

INVITATION TO THE CLA KENT BRANCH AGM

14 SEPTEMBER 2021
HIGHLAND COURT FARM



PROGRAMME

- 10.30 Arrival at Highland Court Farm for registration and refreshments
- 11.00 Kent Branch AGM in the Night Yard
- 11.15 Address by CLA President, Mark Bridgeman
- 11.45 Welcome by HICO Group CEO, Gary Walters
- 12.15 Drinks reception
- 12.45 Two course BBQ Lunch in the Courtyard
- 14.00 Tours of the Estate, choose one on the day to take in either:
1. Highland Court's environmental scheme in action. Looking at the species-rich areas which have been managed for nature.
 2. Highland Court's diversification and evolution. A look at the history and changes since c.1900.
- 16.00 Finish with Tea/Coffee and depart

This year's Annual General Meeting is to be held on Tuesday 14 September 2021 at The Old Dairy, Highland Court Farm, Bridge, Canterbury, Kent CT4 5HW

CLA South East would like to thank Kreston Reeves for their valued support.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. To confirm the Minutes of the last meeting held on 5 October 2020
3. Matters arising from the Minutes
4. Election of Officers for 2021/2022
 - a) President
 - b) One representative to Council
 - c) Committee
5. To receive and adopt the Chairman's Annual Report for 2020/2021
6. Any other business.

Nominations for office or for membership of the Committee as given in item 4, or any resolution a member may wish to propose, must reach the Regional Director, in writing by 31 August 2021.

HIGHLAND COURT FARM

Highland Court Farm was purchased by Walter Whigham in 1928 when he decided to leave London and it remains in family ownership.

The farm was the home farm to Higham Park, a Palladian mansion on the outskirts of Canterbury, which Walter Whigham renamed Highland Court in a nod to his Scottish ancestry. The house was requisitioned during the war and was later converted into a hospital, becoming part of the Kent and Canterbury hospital. The NHS later sold the house, and it remains in private hands.

The farm has reflected the changes in agriculture and moved from being a mixed farm to a fruit farm, growing different types and varieties of fruit to lengthen the season. More recently the farm has become far more of an apple factory to meet the standards set by the supermarkets.

Redundant farm buildings have been repurposed into artisanal production and offices – and a venue.

Over the past few years, the arable farming has been moving toward more sustainable methods. It is a LEAF demonstration farm and with some areas which have been in HLS for some years. These areas link up with neighbouring farms to make what most recently would be called a "farming cluster".

Highland Court Farm reflects the oft-competing pressures on landowners; grow food, enhance the local economy, provide more access, tackle climate change, recover lost biodiversity... this list is not exhaustive.



BOOKING YOUR PLACE AT THE AGM

To book your place at the AGM please login to your 'My CLA' account on www.cla.org.uk and click on Events. Tickets cost £45 inc VAT. You can pay by card online, or by bank transfer or cheque following your booking. Please note, if paying by cheque, your booking will not be confirmed until the cheque is processed by Finance, and you may receive payment reminders in the interim between booking and confirmation. If you are having difficulties, please call the South East office on 01264 313434 or southeast@cla.org.uk.

This event will only run if Covid guidelines permit. If the event is cancelled, we will offer you a full refund.

Bookings close 7 September 2021.



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – KENT BRANCH

After a very strange 18 months, and far too many Zoom meetings, I am delighted that our AGM is once again face-to-face. The Covid-19 pandemic's impact on work, family life and well-being has been far-reaching, but it is a pleasure to finally welcome you to a real CLA event.

The rural sector, not for the first time, has had to adapt and change to the challenges and opportunities posed. Farmers were designated key workers, and while many of those employed in hospitality have spent much of the last year furloughed, the 2021 summer season has brought high levels of bookings and business for many. A lot of CLA members will have used this time of enforced lockdown to assess their businesses, and to consider how best to play the cards they have been dealt.

It is perhaps easy to forget that so much has happened since our virtual AGM of 2020. At the turn of the year, and after months of winding negotiations, many farmers and rural businesses breathed a sigh of relief as the UK and European Union finally agreed a deal that will define our future relationship. The EU is a key market for many CLA members, and will remain so, and it is important trade is kept as simple and low-friction as possible, particularly for us here in Kent. In addition, as we transition away from CAP towards ELM, the CLA has been lobbying Government for as much clarity as possible to help members plan. The CLA can help you understand the changes in agriculture policy, how they will affect your business, and give you advice on how to move forward into the new world.

Other areas the CLA has been working on include connectivity, which varies so wildly across Kent, and managing public access rights, especially in light of the changes seen during lockdown. Fresh policies are being promoted to simplify the tax and planning systems for businesses wishing to diversify, while investment in skills and training is required to support job creation in local areas.

With the UK due to host the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow in November, the focus for our industry will be on how to grow the economy, mitigate climate change and reverse biodiversity decline, all at the same time.

Turning to activities in Kent, while most physical events and shows were cancelled, the CLA has run a busy programme of online seminars and workshops, covering a range of issues from water to succession. It has been pleasing to see so many members embrace technology and get involved. Face-to-face meetings and events are starting up again; over the coming weeks these will include meetings with the Chief Constable and re-elected Kent Police and Crime Commissioner Matthew Scott, with whom we work closely to ensure rural issues remain high on the agenda, and the delayed presentation of our Emsden Trophy, honouring farmers' conservation work in Kent.

Key advice topics raised by Kent members have included planning and diversification, particularly around the 56-day option for pop-up campsites and events. Other areas have ranged from business rates to legal advice on property agreements and succession. The CLA has also been appearing in or on TV, radio, newspapers, magazines and websites across Kent over the past 12 months raising awareness of rural issues such as fly-tipping, connectivity and promoting the Countryside Code, including BBC South East Today, the Kent Messenger and BBC Radio Kent.

I would like to thank the South East team, as well as the team in London, for their continued hard work on behalf of us all.

Gary Walters



MINUTES OF THE 2020 KENT BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD VIA ZOOM AT 2PM ON THURSDAY 15 OCTOBER 2020

Present:

Branch President, Philip Merricks
Branch Chairman, Gary Walters
CLA Vice President, Victoria Vyvyan
Director South East, Michael Valenzia
13 Members

The Branch President welcomed everyone to the AGM and thanked Victoria Vyvyan, CLA Vice President, for attending. He thanked Gullands Solicitors for their kind partnership of the AGM and welcomed their representative, Paul Burbidge. He also thanked Kreston Reeves for their kind partnership and welcomed their representatives Mike Dyer and Simon Budden.

1. Apologies for Absence

Formal apologies had been received from 4 members.

2. To confirm the Minutes of the last Meeting

The Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held at AC Goatham on 4 June 2019 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Branch President.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

4. Election of Officers for 2020/21

a) Re-election of Branch President

The Chairman took over the meeting for the election of the Branch President. The re-election of the current Branch President, Philip Merricks, was proposed by Gary Walters, seconded by John Marland and carried unanimously.

b) One Representative to the CLA Council

The meeting passed back to the Branch President. Sarah Webster proposed Gary Walters for Representative to Council, which was seconded by Charles Tassell and carried unanimously.

c) Branch Committee

The President was delighted to announce that Charles Atkins, Evan Bowen-Jones, David Bradley, Eliza Ecclestone and Iain Morris had agreed to join the Committee.

The President also announced that Hugh Boucher, Judith Norris and Nigel Snape had resigned, and thanked them for their support.

Charles Atkins	Hon Michael John Knatchbull
Edward Barham	Iain Morris
Evan Bowen-Jones	James Pavey
David Bradley	Edward Plumpton
Allan Buckwell	Charles Tassell
Eliza Ecclestone	Gary Walters
Bryony Heaven	Michael Wooldridge

The election of the Committee for 2020/21 was proposed by George Horne, seconded by Nick Tapp and carried unanimously.

5. To Adopt the Chairman's Annual Report for 2019/20

The adoption of the Annual Report was proposed by Allan Buckwell, seconded by Michael Wooldridge and carried unanimously.

6. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The Branch President concluded the Kent AGM and introduced CLA Vice President Victoria Vyvyan.

KENT BRANCH COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT
Philip Merricks

CHAIRMAN
Gary Walters

VICE CHAIRMAN
Charles Tassell

COMMITTEE
Charles Atkins
Edward Barham
Evan Bowen-Jones
David Bradley
Allan Buckwell
Eliza Ecclestone
Bryony Heaven
Michael-John Knatchbull
Iain Morris
James Pavey
Edward Plumpton
Michael Wooldridge

Co-opted
Christopher Eriksson-Lee
William Boscawen
Henry Warde
Lisa Fraser

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