

There was a National Flying Club committee meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> April and I would like to begin my report with some great news; firstly the first prize for all races has been increased to £1000 and secondly the Ancenis Open race to celebrate the 100 years since WW1 Armistice Day has received a £2000 donation from Cornelia Long, widow of Brian Long so that too has a first prize of £1000, second place will receive £600 and third place £400. This race, due to take place on the 16<sup>th</sup> June is open to all fanciers in the country and with the majority flying under 500 miles, it will be one of the biggest races of 2018.

Members of the National Flying Club will be automatically entered into the open race and an entry form for non-members will be published in the fancy press and available on the club's website. This means that if a NFC member achieves the highest velocity on the day, they will win both first prizes and £2000 will be coming their way. Non-members will no doubt be thinking that if they join the National Flying Club, for a small subscription of £30 plus £5 joining fee, they can also race for the joint prize money, section positions and they may go on to compete in the Tarbes Grand National, the greatest race in the UK. Marking Stations are available all around the country so come on, everyone is welcome to compete. Race entry forms must be with the secretary on or by the 9<sup>th</sup> June. The pools allocation for Ancenis will be sections pools for members, with the open pools available for all.

The meeting was opened by the Chairman Mr Paul Naum who read out the previous minutes. These were passed as correct and a new committee member Chris Boyce was welcomed to the meeting, Chris had travelled all the way up from Perranporth in Cornwall to represent Section Q.

We were informed that 50 new crates would be delivered by the 1<sup>st</sup> May and 12 of the existing crates had gone in for repair. The Alveley pigeons will be shipped to the M5 services to meet the transporter and with the new marking station at Bridgewater taking less time to reach than Frome, the birds should be at the docks with plenty of time to spare for watering the birds prior to embarkation. On the subject of marking, I had previously said to bring a spare ETS ring in case of malfunction which has now been rescinded. All members should make sure their rings are duly assigned and in working order before presenting them to the marking table. It has been decided that too much time could be taken up reassigning faulty rings when a simple pass over your landing board, whilst in training mode, could easily check rings are working at the members loft. Rubbered pigeons will now carry a single rubber instead of the previous two.

Peter Jolliffe, our jeweller who engraved and arranged the trophies at the annual prize presentation, has decided to retire after 30 years. The Committee gave a vote of thanks to Peter and the topic went on to unclaimed section prizes. If a member attends the presentation any trophies won will be presented or could be collected on their behalf by an acutance. Failing that, a request to the Secretary along with full payment of postage charges and your trophy could be delivered.

Our new Treasurer Mr Stephen Beardmore gave his report that the club finances were in a healthy position. The trust fund is coming to a point where the club could settle outright which would reduce outgoing costs by £24k each year and could mean even better prize money for the members. Stephen is going to look into this over the next few months. Electronic payments are beneficial to the club although new rules by the government has led to a 75p transaction fee on all payments which is better explained in Stephens own words; "It is important I explain the reason for this and hopefully you will appreciate the rational.

As I am sure many of you are now aware, all surcharges for paying via credit or debit card have been banned – this includes payment methods linked to your card, such as PayPal or Apple Pay. The introduction of the ban is welcome and should benefit many members. This however, will have a negative impact on our income for the ensuing 2018 season, as we are still charged by the card merchants, a fee that cannot be passed on, as we did in the past.

Hence the introduction of 75p handling fee for all payments to the NFC for the remainder of this season. At the end of the year, I will review the handling fee with the objective of removing it. In the interim, it would be appreciated if you would pay by card via the website whenever possible, as it is now cheaper for you and generates less administration. Whist I understand it may not be possible for all members, your assistance will be most appreciated.”

The Chairman put forward the reinstatement of the “Champion of Champions” league which will carry a first prize of £500 and will be calculated on a coefficient basis. This is thought to be the fairest calculation as the amount of pigeons per section varies so much. It is hoped to find additional sponsors for this competition to accompany the many generous sponsorships already allocated to various NFC races. John Murray has allocated his two i-pigeon systems to Messac and Sigogne with an unlimited nomination and Carrs Pigeon Products have allocated their sponsorship to the Y/B and O/H race.

I would encourage all members to login to the new website just in case there are any difficulties before the race program begins and if there are, a quick email to the secretary should clear up any login issues. It basically requires you to reset your password by clicking the “forgot your password” link but if you have changed your email address you will need to contact Sid.

The young bird auction raised £6450 although with many leaving their bids until the last minute, it was a very busy time indeed. This needs a rethink for next year with even more contact phone numbers which could be allocated by sections. Good news for the midlands is that the Holiday Inn near Solihull has been booked for the 2019 presentation evening with 50 rooms pre-booked for the Friday evening and 100 rooms pre-booked for the Saturday. A mini bus will be available all day Saturday to ensure shopping trips etc can take place. This season for 2018 the presentation will of course be at the Imperial Hotel in Torquay, but early booking for rooms is advised as they too are limited.

May I wish you all the very best of luck for the coming season and can I ask that if you do have a position for me to report on, please use the [nfcpressofficer@gmail.com](mailto:nfcpressofficer@gmail.com) address to send details. Given the number of races and sections I endeavour to report on, I need to ensure all the information is organised, so please put the race and section in the subject line of your email. As much detail as possible with a photo help to build some informative and interesting articles. I will report all information I receive but cannot guarantee to pick up social media messages of the various applications or reply to a mobile text as these are difficult collate into order. My contact landline number is 01530 242548 for further details.