

# HOLT & DISTRICT FARMERS' CLUB

FOUNDED 1948

President: Richard Brooks

Chairman: Pat Cubitt

Vice-Chairman: Andrew Ross

[www.holtfarmers.club](http://www.holtfarmers.club)

## CLUB MATTERS October 2022

**Michael Pollitt** has proven once again that he is more than chauffeur for **Ken Leggett**, the MBE and park runner who expects to defend his seat on Broadland Council next year which will be his 92<sup>nd</sup>. Michael himself is also irrepressible in reporting farming and rural matters, including our AGM – see attachment - even though he retired from the EDP fully eight years ago. Apart from his role as my oppo at Stalham he is involved with Norfolk Churches, the Camp Hill Trust at Thornage Hall, YANA and much more. Nor has he lost any of his interrogative mien as was evident at the AGM with a pertinent query for our retiring Treasurer **Tony Williams** who bravely presented our accounts with **David Cunningham** having succumbed to *covid* on the morning of the AGM. David's colleague at Larking Gowen **Laurie Hill** has indeed agreed to become our new Treasurer and there may be a further changing of the guard with **Bob King** winding down his role at Crisp Malting although we hope he can continue his double act with **Chris Borrett** for a good while yet.



Bob alluded to the perennial planning saga at Great Ryburgh which has been rumbling on for a decade or more. Having taken NNDC to the Supreme Court, and won, Crisp Malting are still trying to finalise consent to expand their production by half as much again alongside a 50 home residential development. Great Ryburgh is one of the few villages in North Norfolk that has adopted a Neighbourhood Plan (Saxthorpe is another) which gives the Parish Council greater powers as part of the coalition government's Localism agenda. The Crisp packet has been undetermined for two and a half years which is as long as the one at Aldborough where a vast expansion is proposed at a pig farm on the edge of the village. No progress has been reported on the poultry proposals at Heydon for six months even though Broadland District Council is sharing the decision making – or lack thereof. Poultry houses have and are proposed to be replaced on the **Picken** chicken empire at Fakenham and Hempstead respectively. **Ray** is struggling healthwise but he will be cheered if his son Paul persuades the planners with a site for a new village hall and parking for Hempstead Church. They have already benefited from Fakenham expanding northwards towards the bypass to swallow up their Brick Kiln Poultry Farm site. Another member from the Fakenham fringe is **Colin Ross** who, sadly, has similar health issues. His nephews **Andrew** and **Stuart** are facing another cable trench being scored across the A148 between High Kelling and Bodham where trial trenches were being dug for the Boreas Offshore Wind Farm. Vattenfall claim this will be a great boost for the local economy with the Norfolk Zone expected to eventually power more than four million homes from what will be one of the largest offshore wind zones in the world. Meanwhile **John Mack** and his son David are keeping their options open on the 66 metre high turbine that they have permission for nearby. There was disquiet when our latest PM mooted a U-turn over onshore solar projects where building on Grade 3b land may be blocked but I guess everything is now “up in the air”.

Might the Tories also dilute or even kill off the mooted nature friendly subsidies under ELMS ? Whoever forms the new government huge uncertainty remains over so many rural issues including the lack of seasonal workers, astronomic fertilizer prices, avian flu and water. The saga of Catfield Fen culminated last month in the landowners, Mr & Mrs Harris, winning a case whereby the Environment Agency will have to pay greater heed to the effects of water abstraction in and around The Broads. Older licences are already being reviewed on the grounds that they are unsustainable and from 2028 the Agency will be able to change them without offering compensation. Long term solutions are being sought and the idea of funnelling water from the River Trent catchment area into East Anglia is being revisited as The Grand Union Canal Transfer Scheme. Another idea has been the Felixstowe Hydrocycle where farmers have devised a scheme where drainage water is saved rather than being pumped into the North Sea.

*James Beamish*



*Holkham Farm Manager*

Holkham is a good example of the problems we face. We had a grand tour there hosted by James Beamish who has reported how, with four reservoirs, he was able to save his potato crops from this summer's drought, but this left nothing for his corn and other crops. His biggest worry is that if, as in 1975 and 1976, we get another drought next year then the effect could be catastrophic. The rain over recent weeks has been welcome but we need a really wet winter to raise the water tables and replenish the reservoirs. Warm as well as wet, I guess, to avoid powercuts. Here's hoping.

*Tim*

P.S. By the way I trust you raised a glass for Nelson on Trafalgar Night.

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