

Central Scotland Smallholders Association

7.00pm 18th November 2009
Tower House, Clackmannan
General Committee Meeting

Present:

Carol Johnson, Gillian Brown, Lindsay McCann, Sandra Foxon, Annie Massie, Jane Coull, Gillian McKay, David Campbell, Paul Evans, Karen Evans, Dan Champion, Clare Hebbert, Ali Hibbert, Graham Johnson, Gillian McBain, Andrew Sharpe, Bob Menzies, Rosemary Champion.

Apologies:

Janis Sharpe, Daye Tucker, Eleanor Mitchell.

Rosemary thanked the meeting by thanking Sandy for hosting the meeting and providing refreshments,

1. Minute of meeting 14th October 2009

Agreed.

2. Charitable Status

➤ **Public Liability Insurance – Andrew stated that he had done some investigating in costs from a range of companies such as the Norwich Union and Ecclesiastical. Annual fees would definitely be cheaper if we had charitable status. Clare took the group through her briefing paper on gaining charitable status. An organization would need to have purposes or aims that include:**

- **The advancement of education**
- **The advancement of environmental protection and improvement**
- **The advancement of animal welfare**
- **Any other purposes that may reasonably be regarded as analogous to any of the purposes (such as the advancement of a philosophical belief).**

Trustees would need to be appointed, and it was generally felt that this could be a committee. The benefits to the CSSA would include fundraising opportunities, tax relief, higher profile, national recognition, education. It was felt that the Association might have to continue attending events with their stall.

The possible challenges would be a required structure, regulation, financial management, reporting and being committed to demonstrating public benefit. Further details can be found from the following websites; www.oscr.org.uk , www.opsi.gov.uk , www.scvo.org.uk, www.hmrc.gov.uk/charities .

It was agreed that further information would be sought, Action - Clare/Carol/Bob to investigate. Can we contact other smallholder associations to see if they had anything to learn from?

- Letham Food Festival – Although it was a good day, there were no new members joined as a result of attending the event. It was similar to a village fete and perhaps not the most appropriate venue for the Association to attend. It was felt that there was a need for a big banner with the name of the Association. Apart from that the stall looked good. It was felt that perhaps something more interactive was needed to draw in the public – Carol stated that the first event of the year had balloons, sweets and plant sale. The group discussed other suggestions such as a tombola. Perhaps we could take the stall to farmers markets? Overall it was noted that the stalls lose money, if we were to continue we would need to review what we did. This is not an effective way to get new members – later in the meeting it was suggested that perhaps tea shirts, skip caps, bags for life, fridge magnets could be sold at a small profit for funds.
- Website – Carol stated that she had recently processed some new members. All of whom had heard of the Association from the website. It was felt that perhaps this might be the best way to increase membership. Development of website could include local information and advice for central Scotland, welfare guides etc.
- Advertising – to be carried forward to the next meeting. Carol agreed to produce a newsletter, and print off Association leaflets/business cards for members to distribute e.g. at feed merchants etc. Links with Forth Valley Food Links were raised and Carol stated that the Association does get a mention in their newsletter. Diane Alderice is included in any membership emails.
- Membership – a hook to bring in new members could include reduced feed, and supplies. Both Andrew and David has been looking into this and there are benefits if we purchase in bulk.
- Equipment hire – Bob had not received any other suggestions. There followed a discussion and some new suggestions such as; fruit press, small livestock trailer, incubator, rotovator, EID scanner, log splitter.

3. 2010 Calendar

Annie is currently in Wales and is waiting on the calendar being produced. 50 calendars have been ordered and Annie has orders already for 23. Thanks to Annie for organising and completing this task.

4. Christmas Gifts

Carol suggested that perhaps we could produce a selection of gifts with a smallholding theme for Christmas which could be advertised on the website. It was felt that perhaps these could be produced to order for a small profit. Tea shirt design suggestions included dirty hands, “smallholders do it dirty” boot prints, and andy warhol wellies. Carol asked for members to try and do some designs if possible and bring to the next meeting.

5. Further Meeting Suggestions

Members suggested the following ideas; visit to herb producer (scot herb), cooking sessions (food for free, pigs trotters etc), fungal foray (next autumn), pruning, RSPB (visit to Gartmorn Dam), crafts (e.g. felt making), bush craft, book keeping (tax returns), making soap/toothpaste. Clare offered to do a course for members on preparing your sheep fleece and felt making.

6. Treasurers Report

Andrew confirmed that Oatridge college had now sent their bill for the training sessions held earlier in the year. There was just under £5,000 in the bank.

The last sheep course ran by Oatridge went well, and was very informative, in fact one person even paid to attend rather than join the association. Numbers were tight at the last course, and it was suggested that perhaps we need to advertise more widely to ensure a good attendance and perhaps make a profit for funds. Andrew stated that Oatridge is putting in a bid to renovate a steading on their grounds and run lifestyle course for small food producers such as smallholders. CSSA have been asked to be a partner organisation in this process.

7. Consultation

Carol distributed a recent Scottish Government consultation about electronic tagging for sheep that will be introduced January 2010. This is a European directive and has caused a lot of debate with national organisations such as the National Farmers Union and the National Sheep Association. Carol distributed information she had obtained from the NFU, and comments from the NSA forwarded by Daye. There was a discussion about the role of the association and it was agreed that a response to the consultation should be submitted on behalf of the Association. Action – Ali agreed to pull together a response, Paul offered to help if needed.

8. AOB

- Carol passed on information from Scottish Government urging farmers to make the most of government funded bluetongue vaccine stocks before their expiration date on November 6th.
- There was a discussion about gardening and horticulture and it was suggested that someone from the allotment association be invited as a guest speaker.
- Continental market in Alloa at weekend.
- 24/25th October conference organised by Transition Town.org about locally produced food.
- CSSA visit to winery on 27th November

9. **DONM** – Check www.smallholders.info for further details.