

**Minutes of the Albion Cattle Society Committee Meeting**

**held by ‘on-line Zoom call’ on 27h June 2021**

**Committee Members present at the meeting**: John Ball, (Chairman) Lynn Parks, (Treasurer), Susannah Mannerings, (Secretary) Lili Kersey, (Registrations) John Pring and Mike Caunter.

Apologies: Colin Nankervis.

**Bull Kinship & Bull Selection**- JB thanked LK, Libby Henson & Tom Blunt for all their work. Having read LK’s explanatory report, the committee agreed to select the next bull on conservation grounds. With semen already collected from Bemborough ‘Arry, JB volunteered to inspect the next 2 top bulls on the list (as the other bull has been castrated) and report back to the committee.

MC asked if it was worth looking at sexed semen; good for embryo work though conception rates can be lower. MC volunteered to look into this with Scawfell Genetics. SM said sending the bull to stud rather than on-farm collection should be considered because ACS has recently gained semen enquiries from Northern Ireland. JB thought this would be too expensive.

SM asked about selecting bulls for their meat or milk traits. JB & LK said whilst gaining help from RBST, we would select the next 2 bulls on conservation grounds. MC stated that breeders are welcome to collect from their own Albion bulls & can select for other traits. Some bulls will be useful for crossbreeding purposes. MC & SM felt that Albion crosses could help the breed; if they were wanted commercially, it would automatically help the pedigree Albions & bring income for more semen & bull sales. JB was not positive about cross-breeding, suspecting that people want a quick access to the breed & that it needs to be emphasised that such animals will not be eligible for grading up.

LK said she could also run a kinship report to find a shortlist of cows most suitable for embryo work.

**Society Rules**-SM had previously sent round rules of the past ‘Blue Albion’ societies for the committee to peruse. JB commented that in 1920s the society was far larger & that many of their rules were not applicable any more. SM agreed as they paid wages to staff & owned property. MC said rules would have been updated over the years which has not happened with the Albions as it was wound down in 1966. It was agreed for MC to look closer at the rules needed for ACS, looking at the rules of other smaller cattle societies and maybe working with his mother who has much experience with regulations of sheep societies. This will take some time, therefore the rules will need to be omitted from this year’s centenary Herd Book.

**Centenary Weekend –**SM reported that this was still on course & it was time to find out numbers for catering purposes. SM to send out letter with reply form. Many people have volunteered to write articles for the journal & an artist is designing the cover. More articles were suggested eg. Meet the AI bulls, meet a new member, semen collecting, meet the Committee. For the Herd Book, it was suggested that all current live Albions should be listed (approx. 258) along with another list of all 2020 registrations. LK said some members still need to choose their prefix names.

LK thought it a nice touch to ask hosts of the centenary weekend to judge entries for the calendar competition along with a popular vote: everyone agreed.

**Fund Raising**- SM said her friend is willing to help and advise how to run the Facebook centenary auction and that 25 varied lots were already donated. MC said he could help publicise this. Aimee Mills will also help as she runs the ACS Facebook page. JB thought 30 lots would be ample.

**Pedigree Steers**- The need for this was discussed. JP said it would give provenance, particularly to his black steers being sold for beef. It could also help with TB claims & could give improved calving history of registered Albion cows. MC said some butchers display these certificates in their shops and that other cattle societies simply ‘notify the births’ of steers for an administration fee. It was agreed for LK to ask Libby Henson how easy this would be to do & also how it affects the whole database system, ie populations.

**Unpaid/ Paid Members**- LP stated that not many people are paying their annual membership fee and suggested sending out an annual invoice to members each December (SM proposed, LK seconded) Reminders could be sent out in January. It was pointed out that some people like to pay annual fees with a standing order but ACS would need an up-to-date bank account. LP stated that the current passbook style bank account was closing on 31/12/21. Everyone agreed to allow LP to find a more suitable & modern account to open.

**Fangra Application-** SM said this was a work in progress which could be worked on after the Centenary weekend and associated fund-raising.

**AOB- AI bull advertising.**

It was agreed to remove the rarest and minimally available bulls from the ACs website, such as Ryleys Blue Mink and Ryleys Boy Blue. LK said they could then only be suggested for use if a Kinship report showed this, meaning that we move forward and use newer bulls. RBST always keep some semen for conservation use, MC said he will offer RBST some from B ‘Arry as well.

**AOB-Committee functions & roles.**

It was agreed that:

LK : breeding enquiries and registrations

LP : membership enquiries

SM : semen, fund raising and general enquiries.

There is no need to co-opt Aimee Mills yet but she must be informed of things as many enquiries come via Facebook.

It was emphasised that good communication is vital, the committee must email updates & immediate replies need to be sent- they need not be long messages.

**AOB- Postage costs.**

LK stated she was happy to pay for postage of pedigree certificates, as a kind donation to the society.

**Next committee meeting**; 18th September, after AGM.