**Shropshire Wildlife Trust**

**Minutes of Annual General Meeting**

**held on Wednesday 14 October, 2020**

**Meeting held by Zoom**

The Chairman, Kirsten Mould, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Chair recorded for the minutes the decision made at Council on 22 July for this AGM to be held virtually (online) this year due to Covid restrictions on numbers meeting in person.

Richard Carpenter, Brian Hogbin and Heather Bennett were thanked for their work preparing for the AGM to be held on line and ensuring that correct procedure is adopted.

Stuart Edmunds and Tim Brewer were thanked for ensuring the technical side and IT used during this meeting is running smoothly.

Voting procedures were explained by the Chair to members present and introductions made.

Roger Owen Hon. Secretary, Heather Bennett, PA to CEO (minutes) Colin Preston, CEO and trustees and staff.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mervyn Evans, Adrian Platt, Maralyn Hepworth and Jacqui Seymour.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

It was proposed by Anne Wignall and seconded by Brian Hogbin, that the minutes of the AGM held on 5 October 2019, at Alderford Lakes be approved. Carried with one abstention.

**3. Report of Council of Management 2019/20**

The Annual Report was distributed to members with the last magazine. The Trust’s Hon. Secretary, Roger Owen, presented the report of the Council of Management to members, highlighting the following:

* the various campaigns run by the Trust over the last year that had continued despite the Covid crisis
* income and expenditure for 2019/20
* the Trusts work with volunteers and branches
* the Trust’s work with local businesses and people and wildlife.

The Hon. Secretary recorded thanks to all staff, members, donors and sponsors and volunteers without whom the Trust’s work could not continue.

A climate change motion was agreed from last October’s AGM. Following on from this, a task and finish group was formed and has met several times since October 2019.A climate and biodiversity emergency was declared and the group analysed the positive impact of the carbon sequestration from Trust reserves which hold tonnes 89k of carbon. In addition to this the Trust’s landholdings absorb around £2k tonnes of Co2 per year.

Emissions of Co2 from Trust operations are around 55 tonnes a year, it is proposed that these will be to be offset in an appropriate way.

Immediate measures include switching electricity supplier to Ecotricity and insulation at the Trust offices has been deemed adequate.

The Task and Finish group made a number of other recommendations and these will be considered at Trust Council on 21 October 2020:

* Consider an installation of air source heat pump
* Replacement of existing vehicles with hybrid electric in 2021
* Consider the Trust’s investments and staff pension scheme (in terms of investment of fossil fuel interests and sustainability of those funds)
* Working with Shropshire Climate Action Partnership to continue
* Continue to oppose the development of the NWRR
* Continue working with the wider Trust movement sharing best practice
* Consider a dedicated staff post to focus on the climate crisis.
* Branches Forum in October will concentrate on Climate change topics

The Trust’s website has been redesigned to reflect Climate change and Climate change is embedded within the Development plan for next 5 years.

This year, the Trust drafted the Marches Woodlands strategy proposing to double woodland cover in the Marches. This includes working with external partners on a Nature Recovery Network with £5.4m carbon offset tree planting collaborating with the Environment Agency to offset carbon.

In Telford, a green recovery plan is being worked on with Telford and Wrekin Council.

The Trust will continue to update members via its magazine and website and again through next annual report and AGM.

The Chair thanked Roger Owen for his report.

It was proposed by Paul Bell and seconded by Veronica Cossons that the Report of the Council of Management 2019/20 be accepted. All in favour.

**4. Treasurer’s Report and Annual Accounts 2019/20**

The Chairman, Kirsten Mould, presented the Annual Accounts to members who were advised with great sadness of the passing of Alan Salt, treasurer and trustee for past eight years. He was initially introduced by former trustee, Jacqui Seymour. He gave the Trust a rock-solid foundation over his time in office and oversaw changes in Charity reporting, and a big expansion in Trust activity. He had a very big passion for wildlife and was a great friend to Shropshire Wildlife Trust.

The Treasurer’s report for 2019/20 reflects some impact of the Covid crisis through some delays in payment and slowing of project activity with a resulting knock on effect for Trust finances. Despite this the Trust’s position is secure looking forward.

A reported deficit of £19,638 of income over expenditure was noted. Turnover reduced due to delayed activity for the Boglife project due to a combination of bad weather, planning challenges and Covid. The core work of the Trust remains similar in scale with the exception of river and wetland work which continues to grow. Membership support and associated income continues to be vital to the Trust being a 25% contribution to Trust turnover.

As of end of March 2020 the Trust has liquid financial assets of £596,361, and £35,263 in investments.

Looking forward the Trust should continue to operate at an optimal level. More resources will always be welcome to support the ever growing and increasing pressure on the natural environment.

Final accounts will be signed off by auditors shortly when some technicalities around a larger grant from England European Regional Development Fund (Freshwater First) are clarified. The grant has been paid over to the Trust by England European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), but questioned by the auditors as they believe it may be too high. The ERDF have confirmed this is not the case but formal written evidence has been requested by the auditors. This confirmation has been delayed due to staffing difficulties related to Covid.

Hence the accounts summary may be overstated and income will increase over the deficit stated.

The summary of the Trust’s accounts was included in the last mailing to members and full accounts will be posted on the Trusts website or forwarded to members on request once finalised.

It was therefore proposed that the annual accounts be adopted subject to Government confirmation to auditors of the detail noted above.

It was proposed by Katie Foster and seconded by Malcolm Monie that the Report of the Treasurer 2019/20 be accepted. All in favour.

**5. Nominations for Election to Council**

Thanks were recorded to Adrian Platt, trustee, who had retired. He was acknowledged for his years of support and help particularly around corporate work. He has remained a member of Shropshire Wildlife Trust but has moved to Cumbria.

Kate Mayne has been nominated for re-election following a four-year term and has agreed to stand again.

Newly proposed trustees Elizabeth Hulton-Harrop, Stephen Marsh and Malcolm Monie

were introduced to members and the Chair gave a brief overview of their skills and experience. Their CVs have been displayed on the website prior to this AGM.

It was proposed by Dan Wrench and seconded by Ellen Sentier that the above named be elected to Council en-bloc. All in favour.

They were all thanked and welcomed to the Board.

**6. Appointment of Auditors**

In line with Trust due process the appointment of auditors is reviewed every three years and will be put out to tender for 2020/21 to be confirmed by Trust Council. Agreement to follow this course of action was sought from members.

Proposed by Alex Grant and seconded by Brian Hogbin. All in favour.

**7. Any Other Business**

The Chair referred to the extraordinary times we are in, and thanked all members, volunteers, staff and partners for keeping wildlife high on the agenda.

Colin Preston, Director and CEO for nearly 30 years, will retire in a few weeks’ time. His influence and partnerships with others, enthusiasm, dedicated hard work and leadership were noted and huge thanks recorded.

Richard Grindle of London Wildlife Trust will commence as CEO from the beginning of November and was welcomed by the Chair. He is delighted to moving to Shropshire and looked forward to meeting everyone shortly.

Kirsten Mould is standing down as Chairman and has done a fantastic job sustaining a very big workload for the Trust, whilst holding down a full-time job and looking after her young family. She was presented with a gift by the Hon. Secretary and thanked by all.

All present were thanked for their attendance tonight and the Chair closed the meeting at 7.30pm

The AGM was followed by a talk from Craig Bennett, CEO of the Wildlife Trusts joined in April from previous role at Friends of the Earth, followed by questions from members.

He recorded thanks to Colin Preston, his last AGM as Chief Executive.