

**MINUTES of the AGM of FCA MEMBERSHIP LTD, held at
the Forest Worker Zone Marquee,
Stand 1015-1040
APF Exhibition Ground,
Ragley Estate, Alcester,
Warwickshire, B49 5PS
On Friday 20th September 2024, at 5:30pm**

Present

Donald Maclean, Simon Bowes, Alun Jones, Nick Adams, Owen Konig, Tom Powell, Phil Dunford, David Gillett, Charlie Fulton, Colin Ashby, Mary Ashby & Greg Tickner.

Welcome

Donald Maclean welcomed all present. He thanked the Forest Workers Zone for allowing the use of their marquee for the meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Campbell Logue, Mike Milne Holme & Neil Holding.

2. Approval of 2023 AGM Minutes

The AGM 2023 Minutes were approved. Proposed by Simon Bowes & seconded by Nick Adams.

3. Matters Arising

Donald Maclean confirmed that there was no Matters Arising.

4. Chairman's report:

Donald Maclean reported on some of the activities of the year.

The difficulty of attracting new entrants to the industry, both workers and Contractors, was highlighted, along with some of the glaringly obvious reasons for this. With the majority of Contractors experiencing abuse and exploitation by many of the major 'clients' controlling the sector, people continue to leave the sector. People also leave through retirement and the industry's failure to replace them with young blood will continue the downward spiral that has existed for some years now.

Despite the large amount of rhetoric suggesting that there are all manner of initiatives in existence to deal with this problem, Donald felt this was just hot air, being blown by the usual suspects, who are largely the cause of people leaving the industry in the first place. Whilst this situation continues, the future does not look promising.

The standard of training available to the industry was also discussed, and yet again, the involvement of the usual suspects was raised. This time, Confor were highlighted for their efforts in promoting the 'corporate forestry' agenda at the expense of the wider sector. The secrecy surrounding their plans to set up a 'training hub' was just another example of this.

5. Finance Statement:

Donald Maclean reported a surplus of £6119.00 for the year. As always, Donald asked the members to consider issues that they felt the Association might consider funding from this surplus. Membership numbers currently stand at 324, which was a significant drop of 36 from 2023.

6. Proposal to adopt the Financial Reports & Statements presented:

The accounts were proposed as accurate and approved. Proposed by Charlie Fulton & seconded Alun Rees Jones.

7. AOB

This consisted of a wide range of topics presented from the floor.

Members highlighted how difficult they were finding it to cope with the increased costs of doing business whilst there was no recognition of this in contract rates. This was making things very

hard for everyone, but particularly for small businesses, who are also likely to be amongst the newer ones.

Nick Adams has worked with Greg Tickner to produce a large suite of entry level compliance documents that will be particularly useful to new businesses and will save a huge amount of time and effort, particularly when preparing tenders for work. They are now available on our website. Greg has joined us at the APF show to present these and a wider range of optional services that his company can provide to businesses.

Better focus on the retention of skilled workers was suggested, rather than simply relying on new entrants. Those currently working in the industry must be worth something, surely.

Donald Maclean closed the event by thanking everyone for taking the time to wait after the show to attend the meeting. Despite the doom and gloom, it is clear that the industry and the FCA has a large number of dedicated people who are willing to make efforts to improve things.