

Organic Countryside CIC

23 Tye Green, Wimbish, Saffron Walden, Essex CB10 2XE

Company number 06794848 (registered in England)

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Minutes of Annual General Meeting

**Thursday 29th September 2016 at Swards End Village Hall –
8.00pm**

Present: David Corke (S D)

Janice Wrigley (S D)

Elaine Corke (S D)

Hamish McIlwrick

Emma Horton (S D)

Adrian Wright

David Wrigley (S D)

(S= shareholder, D= director)

Apologies: Peter Riding, Norma Chapman, Violet Ashman, Susie Boatman, Vyvyan Veal, Gay Veal

The evening opened with an illustrated talk by **David Corke**: *“When Hattie Jacques visited Noakes Grove”*: what we have learned about the history of Noakes Grove from early Victorian times to when it became a nature reserve.

The meeting was chaired by **David Wrigley**, Minutes were taken by **Janice Wrigley**

1. **Approval of Minutes of 2015 AGM** (Annex 1). Proposed by **Emma Horton**, seconded by **Elaine Corke**. Unanimously approved.
2. **Directors report** (Annex 2). The report is ready to be sent to Companies House, subject to approval by this meeting. Proposed by **David Corke**, seconded by **Janice Wrigley**. Unanimously approved.
3. **Accounts for financial year ended 31st January 2015**. Accounts prepared by **Susie Boatman** and presented by **David Corke**, with explanations of various items below. (Annex 3)

Certification: Last year Organic Countryside CIC paid a substantial sum to the Soil Association for organic certification. This is unsustainable, and Organic Countryside has reluctantly agreed to drop organic certification, although continuing to follow the principles of organic husbandry. Food products will be sold under the name of "Noakes Grove".

Insurance: This has been steadily rising and the directors are currently seeking more favourable quotations for the coming year.

There continues to be a shortfall of income to expenditure, and the directors are actively seeking both cost reductions and income generation.

Approval of accounts proposed by **Elaine Corke**, seconded by **Emma Horton**. Unanimously approved.

4. **Re-election of Directors**

All Directors willing to stand again. No other shareholders present and we have no representations prior to the AGM. All Directors accordingly re-elected.

5. **Farm and Wildlife Reserve Report covering the period October 2015 to September 2016**, prepared and presented by **Elaine Corke** (Annex 4).

6. **Plans for the coming year (October 2016 to September 2017).**

Work parties have already started under the guidance of **David Corke**. They will be held every 3rd Sunday in the month, from 10.00 a.m. Work has already started on clearing overhanging hedge from the roadside verge which is a designated Local Wildlife site, largely on account of the crested cow wheat which grows there.

When work on the verges has been completed, work parties will concentrate on clearing rides in the scrub area which need widening to allow growth of wild flowers.

Christmas Party: Plans are being made for a Christmas party for all Friends, shareholders and Directors. Details will be circulated in due course.

Woodmanship courses: When **Vyvyan Veal** returns in 2017, we hope he will lead more woodmanship skills courses for various groups.

Income generation: It is clear that more income is required to sustain the reserve and the Directors are looking at means of increasing income by means of various activities and through grants.

Sale of wood/charcoal: **David Corke** and **David Wrigley** are investigating possibilities for selling wood that was cut last year, either as charcoal or for wood burning stoves.

Apple Juice: David Corke continues to make apple juice from the Ellis Green site, which will be sold in Saffron Walden market.

Sheep: The ewes will join the ram shortly, and will stay away until after lambing, which will help the pasture at Noakes Grove to regenerate. Resulting lambs will be sold to generate income, either as livestock, or as meat. The owner of the ram will receive some ewe lambs in payment. (Full details still to be agreed.)

Grants: The directors are seeking grants to help with the running costs of the reserve, but **Emma Horton** made the point that grants normally have to be tied to specific projects, so the directors need to focus on key priorities.

Research: We intend to keep up research activities. The local wildflower group compiled a list of species on their last visit, and in 2017 we will ask them to re-visit and compile another list.

David Corke has run three moth-traps over the summer, and will continue to do so over the coming months. So far more than 100 species have been identified.

In the summer we ran a fun day for all the family when we identified 4 species of bumble bees. In 2017 we intend to repeat the exercise and expect to be able to add more species to the list.

David Corke has invited the **Essex Field Club** to visit the reserve in 2017. We hope their various experts will be able to help and guide our research activities.

Living Landscape: David Corke explained this countrywide initiative, which aims to bring together local wildlife trusts to restore, recreate and re-connect wildlife-rich spaces in both rural and urban areas by working in partnership with local communities, landowners, schools and businesses. Parts of Essex are already participating in the scheme and Organic Country hopes to work with other local wildlife reserves to promote the initiative.

7. Any other business: No other business.

Meeting closed at 9.40 pm