

# Pre Basic Growers Association

Minutes of the 45<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Association held in the Fairmont Hotel, St Andrews, on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016

## Present

### Committee Members

Michael Wilson                      Chairman  
Andrew Skea                         Vice-Chairman  
Calum MacIvor  
Graeme Currie  
Rob Scott  
William Campbell  
Sandy MacGowan

### Full and Associate Members

Niall Arbuckle, Michael Paul, George MacKay, Peter Grewar, Kate Ralston, Vincent Lumb, Alan Gordon, John Gordon, Charlie Greenslade, Derek Scott, Jamie Grant, David Scott, Eric Anderson, Grant Cuthill, Alistair Redpath, Nigel Ebblewhite, Jim Cruickshank, Claire Hodge, Triona Davey and Stephen Pedgriff.

### In Attendance

Colin Jeffries                      SASA  
Jackie Gibson                      SASA  
Sandra Goodfellow               SASA  
John Ellicott                        SASA  
Gerry Saddler                      SASA  
Bill Rennie                         PBGA secretary

**1 Apologies** Apologies were received from John Anderson, John Bradshaw, Lesley Tweedie, Colin Blackhall, Johnnie Martin and Ian Fordyce.

**2 Minutes of the 2015 AGM** The minutes of the 44<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting, held in the Exhibition Centre, Harrogate, on Friday 13 November 2015 had been circulated to members prior to the meeting and were approved by Jamie Grant and Eric Anderson.

**3 Matters arising from the 2015 AGM minutes** There were no matters arising from the minutes that were not covered by the agenda.

**4 Chairman's Report for 2015-16** The chairman, Michael Wilson, welcomed members to the Forty Fifth Annual General Meeting of the Association –the first AGM to be held in St Andrews. Once again AHDB Potatoes had been very helpful in finding accommodation for the AGM and we were grateful to them for the use of the meeting room this evening. On Association membership, although we had lost two of our long standing members during the year we gained a small number of new members and membership stands at 40 Full Members and 16 Associate Members.

It remains the case that the Association is regularly consulted by the Scottish Government and others on matters of early seed production and we both value this relationship and welcome the opportunity to contribute. These consultations and our close relationship with policy makers and the scientists at SASA mean that we are able to influence policy on seed marketing and the areas funded by research and development. We had also made representations to SASA on our members' behalf during the year. Several of our members have been directly involved in funded R and D work on blackleg over the last 2 years and our willing participation has been welcomed by those responsible for the research. Andrew Skea attended a recent review meeting on the topic on our behalf last month and there will be more on this later in the meeting. Initial findings do seem to confirm growers' observations that infection of pre basic seed can occasionally occur from aerial spread of the bacterium. Bill Rennie and the chairman attended a UK Consultative Panel meeting in Harrogate last year following the potato event there and there will be a full UK Consultative Panel meeting at the Fairmont Hotel tomorrow morning. An interesting outcome of last year's meeting was that the English authorities agreed to change the proposed timings to introduce the new classification arrangements in line with our arrangements following representations from the industry there.

The committee met at John Anderson's in Kincaig in February to plan our summer study visits and to deal with other Association business. A decision then was to plan for a two day study visit to the Scottish Borders in July and this resulted in excellent visits to Peter Shiells at Mertoun Estate and to Greenvale's store and pack house facilities. Our thanks to Peter and to Dan Parsons, farm manager at Mertoun, for what turned out to be a most interesting and worthwhile visit. Thanks too to Euan Stark and to Niall Arbuckle for their hosting of the visits to the Greenvale sites. Our timing for these visits proved to be impeccable given that many of our participants travelled south through torrential rain before things cleared up for our St Bothwells visit. A visit to the Born in the Borders craft brewery at Kelso gave us an interesting angle on farm diversification and an overnight stay in Kelso allowed some discussions to continue until the small hours.

Another decision made at Kincaig was that this year's Dr Hardie Award would be made to Dr Colin Jeffries who has managed the National Quarantine Unit at SASA for many years and who has made a major contribution to the monitoring of potato germplasm moving in international trade. The Award will be presented to Colin at tonight's dinner.

We continue to have excellent relationships with the staff at SASA and Triona Davey who took over from Denise A'Hara has given us great support throughout the year. We were pleased that Triona and her colleagues were able to join us on our study visits to the Borders

in July. We also recognise and value the excellent relationship we have with John Spiers and his colleagues in Saughton House.

In closing the chairman expressed his thanks to his fellow committee members who had given him great support during his two years as chairman. The chairman wished his successor, Andrew Skea, a successful two years as incoming chairman.

The Association's committee includes the following members: Andrew Skea, Graeme Currie, Rob Scott, Lesley Tweedie, William Campbell, Sandy MacGowan, Calum MacIvor, Ian Fordyce and Craig Bartlet.

Members were encouraged to let committee members know of any issues they thought the Association should be engaging with.

In closing, the chairman hoped that members had found the Seed Event worthwhile and he looked forward to the evening dinner.

**5 Financial Report** The treasurer presented the financial report for 2015-16. It showed a modest surplus of income over expenditure of £226. As in past years there were still some subscriptions outstanding though a few had been paid since the accounts were audited on 30 September. The level of expenditure was modest and was in line with past years. The generous sponsorship contribution of £100 from AHDB towards the summer study visit was noted. The year end balance in the National Savings account was £9,990 and the current account balance stood at £3,174, though the secretary's honorarium and expenses for 2015-16 (£1,789) had still to be claimed. The financial report was approved by Graeme Currie and Sandy MacGowan.

**6 Election of Office Bearers** Andrew Skea was proposed as chairman by Sandy MacGowan and Mike Wilson, and William Campbell was proposed as vice-chairman by Mike Wilson and Andrew Skea. Members agreed that the current committee should continue for a further year.

**7 Appointment of Auditors** The reappointment of Bell and Company, Perth, as the Association's auditors was proposed by the chairman and approved by members.

**8 Membership Fees for 2016-17** The committee's proposal that membership fees be held at £45 for Full Members and £25 for Associate Members was approved by the meeting. It was agreed that the secretary's honorarium for 2015-16 should continue at £1,200.

**9 Dr James Hardie Memorial Award** As was mentioned in the chairman's report the Dr Hardie Award will be presented to Dr Colin Jeffries of SASA at the evening dinner.

**10 Summer Study Visits 2017** The committee's proposal was that there should be an overseas study visit in 2017. Early suggestions were that visits might be made to the Netherlands, to see how the new EU marketing arrangements were being managed there, or to Germany. The committee was charged with considering these options ahead of its spring meeting at Kincaig.

**11 Reports on Current Blackleg Work** Gerry Sadler reported briefly on the AHDB/Scottish Government funded blackleg research (though this had also been covered at workshop sessions during the Seed Event). Pre basic seed growers were thanked for their participation in the project. Dr Saddler said that SASA hoped to follow up on earlier work with seed producers by contacting the buyers of pre basic seed to record their experiences as customers. He also reported that SASA would sample and test for bacterial loadings a proportion of pre basic seed in 2017 though he emphasised that this was for SASA's internal use only and that results would be entirely confidential. Claire Hodge of AHDB suggested that it would be useful to hold a review meeting with pre basic growers in the New Year when proposals for future work could be considered.

**12 Classification and Plant Health Issues** Triona Davey of SASA reported on growing crop inspections of pre basic seed stocks in 2016.

**13 Any Other Business** Triona Davey noted that SRUC intended to submit a project proposal to the Global Food Security programme 'Resilience of the UK food system in a global context' which would examine how the increasing number of potato varieties within the UK food chain is affecting the resilience of the industry. At this stage the project proposers were seeking support from industry bodies and Triona asked whether the Association might support the proposal in principle. The meeting agreed that the secretary should send a letter of support (since done).

The meeting closed with a vote of thanks to the chair.