

AGM MINUTES

KIPLING COUNTY CARRIAGE DRIVING ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Date: 28th March 2024 at the Lucas Memorial Hall, The Street, Waldron,
East Sussex TN21 0RB

Committee and Co-opted committee members in attendance

Jeni Longley (Chairman) | Valerie Eyres | Alison Reilly | Joanne McNicol (Secretary) | Debbie Smith, (Treasurer) | Jane Kennan

Apologies

Judy Coller, Sine Porsch, Sue O'Dell, Eileen Gallagher, Duncan McKinnon, Dawn Field, John Hamilton Smith, Liz Cyster, Libby Roderick, Yvonne Appleby.

Agenda Item 2 Approval of minutes from previous meeting

Minutes approved- Proposer Alison Reilly, Seconder Jane Kennan. Unanimously approved.

Agenda Item 3 Matters Arising

None

Agenda Item 4 Chairman's Report- Jeni Longley

2023 A great year driving- hallelujah! Interesting time with the weather- unpredictable and our first year of driving on Thursdays only, which has helped with logistics and ponies and helpers. Amazingly we did not miss a session due to the weather.

Thank you, drivers, for bearing with fortnightly driving. This will be the way forward this year. It has been good to see so many helpers at our sessions, we are one big family. It was lovely to see Linda back driving and putting Alison in her place!

The RDA show last year was unfortunately cancelled, other groups in the area having difficulty with transport and lack of ponies- so not just us struggling on the pony front. We did go to the Bradbourne Le Trec with Baronsmede drivers and Noah, which was a great success.

As the RDA show was cancelled, we ran an in-house competition driving Alison's cones and obstacle course. Everyone drove really well. Jenny and Bev had great fun timing and manning the cones course, everyone seemed to knock a ball off at cone No 5 which was the furthest away! We also had lots of fun driving in the field and up and down the lane.

We can't do it without our ponies- unfortunately Prince is now in pony heaven. Lots of drivers had great fun driving him and won lots of rosettes. Our helpers will remember him fondly, we've all been bitten (Prince kisses) and pushed around. Val said he's now giving instructions from above to Merlin and Bob. Many thanks to Val and of course Prince. We will miss him.

It was our first full season with Bill who is great fun and produced fast times! Thank you, Tracey. Dominic has become a firm favourite, thank you to Sheila and Sine. Sheila said that thanks must go mainly to Sine for breaking and schooling him. Crumble has been amazing; everyone has fallen in love with him. Charlie fell in love with the grass and Flo is just lovely Flo.

Thank you to our pony providers as the hard work starts hours before and continues for hours after our sessions and, throughout the year.

Our helpers are all incredible and create a lovely atmosphere. Nothing is too much trouble. You all go above and beyond and came out whatever the weather. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

The Christmas lunch at the Yew Tree was great fun and the food was delicious. Thank you to Sue O'Dell who did a great job organising it.

Alison has set up the new logo for Kipling clothing which can be purchased from JS Teamwear. It's very straightforward to order online. Wendy showed everyone her new hoodie.

We bought new cones last year in different colours to have fun with. Any ideas for fund raising greatly appreciated. It doesn't have to be horse related, it's good to attract a different audience and if anyone would like to be involved, please let us know.

Tracey organised a quiz last year at the Bear Inn which was a great success, over £700 raised. There will be another one this year.

We are most grateful our landlords Nick and Jo Clutton for the use of their wonderful field and for allowing us to keep our equipment out throughout our driving season.

Grateful thanks to my fellow officers Debbie and Jo, amazing servants who work extremely hard, together with the rest of the committee, thank you all. Thank you to Sue Lamb and Libby for refreshments, tea is always much needed. And- thank you Libby for your wonderful cakes!

Finally, thank you to everyone for being part of this amazing group. Last year was good, this year will be even better!

Agenda Item 5 Treasurer's Report and Adoption of Accounts - Debbie Smith

As noted in the directors' report to the accounts, (and by Jeni earlier) the decision to drive on only one day a week, whilst proving very successful, has meant that both income and associated costs have been reduced proportionately to the reduction in driving days. However, the cost of bringing ponies to the field does still exceed the driving donations we collect and so the difference has to be made up from fund raising and donations. We have been lucky over the past year to have had access to a larger number of ponies kindly brought along by their owners and we are very fortunate to have a landlord who is so supportive of our group.

As a reminder, we are obliged to prepare accounts on an historic cost accounting basis in line with the Companies Act 2006 and this is what has been distributed to members and is under consideration at this meeting.

For the numbers, firstly the income:

Total donations: £3,560 (prior year £4,979)

Total driving donations: £1,272.50 (prior year £1,460)

Total sponsorship donations: £2,287 (prior year £3,471)

Every single donation is much appreciated and needed but in particular we should acknowledge and thank:

- The Stroke Society which kindly donated their closing funds of £875 to our charity and with thanks to Sue O'Dell for supporting that donation
- £450 from the vets at the Heathfield show
- £500 from Sussex Steam Engine sponsorship as introduced by Sine

In addition, following the attendance of a few of us at the volunteers' day in Ripe last May we have been promised a donation of £500 from the Hailsham Lions pending arranging a mutually suitable time for them to present a cheque at the field. This has not been included in the accounts because there is no legally binding obligation upon them to honour that donation as at the year end but it is wholly expected that they will.

Other income, fund raising, raffles, training grant, reimbursements for things like our Xmas lunch and interest on our deposits totaled **£4,661** to finish with a total income for the 12 months to 31/12/23 of **£8,221** (prior year £9,184).

Again, thank you to all of those who donated raffle prizes for our events – during the last year that accounted for a staggering **£600 of income** as well as providing a huge amount of fun again for participants and helpers.

Our total operating costs for the year totaled: £10,571 (prior year £11,909)

This is inclusive of rent (again discounted by our very supportive landlord), insurance of carriages, public liability etc., RDA membership fees, attendance fees, mileage costs, Xmas lunch, depreciation and sundry costs. We also purchased some new colourful driving cones which cost £630 and like the obstacles purchased last year, are proving a very useful training aid. These have been expensed in the year because we are unable to insure them. We also had some large maintenance costs associated with our pavilion which included weather proofing paint and non-slip treatment for the ramp and came to just over £2,000.

This gives a total net loss for the year of £2,350 (prior year £2,725) in historic accounting terms. However, the net cash movement is a reduction of £1,070.

Balance Sheet

Key points:

Opening cash: £28,399, closing cash £27,329

Opening total net assets: £30,995

Closing total net assets: £27,846

As I have mentioned previously, as a rule of thumb, and something that has kept us “safe” financially in the past, the aim is to hold approximately two years’ worth of financial operating costs in reserve. Despite a further reduction in retained assets this year, the Group is still within this tolerance and as such can be considered stable for the short to medium term. However, we do need to fundraise every year to safeguard that position and to meet our operating costs to maintain and acquire new equipment. This is not something that our committee members have time to actively run and manage personally and so we would love to hear from anyone who might be able to help us out in that direction, come up with fresh ideas and rally support from within or beyond our existing volunteers. Fundraising which our members can participate in can also potentially add another dimension to our Group.

That said, we do have the Lions’ donation as mentioned, we have again been accepted by the Tesco Stronger Starts (previously Bags for Life) scheme where we will achieve between £500 and £1500 depending upon the voting which ends this weekend and our landlord kindly introduced us to a scheme to support local charities run by the local police force. I have been advised this week that we will receive a £500 donation from them “at some point” soon (I keep fingers crossed). We also have the music quiz night at the Bear, Burwash, which raised nearly £800 for us last year, on 6 April. All of these will contribute towards the cost of a new, maintenance free, carriage shed to replace our two small sheds, which are at the end of their lives.

So, going back to my official role, I need to tell you that the accounts as presented have been independently reviewed by a qualified accountant who is not associated with the Group in any other capacity and has verified that they have been properly prepared and presented. You received a copy of his statement along with the accounts.

Questions: -

Peter- Will the Tesco’s blue token grant go towards the new carriage shed although there will be a shortfall?

Debbie- Yes it will go towards the total cost, £ 3800 approx.

Jeni said the new shed will replace the two little sheds. Sue O’Dell has worked with the committee to order a new metal shed which is being made as we speak.

Jeni proposed a motion that accounts year ending 31/12/23 be adopted- Proposer Peter Horwood, Seconder Bev Worthington, unanimously approved.

Agenda Item 6 Changes to the Committee, Election of Directors/Trustees

- a) All committee members stood down. Jeni Longley left the room.
- b) Chairman: Debbie Smith proposes that Jeni Longley is re-elected as Chairman, seconder Alison Reilly. Vote -Unanimous.
Treasurer: Sheila Petitpierre proposes Debbie Smith is elected Treasurer, seconder Jane Kennan. Vote - Unanimous.
Secretary- Debbie Smith proposes Joanne McNicol is re-elected as Secretary, seconder Bev Worthington Vote –Unanimous.

- c) To elect for the coming year committee members/Directors:
Peter Horwood proposed the following trustees are elected: - Val Eyres, Jane Kennan, Sue O'Dell, Sine Porsch, Alison Reilly.
Secunder: Sheila Petitpierre. Vote -Unanimous.

Agenda Item 7 Appoint an auditor or independent examiner of the group.

Jeni Longley proposes that Simon Griggs is reappointed as auditor/independent examiner Secunder Debbie Smith. Motion carried.

Agenda Item 8 Any Other Business

Jeni- Start date for this season is provisionally 25/4/24, ground dependent. We will continue to drive once a week on Thursdays with each group driving on alternate weeks.

Jo-Endeavour awards. Drivers can set a goal e.g: -endeavor to drive a circle, drive a dressage test, cones course, whatever they like. Once they have achieved their goal, they will receive an Endeavour Award-a certificate and badge.

Sine- The Steam engines have offered Kipling a stand at the South of England Show in June to promote our group and raise funds.

Jo-we will also have a stand at Bexhill Horseshow on Bank Holiday Monday in May.

Meeting closed by Jeni Longley Chairman, 11:30am

Meeting followed by presentation of Helper's Award (Janet Bettell-Higgins Shield) recipient Jo McNicol, and an interesting talk from Tracey Spencer about her journey to The World Para Driving Championships in 2023.