



Minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting held at Lower Smite Farm on Wednesday 11th October 2023

David Mortiboys introduced the meeting, our second in person since the pandemic.

59 members attended with no proxy votes requested.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Richard Cory, Peter and Jane Scriven, Christianne Tipping, Harriett Baldwin MP, Izzy Jones, Valerie Layfield, Carrie Pawley, Jill Sparke, Mark Preston, Anne Roberts, Paul Wearing, John Williams and Sean Young.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 12th October 2022

The minutes had been previously circulated through the Trust website. Approval was proposed by Sandra Young, seconded by Mervyn Needham and agreed nem con. The minutes were 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. David Mortiboys highlighted our recent purchase of Green Farm, adjacent to Monkwood, and Romsley Farm Meadows and thanked the supporters and funders who made it possible, specifically mentioning the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Severn Waste Services, the Banister Charitable Trust and our members. We remain committed to net zero by 2030 and our land purchases will help to sequester carbon and enhance biodiversity. Campaigning and lobbying with our fellow Wildlife Trusts has kept pressure on Government and resulted in policy changes and less harm to nature. We are also committed to ensuring people from all cultures and backgrounds abilities and identities are supported to value and enjoy wildlife to achieve our goal of one in four taking meaningful action. He also commented on the huge amount of work done by the Trust staff and volunteers and thanked all for their efforts.

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. The Honorary Treasurer, John Blakiston, gave members an overview of the Trust's financial control framework including 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 2023 where income was £2.916 million of which £907k was given by donors or funding bodies for a specific restricted purpose and £250k was designated by the Trustees for defined purposes, leaving a balance of £1.759 million to be used to meet the charity's objectives without any such restriction or designation. Expenditure was £2.315 million resulting in a surplus of £327k after deduction of £275k unrealised losses on investments. Net assets stood at £17.638 million, chiefly the nature reserves and investments of £3.269 million. John considered that the Trust had weathered the pandemic and cost of living crisis well and was in a fit state with continuing conservative financial control. A question from the floor about overall staff costs was answered in detail after the meeting by reference to the full accounts.

Adoption of the Report was proposed by Tom Meikle, seconded by Linda Butler 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

Four Trustees retired by rotation and their re-election was proposed by the Chair on behalf of Council with individual votes:

Richard Cory, seconded by Harry Green

Harry Green, seconded by Mervyn Needham

Chris Greensmith, seconded by Sandra Young

David Mortiboys, seconded by Peter Holmes

Each was re-elected nem con.

David Mortiboys expressed thanks to Prof. Graham Martin and Mervyn Needham who were standing down as Trustees after several years, although both will remain active with the Trust. His proposed vote of thanks men with acclaim. Each was presented with a framed photograph in appreciation of their long service to the Trust.

7. To appoint Auditors

The Hon. Treasurer, reminding 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 Bob Gillmor, the resolution was approved nem con.

9. Any other business

There was no other business.

The meeting closed at 7.55pm and was followed by the annual awards ceremony.

R.J. Gillmor
Honorary Secretary
13 October 2023