

**Shropshire Wildlife Trust**  
**Minutes of Annual General Meeting**  
**held at 10.30am on 15 October, 2022**  
**at Abbeygate Hall, 193 Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury SY2 6AH**

The Chairman, Roger Owen, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Steve Marsh

**2. Approval of Minutes**

It was proposed that the minutes of the AGM held on 19 October 2021, be approved. All in favour

**3. Report of Honorary Secretary**

The Trust's Hon. Secretary, Alex Grant, presented the report of the Council of Management to members as follows:

Longstanding Trustees Rod Aspinwall and Katie Foster stood down at the last AGM but remain in close contact with the Trust as Vice-President and Honorary Adviser. Two previous Vice-Presidents, Brian Hogbin and Paul Bell have both now retired; they leave with our grateful thanks and best wishes for the future.

Trustees attend quarterly Council meetings and sit on various committees to ensure that the work of the Trust meets our objects and addresses other relevant matters of national or global concern.

We welcomed Sarah Zacharek as Head of Finance, Helen O'Connor as Head of Development and Rachel Schofield as Communications Campaigns and Marketing Manager. The Rivers Team has now been retitled as the Land & Water team reflecting its expanded role, with Pete Lambert as Head of Land and Water.

At the national level Craig Bennett CEO of The Wildlife Trusts has been driving a strategy, "Bringing Nature Back - 2030". [The strategy details a series of goals, transformations and priorities to place the environment at the very core of life in the United Kingdom. Specific initiatives include the 30:30 campaign, and a drive to reach out to at least one in four citizens. The strategy and initiatives provide individual Trusts with a unifying message whilst maintaining their autonomy to work effectively within their regions.

Our objectives, which can be summarised briefly as conservation, of species and habitat; education and access; and evidence and research. In promoting our objects, we continue to focus on various specific fields of activity, including the provision of land management advice, the Wilder Marches programme, the completion of the Marches Mosses BogLIFE project with a fully accessible hide installed at Charles Sinker Fields, natural flood management in the Upper Severn, opposition to North West Relief Road, green social prescribing, and outdoor learning sessions

The objectives were brought into sharper focus by the Declaration on the Climate Emergency and the Biodiversity Crisis which was adopted at the AGM in 2019. Trustees have agreed a strategy to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030 and compiled a baseline estimate of our emissions. In 2019-20 the Trust's emissions amounted to 317 tonnes of CO2 equivalent (tCO2e). For the current reporting period, the emissions were 270 tCO2e. Measures continue to be taken to further reduce our emissions. If and when it is found to be impossible to eliminate, reduce, or substitute emissions any further, we will seek to offset the residual emissions, where possible through increased sequestration on our own land.

Our volunteers, branches and friends' groups contributed more than 19,000 hours, which equates to twelve full-time employees. To them, and to our Ambassadors and the general membership, we offer our sincere thanks.

The Chair thanked Alex Grant for his report.

It was proposed that the Report of the Council of Management 2021-22 be accepted. All in favour.

#### **4. Treasurer's Report and Annual Accounts 2021-22**

Roger Owen presented the treasurers report on behalf of the Honorary Treasurer, Steve Marsh.

The accounts show how the finances of the Trust have improved over the year, in particular, overall income increased compared with the prior year by approximately a quarter (23%) and as expenditure only increasing by approximately half of this rate. The net income almost trebled (288%) to £392 thousand pounds which directly increased total reserves.

The income growth was due largely to the receipt of two substantial legacies of which the larger one was unrestricted. Income was also increased as the trading and face-to-face membership recruitment were largely back to normal after Covid and Digital membership recruitment has also continued to be a growth area.

Total Group unrestricted reserves increased by £331k to £617k and free reserves increased by £330k to £353k. Again, a significant proportion of the increase in the unrestricted reserves was due to the receipt of the substantial legacy.

Our unrestricted reserves, at £353k, are now comfortably within desired range of £250-500k.

Finally Roger thanked Sarah Zacharek the new Finance Manager and the other members of the Finance team for their work during the year.

It was proposed that the annual accounts be approved. All in favour.

#### **5. Nominations for Election to Council**

Thanks were recorded to Dan Wrench who is retiring at the end of his second term and to Anne Wignall who has stepped down after three years' service.

James Drever and Alex Grant are standing for a second four-year term. Iain Diack, Laurence Kinnersley and Lisa Woodfield are standing for a first term; their resumes can be viewed on our website.

It was proposed that the above named be elected to Council en-bloc. All in favour.

They were all thanked and welcomed to the Trust.

## **6. Approval of the new articles of association**

Earlier this year Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) Council agreed, due to changes in legislation, to update its Memorandum and Articles, using The Wildlife Trusts (TWT) template for Articles of Association issued in late 2021.

Key changes include the updating of SWT charitable objects; provision for virtual AGMs/voting when necessary, dropping the stipulation that the President be an Officer and a trustee; and clarification on the re-election of Officers..

This was done in consultation with TWT, other Wildlife Trusts, and the Charity Commission. The proposed new Articles have been approved by SWT Council and permission for regulated alterations sought from the Charity Commission.

It was proposed that the Trust's Articles of Association shall be altered in substitution for, and to the exclusion of, any Articles of Association of the company previously registered.

The special resolution was passed with all in favour.

## **7. Appointment of Auditors**

It was proposed that Thorne Widgery LLP were re-appointed as auditor for the financial year ending 31 March 2023, their third second year of office.

All in favour.

## **8. Any Other Business**

Richard Grindle, CEO gave a short update on the Trust's new strategic priorities, achievements since April 2022, and key programmes for 2022-23 onwards including beaver release, land management advice, schools work and Wilder Marches.

All present were thanked for their attendance and the Chair closed the meeting at approximately 11.20am

The AGM was followed by a talk from Jonny Birks on Pine Martens.

*[Note: this version of the minutes was created in 2023 after the original minutes were accidentally deleted]*