

**MINUTES of the 2022 AGM of FCA MEMBERSHIP LTD**, held at Forest Worker Zone Marquee, APF Exhibition Ground, Ragley Estate, Alcester, Warwickshire, B49 5PS  
On Friday, 23rd September 2022, at 5:30pm

**Present**

Donald Maclean, Alun R. Jones, Simon Bowes, Nick Adams, William Jackson, Angela Smith, Matthew Allen, Colin Ashby, Mary Ashby.

**Welcome**

The meeting was opened by Donald Maclean at 5.30pm. He welcomed everyone and thanked them all for taking the trouble to attend.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from David Gillett, Dan Green, David Allen, Campbell Logue & Mike Milne Home.

**2. Approval of 2021 AGM Minutes**

The AGM 2021 Minutes were approved. Proposed by Alun R. Jones & seconded by Simon Bowes.

**3. Matters Arising**

Donald Maclean confirmed that there was no Matters Arising.

**4. Chairman's report:**

Donald Maclean reported on the activities of the year. He explained that the industry was beset with problems and that a shortage of money was driving decision making, like never before. Slow and non payments have risen significantly and the state forestry bodies don't seem to know what they are supposed to do next. Despite the restrictions of the pandemic being over, the public sector appears not to have been informed. Singling out Forest and Land Scotland (FLS), although they are by no means unique, he commented on the slow pace of decision making, which is causing problems for contractors across all sectors. Huge delays in procurement exercises cannot all be down to incompetence and there is a feeling that a lack of finance may be partly to blame.

We are in a cost of living crisis and are beginning to see a cost of working crisis. This is only exacerbated by the reluctance, or inability, of large companies to help out; something that became very apparent during the last few months, when fuel prices have risen so sharply. We are facing a difficult future.

The Chairman said he felt personal disappointment that last year (2021) the Association posted a small loss. This was attributed to the Covid relief that allowed members to miss paying subs during the difficult times of the pandemic. Finances have since been balanced out this year by members, who have since caught up and the £12,110 surplus when corrected is more in line with what might be expected at around £6,000 each year, over the last two years.

The volunteer effort is waning. Change is required if the FCA is to remain sustainable. The current Board and Policy Committee members are all ageing and all have their own businesses to run. Coupled with a marked rise in contractor complaints, this is creating a critical strain on the Association's volunteer staff. It is time to take a serious look at employing a professional who would be tasked with much of this workload. We do have new FCA Policy Committee members coming in, but they will take time to bed in to their roles.

Membership numbers now sit at 413, up from 395 the previous year. However, the percentage of new members joining at Category 1 is increasing significantly and there are some members downgrading to the less expensive categories. It may be time to streamline the category system, which has become less relevant than it once was.

**5. Finance Statement:**

We posted a profit of £12,110 for the year. As already stated, this is extraordinarily high for a year and can be explained by loyal members who took advantage of our subscription 'holiday' last

year and paying 'extra' to make up for it. The board is humbled by such a gesture and from so many members. The balance sheet stands at £117,609.

**6. Proposal to adopt the Financial Reports & Statements presented:** The accounts were proposed as accurate and approved. Proposed by William Jackson and seconded by Nick Adams

**7. Any other business:**

Questions from the Floor - Is it the business of the FCA to act as debt collectors?

In the first instance, we believe so. Most of our interventions yield some success, even if it is only partial. However, this is one of the many things putting such a strain on the Policy Committees. It is the Association's role to challenge the status quo and late or non payment of accounts is something that seems to be an integral part of our industry. Would it be possible to add an extra fee to subscriptions to fund an insurance scheme that would provide a legal service from a retained solicitor? In the discussion that followed, it was decided this was a workable solution if handled correctly and it was agreed that as well as pursuing this, the Policy Committees would put a question to the membership to try and identify whether anyone has the requisite legal expertise.

Will Jackson thanked the Board for the work they do in keeping the Association running and offered his thanks to the membership for the donations made to the Ukraine fund he has been involved in over the last few months.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and for being so forthcoming with their questions and suggestions.

The meeting was closed at 7.05pm.

**AGM ends**