received general agreement and it was suggested that a year's subscription would be appropriate.

HS again stressed that she felt it was important to give something back to the members as there was a perception that the NPA had taken away free rings and increased fees.

PL suggested that the NPA continue with the Champion of Champions and wondered if this could be tied in with the AGM. **EM** felt that it would be difficult to get members to bring BiS birds to the AGM.

JS suggested that whilst these were all good ideas they were complicating the issue and suggested that £50 be offered to the Best Young Bird at two championship shows. **HS** suggested that this could be altered each year. **EM** summed up the discussion and proposed that in 2016 there would be awards for Best YB at 2 shows, and that in 2017 an award for Champion of Champions. This was agreed. **EM** then drew 2 paper slips from a bag containing the 10 all-breed championship shows; the two shows being East of England and SUFEX.

9/ Correspondence

The British Holle Cropper Club had submitted a list of judges for the Holle Cropper Club.

The Committee approved the addition of Ian McConnell to the Horseman Pouter list.

GG asked why these were being discussed by the Committee when the Secretary had traditionally done so? **PL** agreed and said that if a breed club puts forward judges the Secretary should automatically approve them. This was agreed.

10/ Meeting Dates and venue for AGM

It was agreed that the AGM be held at the Premier Inn at M62 Jct 32, the cost being £128. The Secretary was asked to make the booking for February 12th 2017.

Next meeting of the National Committee to be held on September 18th at Premier Inn Rugby.

11/ Any Other Business

MR said that he had been approached by Archie Taylor with the request that he be added to the Chinese Owl list. **PL** said that he was a long time breeder and judge and had been removed from the list when he emigrated. **MR** proposed that he be restored to the Chinese Owl List, seconded by **PL** and agreed.

HS said that there had been email discussion regarding the old website domain name www.nationalpigeonassociation.co.uk which was now hosting general pigeon related matters. She confirmed that John Ross had lapsed the domain.

Meeting closed 15:30