

Ploughing Championship (Scotland) Ltd
Open Meeting, Sunday 10 December 2023
held at 1pm in Stanley & District Village Hall

Present: Derek MacIver (Chairperson); Ian Bain; Bill Daniel; Iain Brown; Drew McKendrick; Neil Ramsay; George Black; Wemyss Brown; Jock Aitchison; Norna Sutherland; Harvey Sutherland; Robert McKechnie; Iain MacRae; W B Grieve; G Hepburn Jnr; Lizzy Baxter (interim secretary); Alistair Davidson; Alan Senic; Hugh Currie; Ian Cruickshank; Dave Carnegie; Mark Skea; James Jack; Alex Harris; Ed Bennie; Jim Marrow; Gordon Hepburn Snr; Carol Jack; Colin Crawford; Brian Baxter; Evan Anderson; Gordon Mitchell; Angela Mitchell; Scott McIntosh; James Dunn; Margo Crawford; Willie McIntosh; Neil Keillor; Andrew Mitchell Snr; Joyce Mitchell; Elaine MacRae

In attendance - Fiona MacKintosh (minute taker)

1 Welcome

The Chairman, Derek MacIver, welcomed all to the meeting.

2 Apologies

Ali Greenhill; Gavin Robertson; Raymond Middleton; David Kirkpatrick; George McLaughlin; Alex Keith; Andrew Cuthbertson; Steven Tantanthon; Jim Edgar; Scott Alexander; Stephen Mackenzie; William Ronaldson; Robbie Gauld; Dennis Hampton; Jill Grieve; Struan Trewartha;

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting – 18th June 2023

Proposed by Dave Carnegie and seconded by Willie Grieve

4 Chairperson's Report of 2023 Scottish Ploughing Championships

2023 Scottish Ploughing Match Monktonhill

When I arrived on the Saturday afternoon, prior to the match, I could hardly believe the blue skies and how dry it was, compared to the rest of the country, which over the last few weeks had been drenched and was continuing to be soaked almost around the clock on a daily basis.

Sunday - On my arrival at Monktonhill on Sunday morning, I found Colin and Margo already hard at it, tidying and organising Scottish ploughing storage boxes. Hugh, Jake and Ross set to, to clear the shed, put the stage together, erect some signs and carry out the field's inspections.

Monday - Monday saw all the road signs being put out, the fields scratched and yard cleared.

Tuesday - During this day, the team swelled in numbers, this meant we were able to achieve all pinning etc.

Wednesday and Thursday - The final preparations were completed, thanks to a giant effort on everyone's part We continued to be blessed with good weather.

Thursday evening - As many as could attend, came along to the blessing of the plough in Saint Meddens Church in Troon. The excellent service was conducted by the Reverend Andrew McGurk, with readings being done by Andrew Cuthbertson and Robert McKechnie.

Friday DAY 1 - Competitors, Judges, Stewards, Officials, helpers and Committee members all arrived early, with quite a bustle of excitement and some trepidation for the day ahead. Almost all of the 98 entrants attended. The weather continued in our favour. Conditions were dry, (but too dry for some). There was a good footfall throughout the day, with lots of positive feedback coming from all areas. RHET had arranged for local school children to attend the match, which in turn enabled them to expand their existing knowledge about farming. This was very well accepted by the children particularly their trip around the plough fields in the trailers. Due to size of the site the people carriers were indeed a very welcome addition. We have to thank John McNae for supplying the

tractors and drivers for the towing of the three people carriers. It was a service which was very busy and appreciated by all on both days. We must also thank the many Trade stands and Craft stalls, who took time out of their usual busy days, to support our two-day event. All of those aforementioned exhibitors/sellers, reported very positive feedback and thanked us for their invite to the Championships. No results were issued on the first day, and the day concluded with the day 1 raffle being drawn.

Saturday DAY 2 - The day began with a parade, being led by a tractor painted in Doddie Weir's legendary tartan colours. We have to thank Robert McKechnie for streaming the parade live on Facebook. Once again, we had good dry conditions, which led to a record attendance from the public. Judging was completed in good time, which enabled the results to be tallied up without delay. The many winners of the various classes were presented with their trophies, rosettes and prizes by Andrew and Lizanne Cuthbertson. Congratulations to the Scottish Conventional Champion Andrew Mitchel snr and Scottish Reversible Champion Brian Baxter. The day ended with a most delicious meal being served up by the Staff at the Piersland House Hotel. I also must thank the Piersland for looking after us so very well throughout the whole week.

Sunday - It was extremely heartening to see so many people come to Monktonhill to help tidy up and pack everything away before we all departed to return home. Because of so many hands willing to help, the tidying was done in record time.

Also, I have to thank Drysdale catering for supplying great food for all the Ploughmen, Stewards, Judges, Officials and Sponsors. I also wish to thank everyone who has helped throughout the year, which in turn made this year's match a great success. It's all down to Teamwork.

Lastly, we have to give a huge thank you to Andrew Cuthbertson who made the land available and has been very supportive and helpful to us all, throughout the last few months.

5 **Feedback on 2023 Scottish Ploughing Championships**

Emails - most of the feedback after the results went out was very positive. The good weather certainly aided the day. The way the match was run was great; the competitors were made to feel welcome and being given lunch was a bonus. James Magnay said it was a great weekend. A suggestion was made to do away with the visitor class. Ken wood gave thanks and said that all competitors were happy and to keep up the good work. P Walker said the results made interesting reading and it was the first time that they had been given a competitor lunch and the pack given with the goodies was very welcome. There were a few more positive emails and some wishing to come back.

Scott McIntosh said that the match was well organised, and he enjoyed the weekend and it seemed to be a ploughing match. He added that the score sheets were a bit over complicated. It was pointed out that these had been taken from the world match. All in all it was good the number of aspects may need neatened up.

Willie Grieve – said the trailing competitors had competed for 8 years and this was the best Scottish one yet. Thought needs to be given to the size of the plots for the trailing ploughs as there was difficulty in turning.

Gordon Hepburn – the feedback for the Ferguson class was disappointing. They were given the chance to plough both days, but they declined. He said that some entered one day in the Ferguson class and one day vintage. It was good working with the Ferguson Club and it might be an idea to increase on this.

Jock Aitchison – tremendous food, straightness in every aspect, like the world style may need to be looked at. All in all, a good match, maybe keep some of the score sheet for the world style classes.

Dave Carnegie – said it was a good match. Looking after the ploughmen and the judges was a big plus. He said he disagreed with Jock, but he had never judged at a Scottish Match. He felt that we should stick to all aspects, and this may get a better score.

Iain MacRae – mentioned that all the young boys were delighted to get the chance to judge and to learn from the more experienced.

Willie Grieve – said that past chairman who judged had been delighted to be asked. He was pleased to see 3 judges conferring and suggested that we stick with this method and to encourage judges for the next few years.

Ian Anderson – said it had been a cracking weekend. The plot numbers perhaps should be looked at if ploughing for two days. It could have been an issue; he suggested a draw for numbers be made at the end of the first day. This is something that has been discussed and will be looked at for the future.

Willie McIntosh – enjoyed the match and liked having the parade on the second day, he asked if this could also be done on first day? The chairperson said that this could be looked at. There has been approx 6k views of this on facebook. Dave Carnegie added that the parade is okay if everyone is ready at their pin on time if people are not on time this does not work. Gordon Beattie added that the first day is busy and this may not be practical. It was also added by Neil that it may be difficult to find folk.

Gordon Beattie – said that he had been speaking with Nigel Vickers who had got on well and said that it was a well-run match. Everyone knew what they were doing.

Colin Crawford – said he would like to ask those assembled at this meeting whether they thought the format of Friday/Saturday was okay or would it be better to move to Saturday/Sunday format? It was suggested that that this be brought up at the AGM. It was asked if there were any issues with the Fri/Sat format? Gordon Hepburn Snr said that having the match on a Sunday may give a better gate. James Dunn said that having the Sunday for tidy-up was a bonus. Mark Skea said that the trade stands may prefer Fri/Sat.

It was suggested that the gate takings alone are not used to gauge whether the Fri/Sat format was a success, but good to take it into account along with other aspects. It was felt that the gate was not particularly good on the Friday and that possibly there were around 130.

Brian Baxter said that he enjoyed the weekend and suggested that the judging format be taken to the AGM. He proposed two judges at each end, for the World Style.

Gordon Hepburn Jnr mentioned for the school kids the Friday was good, and having the involvement with RHET. The kids are the future, and we need to them along, he added that it was great seeing their faces. Mark asked if some of the kids who came along on Friday came back on Saturday with their parents. It was thought that there had been some who did. Gordon Beattie added it was good working with the schools. Iain MacRae pointed out that for the 2024 match the schools will be on holiday, but we could speak with RHET in the area.

Dave mentioned that it had been suggested that the Fri/Sat format be tried out for 3 years. Dave also asked if there were 10 ploughing in a class would the 10 get through to the plough off or would this get cut to 7. Brian said that cutting the ploughs dilutes the pool for representatives. Willie said it encourages people if all go through, and this be for 10 or below.

Scott McIntosh said that the level of ploughing in the juniors shot up on the second day of ploughing. Willie McIntosh said that the numbers for second day ploughing depends on the land available.

For the Fri/Sat format the main sponsor wanted this format. Elaine MacRae mentioned that she had not got the full accounts and gave an overview. The gate income over the two days was

around £9k and that this was more than anticipated. She added that she thought a fair profit had been made, and that a large part of the income was down to Hugh and his team pursuing sponsors. Elaine said it did not sit well with her that ploughmen were paying £70 entry fee and not getting anything and that was why she felt that lunch should be provided for them. The chairperson said that the success was all down to teamwork, and it takes everyone to do the job. He added that a vote of thanks be given to Elaine.

Gordon Hepburn Snr – mentioned that it was a good idea to have the trade stands laid out the way they were done. Derek added that he had spoken with several of the trade stands who were happy. Hugh added that he had visited all the trade stands after the match and all were delighted, they would not be keen to do Sat/Sun.

Iain MacRae gave thanks to Mark's son for cleaning the toilets.

Brian Baxter mentioned that there had been one piece of correspondence regarding blue badge parking, and this is something we need to be mindful of in the future.

6 Correspondence Receive – email/post

Thanks, from RHET – Jane Cameron – the teachers were happy with the learning resources given. They also welcomed some to the tent on Saturday.

Adverts in the Scottish Farmer and the P&J – apologies have been received from the Scottish Farmer, they had made an error and misinterpreted the email sent with pictures. They will do a piece at the start of 2024.

Willie Grieve – mentioned that Alec Harris who is related to Stuart Trewartha wanted the Scottish Ploughing Association to know that the way Stuart was accepted and treated as a competitor was tremendous. Alec, who was also present, said that it was second to none.

Calendar – it had been asked if there was to be a 2024 calendar. This had been discussed and it had been felt that there was too tight a turn around time for this. A calendar will be done for 2025 and this will have pictures from the 2024 match and previous years. This will tie in with the 60th anniversary. Gordon Hepburn Snr suggested that we get someone to take pictures with the calendar in mind. Derek mentioned that if anyone had old pictures from previous matches across the years that could be used, if they could pass them on for consideration.

Neil Riddle – thanked the committee and others involved in the match who helped him as a trainee. He was delighted to take part on the Friday and worked with three very knowledgeable men.

Craft Stalls – there had been a few thanks for these, they had been happy to be in the main hub.

Thanks were extended to Colin and Margo Crawford for the merchandising stand.

Gordon Hepburn Snr asked how the raffle had gone and did the cloakroom tickets work well. The income from this was around £1200. Using cloakroom tickets saves on the printing costs, and licence fee etc. Willie Grieve added that there had been good prizes and that it was great having this on both days. It was suggested that we stick to using cloakroom tickets for this.

7 Training Day – Spring 2024

Various questions on this were posed – when to hold, where to hold.

Iain MacRae suggested that it should be held as close to the area where the match will take place. It had previously been suggested that this take place the day after the Black Isle Ploughing match, but Iain said that this date was not suitable.

It is possible that the host for the 2024 match, David Jack, will be able to provide 5-6 acres for this. Another suggestion was made to hold it nearer to the AGM date. There are number of matches which have been rescheduled due to postponement. After discussion and a few dates looked at a provisional date of Saturday 24th February was set.

8 **Ploughing Championships & Future Competitions**

- World – Estonia 16/17 August – Brian Baxter and Andrew Mitchell
- European Reversible – France in Sept – currently no representatives named.
- European Vintage – held with Irish Nationals. Dates have not yet been confirmed. The venue will be the same as last year in Ratheniska, Co Laois
- Five Nations – looking for hosts, this will possibly be in Wales but is to be confirmed.
- Six Nations – as above. Gordon Hepburn Jnr proposed that for the six nations we throw our hat into the ring. Wales have hosted twice. Scotland has not hosted since 2015. The 5 nations could be held alongside another event and suggest looking to hold the 5 nations for the future and look for a suitable venue. This can be looked at during the AGM.

Elaine mentioned that members of the committee etc plough in the match, however, people are also needed back at base, and it would be good if two did not plough.

Mark Skea asked what classes take place, the reply was 5 nations – world style and 6 nations vintage

- Site for 2024 – Newmore Farm, Invergordon – a site meeting needs to be held soon. A local meeting is to be held next week.
- Site for 2025 – Arbikie Farm, Inverkeillor, Arbroath, Angus – Dave is trying to contact someone here, but all on holiday. He will pursue.
- Site of 2026 – the suggestion was that this be held in the south, possibly East Lothian. Gordon Hepburn suggested advertising on Facebook Page that we are looking for a site for 2026, Robert McKechnie agreed to do this.

9 **200 Club Draw**

Last three draw results:

- March – Steven Eccles, David Taylor, James Edgar
- June – Gordon Hepburn (Snr), James Edgar, Donald Gavin
- Sept – T Greenhill, G Black, James Tait

A number generator was used to make the December draw, winners were Frank Blyth, Alex Robertson and Kevin Robson.

10 **AOCB**

Frank Blyth mans the stop and go sign for the match and it was agreed that he should be recognised for what he does for the Scottish Ploughing Championships. A gift voucher was proposed. This was agreed.

Young Plougher Development – this needs promotion and further discussion. It was agreed that the costs can be quite prohibitive and perhaps put more into the area where the match is happening to encourage. Elaine also suggested that young ploughers be invited to shadow as judges. A suggestion was made that they could plough on the second day and put a bit into the judging and ploughing giving feedback and have a mentor. Alec Harris said that the encouragement and assistance that was given to Struan made a huge difference which now has helped him at other matches. It is good to get encouragement and Struan thinks it would be good for other guys. Transport is one of the issues. It was suggested that we promote this as widely as possible, and to encourage youngsters in the area the match is being held. Gordon Beattie said if the youngsters are keen it is good, but if they are not keen it can be very defeating for a mentor. He added that we need to watch that any money/assistance given is fair. Perhaps free entry to those from the area the match is in. Mark suggested advertising more on social media, this is the way younger ploughmen

operate. More emphasis on the smaller ploughs as the amount of land needed for the bigger ploughs causes problems.

Judges Training Day – Willie Grieve suggested that a training day be held to encourage judges as there is not time to give tuition and judge at the same time. Maybe a bit of land to pinpoint judging in the summer. Judges are not always doing what they are asked to do on the sheet. This could maybe be promoted by the affiliated societies. He added that this was held two years ago, and it was good, perhaps two or three could be held. Brian Baxter agreed with Willie and suggested that this could be done regionally. Willie said that you would need the same mentors at each. Various issues with this were discussed including clashes of dates, locations. Mark suggested 15th June/15th July. It was felt that there could be possible problems educating experienced judges into new ways. Willie said that there is not enough time to do everything in one day. It was suggested there be a day for Judges and a day for youngsters. Two or three plots would be needed and could be ploughed the day before. Derek said we would see what we could arrange.

11 **Date of next meeting, AGM on Sunday 3rd March 2024**

The AGM will be held in Bridge of Earn on 3rd March.

Derek thanked all for attending and the meeting closed at 2.30pm with a with a vote of thanks to the Chair from Gordon Beattie.