



Yorkshire Dry Stone Walling Guild

Minutes of Annual General Meeting 16th November 2006 Held at Thirsk Town Hall 7.30pm

Apologies for absence were received from: - Brenda Koo, Dave Edwards, Keith Ledger, Margaret Handley, Peter Whiting, Jeremy Morrogh-Ryan, Andrew Bailey, James Bailey, Chris Clifton.

20 members attended the meeting; Mr. And Mrs Anwar being new members joining that evening. This year our President Bill Cowling joined us.

The minutes of the last meeting (17th November 2005) were read. With no matters arising, Ian Varty proposed acceptance, seconded by Dave Purvis, and approved by those present.

Chairman's Report 2006.

Michael Booth read his report, based largely on the pre -circulated newsletter to the meeting.

The Guild had again enjoyed a very good year; the main activity highlighted being the successful launch of the Training Programme. He paid particular tribute to the Instructors who had collectively worked hard in all weathers to make it the triumph it had been. A recent very enjoyable social evening for tutors and wives had been held as a 'thank you' in recognition of this effort. Membership had grown by 37 from this programme alone, but a high degree of wastage is to be expected. It will be instructive to see how many renew membership in 2007.

Show attendance in the year had been fruitful and made more interesting by the build of a permanent feature wall around the FWAG pond near the Brown gate at the Yorkshire Agricultural Show. Bill Cowling's influences, both on the YAS committee, and in supplying the stone for its construction were greatly appreciated.

Other points touched on were the well-attended practice meets at Sutton Bank, Thorgill near Rosedale, and Aysgarth. Another sponsored build in lovely surroundings had been held at Healaugh, Swaledale, with a very generous donation to Guild funds as a result.

Treasurer's Report 2006.

The accounts had been circulated to all members, and showed a further improvement in Guild funding for the year. A summary format based on that used by our Bankers was now included for a 'snap-shot' view. A lot of financial activity had arisen from the Training programme, but the Chairman was at pains to point out to the meeting that the Guild still operates as a non profit making venture; the surplus funding arising principally from the large and very welcome donation received after the Healaugh build.

The Treasurer drew attention to the Grant from the Rural Target Fund, which will eventually inject £745 into Guild funds, and the satisfying revenue from direct sales of the BTCV practical handbook. The expenditure on Safety equipment queried by Lawrence Tucker was for a 1st Aid kit, eye wash pods and safety glasses in support of the Training courses.

Acceptance of both reports was proposed by Clifford Bailey, seconded by John Clifton., and agreed by those present.

The Chairman then invited our President, Bill Cowling to address the Meeting.

He was pleased with Guild progress and the successes of this year, with the hope of another good year to come. The feature wall at the Harrogate showground was a cause of personal satisfaction; he looked forward to its continuation, and another similar feature elsewhere after its completion to further enhance the site.

He was disappointed that the entry level Stewardship Scheme had little to offer in the way of grant aid for walling, that the higher level scheme appeared to preclude people from joining, and that Capital Grants were not being honoured despite fanfares to the contrary.

Askham Bryan College now has a centre open on the Harrogate showground, with more room to do outdoor activities.

He concluded by wishing the Guild well for the future, and to keep moving ahead.

Officers and Committee

The present officers and committee were prepared to serve another term, and several postal proposals had been received to re-elect the existing team. Michael Booth proposed John Pridmore as a further committee member. The members present endorsed these proposals; the posts are therefore as follows: -

Officers

Chairman Michael Booth
Secretary Brian Wood
Treasurer Brian Wood

Committee Dave Purvis; Clifford Bailey; Dennis Garbutt, Michael Rosher, John Pridmore and Stuart Matthews (Company Secretary)

At the Chairman's request we now deal with AOB.

Any Other Business.

The Secretary requested approval from those present to invite our major sponsors from this year and last to accept lifetime honorary memberships in recognition of their support and generous donations to Guild funds. This was agreed unanimously.

Websites were briefly discussed. John Pridmore had previously offered to set one up; the Secretary reported we had entries in both the Hambleton District Council and Wensleydale Chamber of Trade sites. Setting up cost was only a part of the expenditure with decent firewall software being essential and sites do have to be kept up to date.

Bill Cowling suggested a possible solution lay via the Yorkshire Agricultural Society. The committee were to look into ways and means.

A one-day taster session, with free training for a limited period as a means of increasing membership was another action for committee consideration.

The Chairman asked if the meeting had any views on AGM format, a speaker perhaps, maybe a more social event with some food etc. He was also considering a pictorial summary of the year instead of the current notes. There were no clear-cut opinions one way or another from the members, so these matters will be decided in committee.

The meeting then turned to the apparent lack of attraction to our walling competition. Why did people not turn up, even after paying their entry fee?

Ian Varty and Chris Morgan were both of the opinion that people were reluctant to have a go, probably from lack of confidence in personal ability.

The Chairman reiterated that until one tried, these concerns would not be overcome.

Was the prize money sufficient? Should we open it to a wider audience? A new location perhaps. Perhaps a BBQ or big sandwich to follow the event, invite DSWA members . Timing was important to avoid clashes with Pateley Bridge and Kilnsey Shows.

What was clear was that advertising was the key to increase outside interest, now an affordable expense for the Guild. The Committee will try some new initiatives to test reaction for the coming year.

A raffle collected £24 for the evening, to be donated to BBC Children-in-Need.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm

Those present:- Ian Varty, Clifford Bailey, Chris Morgan, John Turner, Henry I' Anson, John Clifton, Felix Heimer, Lawrence Tucker, Michael Rosher, Geoff Selby, John Pridmore, Richard Laidler, Dennis Garbutt, Dave Purvis, Tariq Anwar, Annie Anwar, Judith Wood, Brian Wood, Michael Booth, Bill Cowling.