

# Central Scotland Smallholders Association

Est 2008

## Annual Report

February 2011

### Association Aims:

- Serving the needs and interests of existing & aspiring smallholders.
- Promoting and supporting sustainable land use.
- Promoting and supporting high standards of animal welfare.
- Contributing to relevant local and national consultations, representing the views of members and promoting their interests.

Welcome to our third annual report, and the opportunity that this brings to reflect on what has happened throughout 2010. This was a year of change, a new Chair, a new committee structure, and a vice chair. We also tried doing different things this year in response to member suggestions, some things worked and others didn't. We split our meetings up into business (committee) and social (members) with some speakers and some casual networking. We also tried to sell things at the Agricultural shows, and hatched meat bird chicks in our incubator.

### Chair

Thanks goes to Graham for taking on the role of Chair for the year. His efforts have been much appreciated and I'm sure our marriage will be fine again after a little counseling..... It was thanks to Graham that we won the best small display at the Doune and Dunblane Agricultural Show – which means we have to go back next year to hand over the shield!! Our chair rose to the challenge and was available all day at both Agricultural shows which included our popular live exhibits of turkeys and hens as well as our 'name the turkey' competition and plant sale. He has steered the Association with a steady hand through this year.

### Membership

Membership continues to grow, from 23 members in 2008 to 37 members in 2009 and 55 members in 2010. We grow as we learn and got three times more members at the Agricultural shows than last year! However the bulk of our membership are existing members choosing to continue their membership from the previous year.

#### New members

Agricultural show – 9

Website – 3

TAS – 7

Poster – 2

Existing member – 7

Smallholding Magazine - 1

The shows are a lot of work but do appear to raise the local profile of the Association and give members an opportunity to showcase what we do. There is always a good atmosphere around the shows and I think that it helps the members to bond with each other and contribute in any way they can. Membership and fees are important to the development of the Association, research into the success of similar organisations highlights that a large membership base gives a solid financial foundation to core Association activities. It is early days, but hopefully we can grow. Expenditure involved in running the Association is still to be truly costed and may not be sustainable at current levels. The matter of public liability insurance remains to be tackled.

### **Training**

Without Lottery funding the Association was unable to subsidise any training courses this year. However, three members undertook courses privately which the Association advertised and supported. A programme for 2011 is being developed – check out our website for details.

### **Website**

Our new website is live but still under construction, comments and suggestions are welcome.

[www.smallholders.info](http://www.smallholders.info)

### **Speakers**

The Association celebrated 2010 the Year of Biodiversity with an event back in January 2010 called 'Smallholding For Biodiversity' in the Mayfield Community Centre, St Ninians. With guest speakers from a range of organisations including Central Scotland Bat Group. We also had a good turn out for 'Barony Handcrafted Soap' at the Mayfield centre, and many members sought the opportunity to purchase Xmas gifts.

A lot of our social meetings, including our Xmas get together, have been provided by one of members Sandy, and a big thank-you goes to her and her husband for being such good hosts.

### **Visits**

- Members attended a visit to a small farm owned by Rita Adam. This was a very enjoyable occasion and an opportunity to meet with some rare breeds.
- In May some members also attended the Royal Welsh Smallholder and Garden Festival for the second time – a growing favourite, this event allows the opportunity to meet with minor smallholding celebrities such as Tim Tyne and Liz Shankland. As well as stocking up on supplies and getting business ideas.

### **Meetings**

We introduced our new committee structure this year in an effort to spread the load across a greater number of members. Commitment from committee members was variable which resulted in capacity issues, as a result some tasks were not undertaken

as well as they could have. Our committee has an action plan and comments or suggestions are welcome. It is hoped that minutes of our meetings (10/02/10, 14/04/10, 16/06/10, 11/08/10, 13/10/10) will be posted on our website, in the meantime contact the secretary for hard copies.

### **Newsletter**

We try to produce a seasonal newsletter for members and the public. This publication serves to maintain a link with those members who do not have access to the internet, or cannot attend the meetings. It is also a potential source of income through sponsorship and advertising. Back issues are available on our website.

### **Funding**

The Association continues to benefit from a range of funding sources:

- Advertising space in newsletter
- Calendar sales
- Membership fees
- Fundraising website

We have now purchased a Lotteries License which will enable us to undertake a range of fundraising activities throughout the year and at shows. Watch this space.... for an opportunity to win £100 launching shortly.

### **Calendar**

The Association produced it's second calendar this year. Thanks to Annie for pulling this all together. Don't forget to take your camera along with you and get that perfect picture for next years one!

### **Show What You Grow**

Once again our members rose to the challenge. The annual August BBQ was held at Clackmannan and thanks to Anne for being such a great host. The highlight of the day was the alternative 'Show What You Grow' competition. Thanks to everyone who participated.

### **The Future**

Looking back we have achieved a lot of things this year, and it remains for me to thank our current Executive Officers and committee. In particular thanks to Andrew for undertaking the Treasurer duties over the past couple of years. Every year we gain in confidence and experience. The Association is beginning to find it's feet and become a presence within Central Scotland. Please continue to support us throughout 2011!

Your Secretary  
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