



Chairman RODNEY LEGG Charity no 214753 General Secretary KATE ASHBROOK

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Friends House,
Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ on Wednesday 5 July 2006**

PRESENT

| | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Mr Paul Clayden | (vice-president) |
| Mr Roger de Freitas | (vice-president) |
| Mr Rodney Legg | (chairman) |
| Mr Robert Greenly | (treasurer) |

and 42 other members of the society, five members of staff
and three guests.

Apologies were received from 25 members.

WELCOME BY THE AGM CHAIRMAN

- 06/1 The AGM chairman, Roger de Freitas, welcomed members to the 140th AGM. He gave a short presentation on the opportunity for the society to develop its campaigning clout and improve its governance to make it an even more effective force. The executive committee had already embarked on a strategic review of the society, at an awayday the previous month, and he said that the fruits of that would become evident over the coming months.

APPROVAL TO LIMIT SPEECHES

- 06/2 It was agreed that speeches would be limited as follows: proposers of motions maximum five minutes, others maximum three minutes.

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON 5 JULY 2005

- 06/3 It was agreed that the minutes be signed as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Urban rights of way (05/21)

Brian Reader (Surrey) disputed Don Lee's claim that no one else was campaigning for urban rights of way. The Ramblers' Association was involved in two cases in Manchester and had spent about £31,000 on them.

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British Standard on gaps, gates and stiles (05/19)

- 06/4 Chris Beney (Hertfordshire) said the British Standard had now been published. Two members of the Open Spaces Society executive committee were on the working party.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2005

- 06/5 Rodney Legg (chairman) proposed the adoption of the annual report.
- 06/6 He referred to the publication of the new Ordnance Survey Explorer maps showing the access land in yellow. In 1865, our founder, George John Shaw Lefevre (later Lord Eversley) devoted this third speech as Liberal MP for Reading to establishing public rights over all commons. It has taken a further 97 years to achieve this.
- 06/7 He thanked Bernard Selwyn who had been our direct parliamentary link for as long as he could remember. He thought of Bernard along with Lord Eversley as the spirit of the society. He then invited Kate Ashbrook, the general secretary, to speak to the annual report.
- 06/8 The general secretary spoke about the Commons Bill and the Trap Grounds case. On both, the society had made a significant impact. She paid tribute to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Commons Bill Team who had liaised with and listened to the Open Spaces Society during the bill's passage.
- 06/9 We were often a lone voice, but with some successes. She congratulated Rodney Legg on saving the society from being removed from the list of appointing bodies to the National Trust council.
- 06/10 The society was working on the strategic plan but there would be no loss of commitment to campaigning. However there was potential to develop our information service and our communications.
- 06/11 The general secretary closed by thanking the local correspondents and other volunteers, funders, the executive committee, staff and members for all their hard work and loyalty to the cause.
- 06/12 The annual report was seconded by Bob Milton.
- 06/13 Jack Burling (Cornwall) said he would like to see the society demonstrate itself as a countrywide organisation, rather than southern-based.
- 06/14 Joyce Bellamy (London Borough of Merton) said it was a triumph that English Heritage decided to put metropolitan commons on the register of landscape of historic importance.

- 06/15 Graham Wanstall (Kent) was concerned that the membership had been excluded from the strategic planning. The general secretary replied that it was premature to consult until we had a draft strategic plan to consult on.
- 06/16 Don Lee (Manchester) said that, contrary to Jack Burling's view, the society was a leading light in the north and unpopular with the authorities in Manchester because of its activities. In Liverpool, the society had been the only objector to the closure of paths due to the Paradise development. Furthermore, he assured Graham Wanstall that his local correspondent's reports were carefully considered by the local correspondents' working party, of which Don was a member.
- 06/17 Diane Andrewes (Hampshire and Bursledon Rights of Way & Amenities Group) congratulated the society on an excellent annual report. She sought clarification of the term 'activist' in the report. The general secretary replied that an activist was someone who was an active volunteer on behalf of the society.
- 06/18 Patrick Ford (Surrey) said he considered himself an activist because he always reported path problems to the highway authority.
- 06/19 Peter Jackson (London Borough of Westminster) congratulated Rodney Legg on securing the Open Spaces Society's place as an appointing body to the National Trust Council.
- 06/20 Derek Tibbetts (Buckinghamshire) said the society in the past tried to change the law to improve the situation. He felt we should still be trying to simplify the law on public rights of way.
- 06/21 Jack Burling (Cornwall) said he did not want the law changed to make it easier to move paths.
- 06/22 Paul Clayden (Oxfordshire) said the society was still campaigning for changes in the law, and we had had some success in the Commons Bill.
- 06/23 Ben Aston (Windsor and Maidenhead) asked whether we provided assistance to our volunteers to get coverage on local radio. The general secretary said this was a good idea.
- 06/24 The annual report was approved.

ACCOUNTS FOR 2005

- 06/25 The treasurer, Robert Greenly, introduced the accounts. We had made a surplus of £13,000 but this was purely due to legacies of over £70,000. Our finances were therefore precarious and unpredictable and we needed to address the situation

- 06/26 The accounts were seconded by John Purdy, who urged members to remember the society in their wills.
- 06/27 Peter Jackson (London) said that many organisations depended on legacies for their survival, the National Trust being a prime example
- 06/28 The accounts were adopted nem con.

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS FOR 2006

- 06/29 It was proposed by Brian Reader, seconded by Patrick Ford and agreed nem con that Villars Hayward, chartered accountants and registered auditors of Henley-on-Thames be appointed independent examiners for 2006.

ELECTION OF VICE-PRESIDENTS, OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Vice Presidents

- 06/30 The vice-presidents had been formally proposed by Claire Cunningham and seconded by Bob Milton. The meeting agreed that Lord Clark of Windermere, Paul Clayden, Roger de Freitas, Richard Mabey, John Riddall, Margaret Smith and Anne Wilks be elected vice-presidents.

Chairman, vice-chairman and treasurer

- 06/31 Bob Milton had proposed and Don Lee seconded that Rodney Legg, Phil Wadey and Robert Greenly be elected as chairman, vice-chairman and treasurer respectively. This was agreed by the meeting.

Executive Committee

- 06/32 The following had been proposed and seconded as members of the executive committee.

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|-------------------|--------------|
| Chris Beney | Bob Milton |
| Tim Crowther | Peter Newman |
| Claire Cunningham | Donald Lee |

- 06/33 As there were insufficient candidates for a ballot they were automatically elected.
- 06/34 Roger de Freitas paid tribute to Bernard Selwyn who had retired from the executive committee after 14 years. He had been a vital force for the society in his parliamentary work and as our London representative. The society owed him a huge debt of gratitude.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 06/35 There was no other business.

06/36 The meeting closed at 12.30 pm.

06/37 In the afternoon there were presentations by Chris Beney on unrecorded ways, Don Lee on tackling crime and rights of way, and Nicola Hodgson on the Commons Bill 2006, on which Hugh Craddock (Defra Commons Bill team) and Paul Clayden also answered questions.

Spencer

