



The A.C.W.S. NEWSLETTER

2025 3rd Edition

ACWS Ltd - PO Box 270 - Washington - Tyne & Wear - NE37 9BX
www.acws.co.uk



**Photograph Courtesy of
Stephen Griffin (43rd North Carolina)
Moira 2025**

ACWS is a Member of

N·A·Re·S

Issue 217

A.C.W.S. CONTACTS - Directors & Army Commanders



**Chairman &
Federal
Commander**
Darren Paul



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Dave McDade



Membership
Claire Morris



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Mike Bussey



Events
Catherine
McDade



Communications
Joseph Reed



**Confederate
Commander**
Glenn Gibson



**Federal
Representative**
Paul Kennelly

Director's Reports

Chairman's Report

Did I just get back from a brilliant weekend with the ACWS or was I a small cog in a large engine? Definitely the small cog!

My wife, Shaz, asked me "who did I dance with, because you dont dance?!"

Just too many "thank yous" to give out and to be honest, it's just a massive thank you to everyone who helped out with the ACWS 50th Birthday.

I asked Linda if she knew what was so special on the Sunday morning, I then told her that it's the first day of the next 50 years of the ACWS.

The last couple of events have been hard work, what with times getting to camp and changes to timings, but as usual we pulled together and got through it and ended up having great weekends regardless.

We are all heros within the ACWS, but sometimes someone just out of the BLUE (pardon the pun) stands out that bit more. I am of course referring to our very own 1st Sgt Neil Manison, 19th Indiana who, at our 50th birthday at Moira, without a thought for his own safety, jumped into the water of the canal to save a young girl who had fallen in. Both were a little wet and shaken up but okay. Well done Neil, we can't thank you enough.

One last thing I would like to add a big thank you to Melissa Huntley (secretary) who has stepped down. Linda Reed has now stepped back into the post and will help us out until the next AGM.

Also, please could I ask you all to give a little of your time in adding your votes for the next AGM, it would mean so much to your board to show your appreciation towards the work that they do.

Finally, a huge thank you to the Board of Directors for their hard work behind the scenes this year, without which our society couldn't keep going. Another massive thank you to every member for all of their efforts this year making it to events and working around the clock.

One more, Thank you Shaz for putting up with me and all of the ups and downs that I have come across.

One of the many cogs,
Daz Paul
Chairman, ACWS



Event's Director's Report

Hi Everyone,

By the time you read this, we will have finished our events for 2025, so please can I say a huge thank you to everyone for another brilliant year.

Every client has been impressed by our displays, commitment, professionalism and flexibility. Speaking to other society leaders, our camaraderie is envied! Every event this year has helped with our efforts to raise funds for a new society van- well done all.

The way we come together as a team to make every event a success is wonderful – totally summed up by everyone's efforts to celebrate our 50th Anniversary at Moira. Also, the incredible way that my Hen Party was kept secret – planned and executed to absolute perfection. It was a fantastic night, thank you so much to all the ladies and gents.

I am already looking ahead to next year, so please keep your eyes open for venues and events that you would like me to contact.

The next time I see many of you, I will be Mrs McDade, but I reckon I can still cope with organising events and Dave!

Best Wishes

Catherine xx



Federal Representative's Report

As Federal army representative, I don't get a lot asked of me. That's good. It means things are going well.

This last season has been, at times hard work, particularly thinking about how we had to cope in the heat waves. Camping did raise a few problems, due to lack of space.

It is not a fine art, we work with what we are given or grabbed.

Federal unit commanders, depend on being given reliable numbers in good time so that they can at least allocate camping space.

Having so many (most welcome) special displays, again space is often at a premium, so please be tolerant. We do our best to keep everyone happy.

Having said all of that, the Federal camp, has been in general (no pun) of a good standard and well received by show sponsors and the public, alike. I did have occasion, last year to hang a canvas sheet over my awning. The heat from the sun was so intense, I was in danger of sunstroke. On that note, I wonder if it would be prudent, that all awnings on our camp, should have a spare sheet, to drop down in the case of such an episode. Summers are a getting hotter.

My thanks go to my colleagues on the Board, who worked particularly hard this season, organising the superb 50th Birthday bash and to all who helped. What a week-end that was!

Finally, I have to inform you that I have stood down from staff Adjutant. The position was only ever going to be temporary. Due to my health, I could not make parades and carry out my duties as I should, a thing that I find very frustrating.

So it is with great joy, that I hand over to your new Federal Battalion Adjutant, Mr Matthew Llewellyn, a gentleman

with proven skills, very capable ability and somewhat more fit than myself. Please give him your best support in his new position.

Wishing you all good health and happiness.

Capt. Paul Kennelly. Staff Liaison officer.

Federal Commander's Report

Up to now, we have been bringing back more and more of the old ways and activities that fill our days on a weekend.

Our displays have increased and without a doubt, have increased public interest tenfold, so much so that we have been struggling to have enough space to walk around.

Please work together with regards to your guide ropes and pegs so as not to create trip hazards.

Please can I ask all Union members, soldiers, musicians, medical personnel, provosts and signallers to attend the morning parade when requested by the Sgt Maj so we can fully see who is on camp and ready for duty.

Medical personnel, your faces are needed to be seen so everyone knows who to turn to over the weekends.

With all events now completed and added to our long list of memories, which I must say have been amazing this year, the heat was almost unbearable and I was overcome with everyone ensuring I was well hydrated, fed and not going to "go down" from the heat as I have in the past. The amount of times my canteen was checked, I LOST COUNT! But really, Thank You.

As always, end of the season, check your kit, repair buttons, clean guns and patch your trousers.

Yours to command, Daz Paul, Major, Union Army.

ACWS 50th Celebrations

At Moira Furnace

The ACWS travelled to the Moira Furnace Museum and Country Park in Leicestershire on the 9th and 10th August 2025 for the ACWS 50th Anniversary. Both old and new ACWS members attended in abundance and therefore made for both a very memorable and occasionally very emotional and moving event as stories exchanged and memories relived about our long and splendid history.

As such, it was an event that will be remembered for a long time by many people. Fittingly, as the weather was particularly hot and sunny, it made for another very popular and busy weekend for both the re-enactors and the knowledgeable public who attended.

The Moira Furnace Museum and Country Park is located at the heart of the National Forest. This excellent and picturesque site is dominated by the huge and impressive iron making furnace built by the Earl of Moira in 1804.

It is now a protected monument and this is attributed to not being an iron making blast furnace for long which resulted in it becoming one of the best preserved and protected in the United Kingdom.

I can confirm that the whole of the outside has now been fully preserved, pointed and protected with original mortar and renovation work is currently being undertaken inside. This will result in a full and complete restoration for many years to come.

This is important as it also houses a fascinating museum of industrial and social history. In addition, the passing Ashby canal which was abandoned in the 1940's has also been partially restored and narrow boat trips on the "Joseph Wilkes" now prove popular with the public.

Other permanent attractions on the site include the well preserved Lime Kilns, a Craft Village, a Playground and an interesting Woodland trail with various sculptures, aquatic plants and wildlife.

Although it was our 50th Anniversary and much of the focus was on our commemorations, the ACWS was also contracted to provide activities and living history displays for the public who attended over the weekend.

As such, both the well attended Union and Confederate armies took it in turns to perform full firing displays throughout the day as well as perform infantry drills. All these loud and superb firing demonstrations again proved really popular with the public and Christian Sprakes, our ACWS commentator, as usual kept the audiences enthralled throughout.

Again, full credit must go to both armies as they demonstrated excellent firing in close order and in 2 ranks. Personally, I must say that both armies were spot on with their firing by company. The ever popular Kids Drill also took place on both days and despite the limited numbers, which happens on occasions, were thoroughly enjoyed by everyone taking part. Interesting to also note that a couple of the adult members of the public who felt sorry for us and took part to actually help us out have now signed on as adult members! As ever, many thanks to everyone who took part and joined in.

It is always important at such events to also put on displays and a living history impression to keep the public interested and involved. Both the Union and Confederate camps did really well with this over the weekend and both camps were full of interested members of the public.

The Confederate Army put on their excellent Matthews Personal Confederate Soldiers Kit display, Jasons Chuck a Luck gambling display and Steve`s Dress a Soldier display. It was also nice and interesting to see 5 authentic campaign/pup tents set up opposite the main Confederate Camp which personally I thought looked superb.

The Union Army and Union Artillery were also both on top form. The Union Medical, Christian Charity Commission, Authentic Home Cooking and Original Artefact displays were excellent and enjoyed by all the public. The Union Artillery were also in top form with recently superbly restored pieces as well as doing regular artillery displays for both armies artillery crews.

Well done to everyone in both armies who volunteered and helped out. There is no question whatsoever that our living history displays are certainly improving as well as becoming extremely popular with both the public and particularly the Event organisers.

However, this was the 50th ACWS Anniversary Party so something special was required and these are my personal highlights of this wonderful and memorable event. Please forgive me if I miss anyone or anything out as it was such a busy and eventful weekend and many people were actively involved.

The main highlight of the weekend was the Saturday celebrations. This included the excellent buffet which comprised of numerous hot and cold food dishes.

The hot food included a delicious Chilli, a tasty Vegetable Curry, an excellent Spagetti Bolognese and a lovely Potato pie all with loads of cold buffet snacks. Really well done to all our chefs/cooks and those that helped. There was plenty of food for everyone.

This was followed by the superb Mudlands band. This was the West Midlands finest Cajun and Bluegrass band. They were excellent with everyone joining in and dancing to their banjos, guitars and fiddles.

This all took place under the protection of our grand marquee provided by our former ACWS Chairman Mike Smart so many thanks to him and all those who helped put it up and take it down.

Personally, I thought the marquee with all our Civil War decorations including our authentic flags/buntings/ decorations was awesome and priceless.

Massive credit to our superb chairman Daz and Shaz (US) for creating this masterpiece and anyone who looked closely or when actually sober will have seen our lovely ACWS emblem directly right behind the band stage as well as the inclusion of 2 absolutely cracking and authentic new flags!!!!!!

The celebrations were opened by our own ACWS Band who were superb and personally I thought it great to see our former Principal Musician James Reed back playing!

Other highlights over the weekend included our own Friday night party in the marquee with Christian (US), John (CS) and Catherine (US) and our new lead singer Dave "The Rave" McDade (CS) all on really top form helped by all the kids (and adult kids) with their musical instruments. Well done to newcomer Josh (CS) for banging out a new tune as well.

There was also a superb blanket sale with an abundance of Civil War material available. I do personally know we made a lot of money which will go towards the much-needed ACWS Artillery van. So well done to everyone who both delivered, contributed and sold the items.

This involved a lot of hard work so many thanks to those. We also had 2 big and successful society raffles which also went towards the ACWS van.

Other highlights included the excellent Kids Party, the photo shoots by both the Confederate and Union Armies around this lovely Wilderness back drop site, Robbos (US) superb night time fire breathing display, the winners of our year long regimental competition for the season and the individual soldier regimental competition won easily by the 1st Tennessee before the buffet and our flag raising and lowering displays at the beginning and end of each day.

Unfortunately, the Confederates did not have a major campfire due to other events but the Union did have their campfires and customary singalongs.

As this was the ACWS 50th Anniversary, there was a very commendable attendance from both armies and a really fine weekend was enjoyed by all with the comraderie between the 2 armies continuing to flourish and develop.

I rarely mention names as everyone contributes but special thanks must go to Linda, Joe and family who personally organised this memorable event and also many thanks to all the ACWS Board members who do so much work on our behalf behind the scenes. Again, special thanks to Catherine, our Events coordinator who is always thinking and working ahead with organising our events.

Others who contributed included Abi & Sam Golder and Claire & Ian Morris who worked non stop. There were many others but I have no more space so forgive me!

Finally, there were lovely moving speeches from both Matthew Jennings (CS) and our ACWS Chairman Daz which reflected well all our love and commitment to our wonderful hobby, friends and second family.

The managers of this lovely site were absolutely delighted with our commitment and efforts as the tills ringed much harder than usual over the weekend which bodes well for a future return to this lovely and friendly historical site.

On my last note, I do hope we do not have to wait another 50 years before having another party like this!

Personal Reflections by Stewart "Goober" Douglas, 43rd North Carolina, ACWS.







SOSKAN, ACWS and American Eagles at Detling

Military Odyssey 2025

SOSKAN, ACWS and the American Eagles attended the Military Odyssey event on the bank holiday weekend of 23/24/25 August 2025. All the 3 societies had really commendable turnouts in terms of both Union and Confederates who responded to the call.

The inevitable result was another absolutely fabulous American Civil War weekend at this prestigious multi period event which was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone who attended.

Although the hot sunny weather throughout the weekend made it pretty uncomfortable at times for the re-enactors, it made for a huge public attendance over all 3 days. There is no question at all that this event is getting bigger and better every year.

The 3 day multi-period living history held on the August Bank Holiday weekend at the Detling Show Ground in Kent is without doubt 1 of the most iconic and prestigious military events in Europe.

The show is jam packed full of living history displays bringing 2 thousand years of history into one place. There are ongoing and incredible action-packed battle re-enactments which are both full-scale and choreographed, giving you a taste of all the action at the front!

Our American Civil War battles were no exception which occurred over all 3 days. Nevertheless, the massive amount of public could get really close to the action from within a safe vehicle-free zone.

Throughout the long weekend, there were living history scenes and live action displays which provided a unique picture of life in conflict with depictions from ancient history to modern-day warfare.

There were British and Germans living in World War 1 trenches, GIs in Vietnam with a superb helicopter display blaring 60's music, a personal favourite of mine were the Anti Vietnam hippies tuning in and spacing out to Grateful Dead music, the American airborne troops (101st Screaming Eagles) languishing outside a burnt out French cafe and numerous WW2 Germans plotting their next moves.

This year, there was an absolutely fabulous WW2 German display of a captured rocket launcher facility entrenched within a concrete bunker topped by a Tobruk.

There was a plethora of military vehicles on display from around the world representing the armies from the last 2 thousand years of warfare.

There were tanks, artillery, armoured and amphibious vehicles, cars, jeeps, bicycles and motorbikes, emergency and commercial vehicles. In addition, there were loads of trade stalls which allowed collectors and shoppers to browse through marquees packed full of treasures, including militaria, antiques, vehicle parts, books, memorabilia, clothing, uniforms, and all manner of essential finds for the discerning enthusiast – everything from a shirt button to a tank!

There was also an extensive display of some top-class models on display for the modellers, bringing enthusiasts from around the world. These craftsmen are always willing to share their knowledge and experience.

For those who wanted a little more glamour or a welcome break from the 'sea of green', people and vehicles headed to the infamous Military Odyssey Beer Tent for evening entertainment including a rock band, World War 2 singers and a DJ set.

Obviously, like every year, the fancy dress party went full steam ahead and it was great that so many people made an effort to give it a go with so many wonderful impressions and get ups. The massive obligatory conga was a personal highlight I could not miss being part of!

SOSKAN, ACWS and American Eagles had a full all day calendar to fulfil throughout the weekend. Firstly, the bugle sounded roll call every day at 8.00am meant full kit at 9.00am as well as the inspection of arms.

Powder issue was shortly afterwards before our first skirmish in the woods as well as both Union and Confederate armies having to perform a kit, drill and firing display in the small arena which went down really well over all 3 days despite only a small number of public being present that early in the morning.

Like every year, there were full living history Wilderness campaign impressions in the woods for all 3 days. For many Civil War re-enactors who attend, it is the Wilderness campaign impression which is the most enjoyable.

Personally, I thought this years skirmishes in the woods really stepped up a mark from previous years with the Union Pennsylvania Bucktails giving us Confederates a real slug fest every time as well as engaging in far more surrendering, parleying, wounding and close up scenarios for the public.

The Confederates also did a memorable last ditch charge on the final day leaving many rebel dead right in front of the barricade. For the public, this was billed as the wooded camp walkthrough and was extremely popular as it is every year.

The really well planned layout through the woods also involved a Confederate/Union HQ, an authentic cooking station with delicious victuals for those rebs coming off the front line, a small medical display, an excellent (and really loud!) artillery firing display as well as individual soldier displays such as shelter halves, gum blankets, music, cooking, card gambling and small dug outs which were absolutely brilliant.

Special credit this year for our superb Civil War musicians who played at the entrance to the woods all weekend as well as our Confederate commentator, Matthew Jennings who enthralled all the public with his talks.

Obviously, the main event for everyone were the 3 afternoon battles in the huge main arena. The planned scenarios included both the Battles of Bentonville and Chickamauga. Due to the excellent turnout and participation from all 3 societies, they were all full of action and movement from the 2-3 blue and grey infantry battalions on both sides as well as the excellent artillery.

There were 3 lovely Union artillery pieces and 1 fast firing lovely Confederate piece. The ground charges were loud and synchronised with the artillery and therefore well appreciated by the crowd.

Both battles were really enjoyable and involved long lines of both Union and Confederate re-enactors engaging with each other with superb volleys, cannon fire and above all taking plenty of casualties.

Personally, I thought the mass lines of Union casualties on the Sunday as the Confederates steadily advanced on their breakthrough at Chickamauga and the Confederate casualties on the Monday as they continually fell back and rallied on the colours due to strong Union column advances at Bentonville made for a cracking realistic sight of how Civil War battles looked.

At the end of the main battles, both a volley at the end into the crowd as well as a full bayonet charge was spectacular as was the synchronised cannon fire as well.

There are always real highlights at such events when we all get together but this years 2025 Detling had so many. Please please forgive me if I missed anything out as it is not intentional.

There was so much going on in all the Civil War camps. On all the 3 evenings, there was song, laughter, food and music around all our campfires and everyone was clearly pleased to be together again re-enacting and enjoying our hobby as well as meeting new comrades.

There were parties and barbecues on both camps as well as the beer tent! There was a Confederate army afternoon tea hosted by our wonderful ladies.

There was a blanket sale between both armies which enabled many new re-enactors to get top quality gear for very reasonable prices to allow our hobby to grow.

In addition, both camps learned from each other with superb bugling and full credit must go to Union musicians Callum Fox and Callum Potts for this who were excellent all weekend as well Confederate Simon Morse for his superb drumming.

Both camps had excellent daily flag raising displays, additional Civil War musical bands, the Confederate padre impression and the Sunday NCO dress code.

However, for me, there were 2 real highlights. Firstly, there was the 4th Texas Flag dedication to the 4th Texas regiment (SOSKAN).

This presentation including a blessing by the padre as well as an individual presentation to all the soldiers with enrolment papers, money and Texas lone star badges. This was both emotional as well as memorable.

The other highlight was the Sunday night music night in the Confederate Auditorium. Everyone who played was absolutely spot on, particularly the young first timers, who joined in with their talent.

This included a lovely impromptu blessing in the middle of the set by the padre to Catherine Conyard and Dave McDade (ACWS) who are getting married a week after Detling. As usual, I thought the huge fun crowd who came along and sang to everything really made it.

Everyone agrees that long may our close co-operation and genuine friendship continue to flourish and develop and lets hope we can really start getting a few regular yearly events firmly planned and established in the 2026 calendar where all the American Civil War Societies in the UK can all get together again.

To those outside our societies, including event organisers, who thought the days of American Civil War re-enacting were over will certainly need to think again.

Our professionalism, dedication, hard work and expertise in what we all do particularly in the light of the vast amount of other historical societies who were present at the event clearly stood out.

I rarely mention names but many many thanks again to Gemma (SOSKAN) and Catherine (ACWS) for all their hard work in all the organisation and planning necessary for such a massive event as well as our 2 superb commanders Union Major Greg Jackson and Confederate Major Matt Bell.

All these 4 people worked tirelessly and seamlessly throughout the weekend for our benefit, enjoyment and safety for which we remain eternally grateful.

Personal Reflections by Stewart "Goober" Douglas, SOSKAN/ACWS - CSA.







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Website: www.civilwarsutler.co.uk



John Rushworth Memorial Trophy Photography Competition 2025

The rules are as follows

1. The photograph must be taken at an event this season, by a member of the Society.
2. Any member wishing to enter the competition can enter any number of separate entries.
3. "Amusing" photographs can also be entered for consideration.
4. Non members or members of the public cannot be included in the photograph.
5. If you think someone else has taken a great photograph, feel free to send it in on their behalf.
6. All submissions must clearly state what event they were taken at.

Entries for the competition must be sent to the Communications director
Editor@acws.co.uk



2nd

Avoncroft 2024
Abigail Hooper
(118th PA)



1st

Avoncroft 2024
Stewart Hayllar
(69th NY)

Good Luck and Have Fun
We look forward to seeing
your fabulous pictures.



3rd

Avoncroft 2024
Matthew Jennings
(2nd SC)

Notices from the Board

Melissa Huntley has stepped down from the role of Secretary. This position has been temporarily filled by Linda Reed until the AGM in December.

On the Board of Directors there are Directors that are Representatives of both the Union and Confederate armies, these are always available to listen to any issues that members of either side have and to assist however they can and if required will raise the issue with the rest of the Board of Directors.

Regiments are able to host their own fundraisers to raise money for various items to aid in the Regiment's authenticity, impression or general well being.

These fundraisers can include but are not limited to, general donations, raffles, "golden tickets" and football cards. All requests to host a fundraiser at any event **MUST** be passed through the Secretary.

Any questions regarding Regimental Fundraisers can be directed to either Army Commander or the Secretary for clarification.

From the Medical Team

Members please remember to bring personal first aid kits with you to events, just as you would take on holiday. Along with any medication you may need for any existing condition you may have.

You must let the medical team know of any existing conditions or allergies that you think may affect you. However, the medics are not allowed to give out any medication under any circumstances this includes but is not limited to pain killers and anti-allergen medications.

Please also remember to stay hydrated at all times and notify any medic if you're suffering with any symptoms of dehydration.

Also anyone in the Society that has any medical qualifications, please feel free to contact our Chief Medical Officer (Mr Ian Morris) or Mr Stewart Hayllar and let either of them know, help is always appreciated.

If an ambulance is needed or has already been called for an injury or emergency please let one of the medical team know, as this will allow us to take observations and do a full handover with the NHS paramedics.

Don't forget, the medical tent is always occupied by a society medic and is easily identified by a yellow flag with a green "H" (Hospital).

If you wish to know who your army medics are at any event, feel free to ask your army commanders.

So let's all be careful out there and look after each other.

Congratulations

to
Mr & Mrs
Dave & Catherine
McDade

Upon their wedding day
30th August 2025





NOTICE OF 2025 AGM

The American Civil War Society Ltd (a company limited by guarantee, (number 2610962) hereby gives NOTICE that its AGM will be held on Saturday 6th December 2025, starting at 1pm prompt via Zoom (virtually).

If you are a current member and have any nominations for posts of Directors or Army Commanders of the Society and/or you have any agenda items appropriate for the AGM, then put them in writing as soon as possible addressed to The Secretary, ACWS Ltd, PO Box 270, Washington, Tyne & Wear, NE37 9BX. These MUST be received at this location by NO LATER than Thursday 23rd October 2025.

Nominations for other than existing post holders have to be signed by the nominee and proposed by at least one other current member, who must also sign the nomination. The nominee may submit a short address for circulation to the membership to support their candidature.

The current directors standing for re-election as at the date of this notice are:

- Chairperson: Darren Paul
- Treasurer: Ian Morris
- Membership: Claire Morris
- Webmaster: Mike Bussey
- Events: Catherine McDade
- Communications: Joseph Reed
- Federal Representative: Paul Kennelly

Mr Dave McDade will be standing for election for the post of Health and Safety Director after being co-opted into the position of Health and Safety Officer during the 2025 season.

Ms Linda Reed will be standing for election for the post of company Secretary and a Director of the company after being co-opted into the position during the 2025 season.

The current two Army Commanders standing for re-election as at the date of this notice are:

- Federal Commander: Darren Paul
- Confederate Commander: Glenn Gibson

Once relevant inputs have been received, the AGM Agenda can be put together, with guidelines regarding "Zoom", and the appropriate documentation can be sent to you before the AGM.

Please note, only current members of ACWS are entitled to vote at the AGM or to submit proxy forms. Members attending the virtual meeting are asked to have their membership cards to hand to help validation, online admission and voting if necessary.

For and on behalf of the Board of Directors,
Linda Reed
Company Secretary and Director
9th September 2025

NB: Electronic delivery of Agenda and voting slips. We will seek to send all the AGM paperwork to all those of you who have e-mail addresses electronically by that means (to cut down on printing and postages) and post only to those who currently have no e-mail address or who have specifically opted-out of e-voting. PLEASE NOTE, your Webmaster has devised a secure way for you to deliver your Proxy Vote electronically.

However, you all need to make sure either Mike Bussey or Claire Morris have your correct, up-to-date e-mail address for this to happen. If you fail to do this then you will not get the AGM papers or proxy vote form.

Please make sure we have the right information by NO LATER than Sunday 19th October 2025.