



## **Minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting held at Lower Smite Farm on Wednesday 12th October 2022**

With both David Mortiboys and Richard Cory having tested positive for Covid-19 in the past few days, the meeting was chaired by Prof. Graham Martin with Bob Gillmor acting as secretary. Prof. Martin introduced the meeting, our first in person since the pandemic.

33 members attended with no proxy votes held.

### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from David Mortiboys, Richard Cory, Mervyn Needham, Peter Scriven, Poppy Morris, Harry Green, John & Shirley Lynch, Phillip Evans, Dave Cook and Ros Spanton

### **2. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held remotely on 13th October 2021**

The minutes had been previously circulated through the Trust website. Approval was proposed by Christianne Tipping, seconded by Chris Greensmith and agreed nem con. The minutes were to be signed by the Chair.

### **3. Matters arising from the Minutes**

There were no matters arising

### **4. To receive and adopt the Report of Council**

The report had been previously circulated. Prof. Martin mentioned some highlights, commenting that Covid-19 is still very much with us but the Trust had got through the pandemic OK. He recognised that the staff were still hybrid working and some had found the isolation challenging. We are still financially sound with membership holding up well. Purchase of Dropping Well Farm had been completed and plans to expand Monkwood are progressing. New community engagement projects are going well in Worcester, Bromsgrove and Redditch. We have adopted a policy aim for net zero by 2030, reducing carbon emissions with electric vehicle charge points, solar PV panels to come in the next few days and our first electric vehicle this month, plus electric tools. We are working to actively sequester carbon but with biodiversity gains. Volunteering also held up well giving opportunities to get outdoors.

Adoption of the Report was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Peter Holmes and agreed nem con.

## **5. To receive and adopt the Report of the Honorary Treasurer**

The report had been previously circulated. Using a power point presentation the Honorary Treasurer, John Blakiston, first gave members an overview of the Trust's financial control framework such as, annual budgeting with quarterly accounts, reviews and management reports; day to day running costs and reserve management met from revenue income; specific projects met from a designated capital fund and a dedicated investments committee. Turning to the figures for the year ended 31st March 2022 where income was £2.793 million of which £917k was given by donors or funding bodies for a specific restricted purpose and £268k was designated by the Trustees for defined purposes, leaving a balance of £1.607 million to be used to meet the charity's objectives without any such restriction or designation. Expenditure was £2.170 million resulting in a surplus of £580k after deduction of £519k unrealised losses on investments. Net assets stood at £17.311 million, chiefly the nature reserves and investments of £3.557 million. John considered that the Trust had weathered the pandemic well and was in a fit state to meet the recovery albeit with continuing conservative financial control.

Adoption of the Report was proposed by Linda Butler, seconded by Tom Meikle and agreed nem com.

[A full copy of the accounts with auditor's statement would be published on the Trust's website]

## **6. To elect Members of Council**

Each was proposed by the Chair on behalf of Council and seconded by Sandra Young, four Trustees were re-elected nem con; John Blakiston, Bob Gillmor, Prof. Graham Martin and Peter Scriven.

Prof. Martin expressed thanks to Poppy Morris and Roger Pannell who were standing down as Trustees after several years, although both will remain active with the Trust.

## **7. To appoint auditors**

The Hon. Treasurer, having reminded the meeting that the appointment of the Trust's auditors had been the subject of competitive tendering during 2020, proposed that Thorne Widgery Accountancy Limited be re-appointed as auditors. Seconded by the Peter Holmes, the resolution was approved nem con.

## **8. Resolution to increase membership subscription rates**

Prof. Martin commented that the last increase was in 2019 and a modest increase is suggested with figures set to be easily divisible by 12 as many members pay monthly; indeed many pay significantly more than the minimum so will not be affected. Rates of £42 for household membership and £57 family membership are proposed with no change to Watch membership at £15 and concessionary at £24. The resolution was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Roger Pannell and agreed nem con.

## 9. Any other business

The Director, Colin Raven, referred to the Government's review of environmental legislation and a major awareness and lobbying campaign by RSWT, the RSPB and National Trust. Threats include repeal of the Environment Act, review of the new Environmental Land Management system, removal of planning restrictions in Investment Zones and removal of the ban on fracking. Members are asked to write to their MPs and local councillors; all Worcestershire MPs are Conservatives. This is the biggest threat to nature for more than 30 years and other actions may be called for. Garth Lowe commented that he was disappointed with his reply from Harriett Baldwin MP.

The meeting closed at 8:11pm.

The AGM was followed by the annual awards ceremony .

### **Worcestershire Wildlife Trust 2022 Awards**

***Worcestershire Wildlife Medal 2022*** as recognition for dedicated service to nature conservation in Worcestershire.

#### **Garth Lowe**

Garth was the first warden of the Knapp & Papermill nature reserve and has continued an active interest. He is an accomplished naturalist, having been chair and active member of the Worcestershire Naturalists club. He has previously been honoured for his long standing contribution to Worcester and Malvern RSPB as leader for many years. The award cited his work with schools and many other groups and mentioned his role as farmer alliance co-ordinator. He has been involved in bird, bat and butterfly surveys and more recently surveys of swifts. As a Parish councillor he has been able to liaise with the Wildlife Trust and advocate for nature conservation. Garth's walks and talks to countless groups have inspired generations of children and adults to become involved in the study and protection of wildlife in Worcestershire.

***Wild Service Awards 2022*** as recognition of outstanding voluntary service to the Trust.

**Steve Anderson** (long term volunteer at Penorchard Meadows and other reserves), **Claire Bolt** (Lower Smite Farm volunteer and surveyor), **Sara Burton** (Hill Court Farm work party leader and surveyor), **Andy Bucklitch** (roving volunteer stalwart and Monkwood dormouse survey organiser), **Peter Farrimond** (long term Lower Smite Farm volunteer), **Carl Graef** (Feckenham Wylde Moor and roving volunteer stalwart, volunteer photographer), **Mike Hartwell** (practical work on many reserves and Monkwood assistant warden), **Brian Hill** (Ipsley Alders Marsh long term volunteer), **David Hoare** (Ipsley Alders Marsh long term volunteer), **Karen Mason** ( long term Lower Smite Farm garden volunteer),

R.J. Gillmor  
14 October 2022