

**Minutes of the Longhorn Cattle Society Annual General Meeting  
At Melton Mowbray Market, commencing at 2.00pm on Saturday 16 October 2021**

**Present were:** Mr T Mills (Chairman)  
Ms D Dann (Secretary)  
Mrs N Luckett (President)

Mr R Adams, Mr M Barden, Mr B Bellew, Mr D Bevan, Mr D Blockley, Mr H Blockley, Mr John Brigg, Mr Joshua Brigg, Mr P Close, Mrs S Coleman, Mrs C Cronin, Rhianydd Davies, William Edwards, Mr B Facon, Mrs K Gibb, Mr P Guest, Mr & Mrs J&S Harrison, Mr & Mrs H Hulland, Ms R Heard, Mrs P Laing, Mr & Mrs B&M Llewellyn, Mr & Mrs C&S Mills, Mr R Mothersill, Mrs J Mycock, Mr S Mycock, Mr D Phillips, Mr P Robinson, Mr & Mrs D&C Saxby, Harry Saxby, Mr & Mrs J&P Stanley, Ms E Sutton, Mr G Towers, Mr G Walker, Mr M Wheeler, Mrs B Wheeler, Ms T Woollatt, Mr B Wragg

Mr C Sutcliffe & Mrs S Zentis attended via Zoom.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked members for attending. He stated that it was great to be able to hold the AGM in person again.

**Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from:

Mrs A Blockley, Clark Blockley, Mr & Mrs A&T Bomford, Mrs A Close, Mr R Close, Mrs S Gurton, Mr & Mrs A&R Goodman, Mrs V Hopkinson, Mr & Mrs M&S Horne, Mr S Horrocks, Ms Suzannah Long, Mr S Mepham, Zara Monks, Mr & Mrs A&P Neads, Mr & Mrs R&R Poulson, Mr D Preece, Mr & Mrs M&W Preece, Mr CC Roads, Mr & Mrs M&Y Smith, Mr & Mrs B&T Stanley, Mr R Sullivan, Mrs D Sutcliffe, Mrs J Tait, Mr D Walker, Mr TA Williams, Mr & Mrs G&J Woollatt

**1. Minutes of last AGM and matters arising**

The Minutes of the 2020 AGM had been previously circulated.

There were no matters arising

It was proposed by Mr M Wheeler and seconded by Mrs P Stanley that the minutes be signed as a true and correct record.

**2. Chairman's Report**

The Chairman spoke to his report.

*Firstly I would like to say how pleasing it is to be able to be here today, in person, addressing you all. Last year's AGM, my first as Chairman, was a somewhat different format staring down a computer screen at a number of small faces as we hosted the societies first ever virtual AGM. As much as I prefer the in-person format, we've had to adapt to the many challenges that COVID 19 has thrown at us and that challenge has continued throughout this year impacting many society events and our day to day lives.*

*Although the steady lifting of restrictions has allowed some return to normality over the last 12 months, many events were forced to cancel due to the uncertainty surrounding what would or wouldn't be allowed and the risk of predicting when restrictions might or might not be lifted.*

*Council have continued to closely monitor the ever changing situation and restrictions and looked to adapt to see how we could make the most of the situation and build on some of the online formats for sales and shows which had been trialled the previous year. Throughout the pandemic Council have continued to meet regularly and we've used a mixture of virtual and face-to-face meetings. The imposed restrictions on meeting people has forced us to use technology to continue to run the society and it has made us question how we most effectively hold council meetings, moving forward we will continue to use a mix of both virtual and face-to-face to meetings.*

*The first event of the year was the Online sale in April. Following our trial the previous Autumn the trustees felt that it would be good to continue to try this format of sale. With the successful sale of 25 lots a top price of £3,200 and good averages it was a significant improvement on the previous online sale. Council will continue to consider an online format when reviewing the portfolio of society sales in the future.*

*In May it was great to be able to run the first live society sale for 18 months with the spring show and sale at Worcester. The health testing requirements at sales have continued to be a significant topic of discussion at council meetings. Council continues to see it as a high priority to understand and improve the health status of the national Longhorn herd and at the end of last year we launched a membership consultation using a herd health questionnaire to understand the membership's views on breed health.*

*We had a good response from members with over 138 filling out the questionnaire. Thank you to all the members who filled out the consultation, it really helped the Council to understand what was*

important to our members. The consultation provided clear support for the society to focus on improving herd health and that this should be done through health testing requirements at sales.

A significant majority felt that testing of individual animals put forward for sales was preferred rather than compulsory membership of health schemes and that BVD and Johnes's disease should be the priority. The trustees took this feedback, reviewed it against industry standards across other breed societies and also took advice from other societies who have implemented similar health testing requirements. After much discussion council agreed that the minimum health requirements for sales should be either accreditation or blood testing of individual animals for BVD and Johnes's and vaccination for BVD. This is a really good step forward for the breed and I think we have found a good balance between ensuring we do not make entry requirements too restrictive for our members but also ensuring that buyers can buy Longhorn cattle at Society sales with confidence in their health status.

These minimum requirements were first implemented at the Worcester sale in May with nearly all vendors going above and beyond the minimum requirements set by the Society by doing additional blood testing for IBR and Neospora to provide further assurance to prospective purchasers.

The Worcester sale was a success with great quality cattle on offer, a full clearance, a top price of 5,400gns and some of the highest average prices we have seen for a long time. A successful society sale is a key part of promoting the breed and the spring sale at Worcester can hopefully now go from strength to strength.

Following the good entries and prices in the Spring Show and Sale at Worcester I'm sure many breeders were disappointed to see the low entries at last months Autumn Show and Sale at Stoneleigh. Although the quality of the cattle entered was high, including some good commercial Longhorns with cross-bred calves, it demonstrated that buyers will only be attracted to a sale if there are a good volume of entries, which we unfortunately did not have. Thank you to those who did enter cattle, hopefully breeders with Longhorns to sell can all get behind the Spring Show and Sale again next year.

The longhorn breed is not the only breed to be struggling with sale entries for their society sales with similar problems seen across the industry. There are many reasons why this may be. The increased access to social media and other online platforms by breeders has opened up many new ways to market and purchase cattle privately. As a Council we will have to review the best options and format for future autumn sales and consider if there are enough breeders looking to sell cattle through live markets to sustain two standalone Society sales.

Although depleted in numbers it's been great to see some shows able to go ahead this year and as usual the Longhorns have been one of the best supported breeds. It's so pleasing to see such dedication by members taking cattle to shows and showcasing the breed. This hard work has led to some great successes in the show ring this year, most notably with Melborne Park Fizz, from Ben and Tori Stanley winning the interbreed championship at Staffordshire show. A great result for Ben and Tori and demonstrating yet again that the breed can compete, and is being recognised in interbreed competitions.

In addition to the live shows, we also ran the online show competition again. This proved to be very successful with 44 cattle entered, with an outstanding cow, Blackbrook Zither, from Pat and John Stanley taking the overall champion. One of the most pleasing aspects of the online show was the junior handler classes. It was great to see the enthusiasm within the junior members – the breed is clearly in safe hands for the future!

Showing is such an important part of promoting the breed and we are keen to see as many breeders as possible return to the show ring in 2022. In order to support this, Council have committed to reinstating the exhibitor support grant for the 2022 show season to support and encourage members to exhibit at shows.

Over the year the Trustees have also been looking at how we can best refresh some of the Society's marketing material and online presence to ensure it projects the image of a modern, progressive breed to attract new members and the next generation of Longhorn breeders. To support us in this we have engaged the support of Chrissie Long, a marketing and digital media expert, who specialises in the agricultural work. Our initial focus has been to create a stock of professional quality images that can be used for marketing and breed promotion. We are also collating a series of case studies showcasing members who are using longhorns in various farming systems and for different purposes. These will be a great tool to demonstrate the versatility of the breed and give potential new members real examples of how the longhorn are being used in a number of successful farming enterprises.

Next year funding has been allocated for a re-vamp of the website to make it more accessible from different devices, to modernise the general appearance and imagery of the site and to make it easier for prospective new members to find key information about the benefits and opportunities from choosing longhorns.

Many members will have been deeply saddened by the passing of John Backhouse back in March. A past president and council member, respected society judge, and renowned breeder with his

*Raincliffe herd leaving its mark in many pedigrees across the breed, John will be missed by many within the Society.*

*Finally, I would just like to thank all the members of Council for their input and support over the year, Debbie for her continued hard work as Breed Secretary and all the Society members for the great work they do in promoting the fantastic Longhorn breed.*

### **3. Financial Report**

The Secretary presented the accounts and the financial report:

*Much of 2021 was dominated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic with many normal activities outside of maintaining the Herdbook cancelled. Activity on the Herdbook remained stable.*

*Herdbook activity for the financial year was 1265 females registered (1,286 in 2020), 945 (1063) animals birth notified, 97 (73) males registered and 1353 (1214) transfers. Excluding deaths, a total of 3,660 (3568) individual transactions took place in order to maintain an accurate registry.*

*As a membership based organisation the Society's main income streams remained subscriptions, registrations and transfers.*

*Secretarial salary, social security and occupational pension expenditure were the Society's largest single outgoing.*

*Printing, stationery and postage expenditure was reduced in this financial year as no Journal was produced.*

*The Longhorn Cattle Society is a Charity and the Trustees of the Society are entrusted with the role of ensuring the monies held are well managed and that there is a prudent reserve, and then ensure that funds are used to carry out the principal objectives of the Society. It is Council policy to ensure that the routine running costs of the Society are self-funding and that the Society has reserves roughly equivalent to a year's annual expenditure. A budget of £91879 has been approved by Council.*

Mr Sutcliffe via Zoom asked what the expense figure of 'breed development' consisted of. The Treasurer explained that it was for the DNA testing and parent verification of bulls and the parent verification of random females and ET females, and the fees the Society pay for Type Classification.

Mr Sutcliffe via Zoom then raised the issue of algorithms on social media and the complicated interactions that these algorithms controlled. He has to search for the posts the Society puts on social media rather than having them automatically appear on his timelines. He offered to assist the Trustees with guidance regarding social media.

The Chairman stated that the Society was in the process of building up a bigger library of it's own content for social media and would be relaunching the Society's Facebook page in 2022 as it currently contained a number of bugs which was impeding it's functionality. Mr Sutcliffe was thanked for his offer of assistance.

There being no further questions on the accounts, the adoption of the accounts was proposed by Ms Woollatt and seconded by Mrs Gibb.

### **4. Election of Trustees**

The Chairman stated that three spaces were available for Council and three nominations were received. This meant there was no need for a ballot so Mr Bertie Facon joined Council again, Mrs Pat Stanley began her second three year term and Miss Thea Woollatt joined Council for her first three year term. The Chairman welcomed them all.

The Chairman thanked Sophie Gurton and Graham Walker for their time and input whilst serving on Council.

### **5. Proposal to update the breed standard**

Trustee P Close introduced the proposed revised breed standard that had been circulated to all members. After his introduction the Chairman opened up the discussion to the floor.

Ms T Woollatt stated that the proposed weights and stature in the breed standard may confuse new members who would think that every cow must comply.

Mr Close suggested that the title be changed to 'Breed Standard/Description'

Mrs N Luckett suggested that adding the word 'typical' to the heading 'Stature' may help with the point Ms Woollatt raised.

Mr C Sutcliffe had submitted two suggested amendments in advance of the meeting, namely removing the 'Distribution' paragraph as it was out of date as soon as it was published, and the words '*...and breeders often trim this back*' in the paragraph relating to 'horns' as this was a husbandry matter and not relevant to a breed standard. Via Zoom, Mr Sutcliffe elaborated on the second point, stating that the words might make new members think that only horns that go up and out are trimmed, but bonnet horn tips are also trimmed if they start to grow too close to the face.

The Chairman stated that the matter of the herd distribution being quickly out of date was discussed within Council and was resolved as the list would be updated when the new Herdbook was published each year.

Mr B Llewellyn suggested that if there was such dissatisfaction with the breed standard that had been submitted to the meeting then it should be taken back to Council for further discussion and re-presented.

Mr B Facon stated that he was concerned that the Society would be in the same position next year if the submitted standard was taken back to Council. The exact wording would not suit everyone.  
There

The Chairman stated that a vote en-bloc should take place on four amendments to the submitted breed standard.

- 1 That it be called a Breed Standard and Description
- 2 That the word 'typical' be added before 'stature'
- 3 That the words '*black horns are not favoured*' be moved from the 'colour' paragraph to the 'horns' paragraph
- 4 That the words '*and breeders often trim this back*' be removed from the 'horns' paragraph.

These amendments were seconded by Mr B Facon

A vote was taken via a show of hands of those in the room:  
30 votes for the proposed amendments. There were two votes 'for' from the Zoom attendees and two Chairman's proxy votes, making the total number of votes for 34  
There was 1 vote against and 0 abstentions

The motion to revise the breed standard, with the detailed amendments, was carried.

## **6. Any other business**

Mr P Guest asked that the list of all animals type classified VG and EX in any calendar year be individually listed in the Herdbook, with the total of all cattle classified in that year also recorded by grade.

It was questioned whether the Herdbook was the most appropriate place for this information to be recorded.

The Chairman stated that the matter would be included as an agenda item at the next Trustee meeting.

A discussion was held around whether the same classifier should classify members each time. It was felt that the classifiers are trained to classify in a uniform manner, and currently there are only two beef classifiers so the Society couldn't ask that different classifiers visit each time.

The Chairman stated that it was up to the Society to set the weighting of each trait, and that the Trustees would be having a meeting with NBDC to ensure the current weighting was working for the breed. A meeting had been arranged for 2020 but that was cancelled due to COVID.

It was stated that a retired classifier had reported that they felt they were put under pressure by some members who were bombarding the classifier with information to try and get a higher score. This behaviour was unacceptable. It was suggested that if this was happening, a Trustee could accompany the classifier on-farm.

A discussion was held around the current health requirements for sales. It was stated that some members felt like 'second class citizens' because they were unable to fulfil the health requirements

The Chairman stated that there had been a lot of discussion on Council regarding health matter and that if the breed doesn't set some sort of standard then the breed will not improve.

The forthcoming sale at Leek had not been adopted as a Society sale as there wasn't enough bandwidth to have two Autumn Society sales. There were other sales available for members who did not wish to health test their cattle and sometimes the Trustees had to make tough decisions.

It was stated that the perspective of the buyer must also be taken into account, and that buyers cannot be expected to pay a lot of money for animals that hadn't been tested for disease. Buyers look at a lot of different elements when selecting cattle to buy and health status is an important consideration.

The Chairman stated that membership of a health scheme had never been a compulsory requirement for Society Sales and that individual testing at the same time as TB testing was an equally valid option. This would be reiterated to the members.

There being no further business the Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

AGM Awards 2021

### **Bull of the Year for the Maydencroft Award**

1 <sup>st</sup> Gentons Usher ET	Mr B Facon
2 <sup>nd</sup> Southfield Panther	Mr & Mrs D&A Blockley
3 <sup>rd</sup> Gupworthy Thrupton	Mrs J Grant
3 <sup>rd</sup> Southfield Uproar	Mr H Blockley
3 <sup>rd</sup> Slough Utah	Mr & Mrs D Preece

### **Cow of the Year for the Leebarn Trophy**

1 <sup>st</sup> Gale Farm Rona	SD Horrocks & Son
2 <sup>nd</sup> Melbourne Park Fizz	Mr & Mrs B&T Stanley
2 <sup>nd</sup> Lower Blacup Patricia	Mr B Wragg
3 <sup>rd</sup> Fishwick Superstar	J Close & Son Ltd

**Senior Heifer of the Year for the Lesley Hutton Award**

1 <sup>st</sup> Gale Farm Tanera	SD Horrocks & Son
2 <sup>nd</sup> Herbertsherd Honey	Master B Stanley
3 <sup>rd</sup> Gale Farm Tonga	SD Horrocks & Son

**Junior Heifer of the Year for the Tetford Trophy**

1 <sup>st</sup> Gale Farm Uist	SD Horrocks & Son
2 <sup>nd</sup> Gentons Ultra	Mr B Facon
3 <sup>rd</sup> Carreg Utopia	Mr & Mrs B&M Llewellyn

**Best Young Handler for the Frank Sutton Award**

1 <sup>st</sup> Rhianydd Davies
2 <sup>nd</sup> William Edwards
3 <sup>rd</sup> Jess Marshall

**Best Newcomer for the Paul Luckett Trophy**

1 <sup>st</sup> Jane Mycock
2 <sup>nd</sup> Jane Grant

**Ambassadors Award for the Carreg Trophy**

Mr SD Horrocks & Miss Jess Marshall