



**TEL** 01491 573535  
**EMAIL** [hq@oss.org.uk](mailto:hq@oss.org.uk)  
**WEB** [www.oss.org.uk](http://www.oss.org.uk)

**Minutes of the twenty-third meeting of the Board of Trustees of  
the Open Spaces Society held at 12 noon on Thursday 10 March 2016 at  
Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ**

**PRESENT** Graham Bathe (chairman)  
Diane Andrewes  
Chris Beney  
Tim Crowther  
Peter Newman  
Phil Wadey  
Steve Warr

**IN ATTENDANCE** Kate Ashbrook (general secretary)

**APOLOGIES** John Lavery

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

1/16 There were no declarations of interests.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 10 DECEMBER 2015**

2/16 The minutes were approved as a correct record and for publication on the website.

## FINANCIAL MATTERS

### Finance committee meeting

3/16 It was noted that the finance committee meeting, due to have been held on 25 February, had been postponed because due to illness the independent examiners had been unable to complete the 2015 accounts in time. The finance committee had instead met immediately before the trustees' meeting.

### Management report to end December 2015

4/16 This was noted. The treasurer explained that the full-year shortfall of just under £100k did not take account of legacies of £135k and large donations of £22k which left us with a £50k surplus on the year. Excluding legacies and large donations, we had in any case come out about £7k better than the budget due to slight underspend on the expenditure headings.

### Investment and cash summary at end December 2015

5/16 It was noted that the excess reserves fund was £167,590 which was a reduction on November's figure due to the agreed expenditure on a caseworker and membership campaign from 2016.

### Approval of accounts for 2015

6/16 The trustees discussed the draft accounts for 2015 and unanimously approved them provided there are no changes. It was noted that the chairman and treasurer would sign the final version on behalf of the trustees. The trustees thanked the treasurer for his work on this.

### Legacy

7/16 It was noted with pleasure that we had recently received an interim legacy of £200k from Leslie Menzler, a former local correspondent for Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire. The finance committee had agreed to put this on deposit to ensure that it incurred some interest without being unduly tied up. Since this sum enabled us to embark on a new initiative, there would be a discussion at the June meeting of ideas for projects. The general secretary would send a note to prompt thought.

### Kids Company

8/16 The finance committee had discussed an article about the lessons to be learnt from the collapse of Kids Company and the treasurer would write a paper for discussion at the June trustees' meeting.

### Topic for spring appeal

9/16 The trustees suggested that the countdown to 2026 for recording 'lost' ways was a suitable topic.

## MEMBERSHIP

### Membership working party

10/16 It was noted that Graham Bathe had stood down from the working party and the trustee members were now Steve Warr (chairman) and Phil Wadey.

### Membership figures at end of February 2016

11/16 The trustees noted that there had been a disappointing drop in membership numbers during February, and that the total was now 1,937.

### Membership: interim report

12/16 Steve Warr presented his paper in which he explained that he had been analysing the membership figures since 2010 and had made some interim findings. He proposed that he continued to carry out his review of 'inconsistent' data and refined the statistics so that we had a firm foundation on which to base future actions.

13/16 The trustees welcomed this work which was providing evidence on which we could build our membership strategy.

### Collaboration with the Environmental Law Foundation (ELF)

14/16 The trustees noted with pleasure the paper from the case officer who had met ELF in December. The two organisations were developing ideas for a joint membership scheme whereby communities could gain access to support and advice from OSS and an ELF referral to a barrister; a bespoke relationship with a set of chambers; an event looking at green spaces issues, and a joint funding application to support an event and joint working. It was noted that this would be referred to the membership working party for consideration.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 7 JULY 2016

### Draft agenda

15/16 The trustees approved the draft agenda and agreed to invite Paul Clayden to chair the meeting. The vice-presidents would be proposed by Phil Wadey and seconded by Tim Crowther.

16/16 It was agreed that for the afternoon entertainment we would endeavour to get speakers from Natural England and Natural Resources Wales to speak on coastal access and the coastal path respectively. Second choice was a speaker from the Foundation for Common Land on the bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for work on upland commons. The speakers would be followed by a few members speaking on their campaigns.

### Annual report for 2015

17/16 The draft text was approved with minor amendments.

## LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS

### Reappointments

18/15 It was agreed to reappoint Gerry Stewart (Glos, Cotswold District) and David Thornewell (Kent, Tonbridge and Malling District) for a further three years.

### Reports

19/16 Chris Beney and Peter Newman had studied the reports and raised various points. The trustees agreed that this process of considering the reports was working well.

20/16 It was agreed that the general secretary would follow up with Sustrans about its misleading notices on public paths, and would amend the guidelines to local correspondents to make it clear that local correspondents must inform the office when they serve a form 1 notice under section 130A-D of the Highways Act 1980 and that such action should only be taken when other means have failed.

21/16 It was agreed that the chairman would write to the local correspondents to thank them for their enormous amount of work, particularly reflecting on our 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE

22/16 The trustees were not aware of any claims or circumstances or problems which may give rise to a claim.

## ANY OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

23/16 The report was noted.

## REVIEW OF MEETING

24/16 The trustees were content with the meeting.

## ANY OTHER BUSINESS

25/16 The trustees expressed their delight at Graham Bathe's book, *Village Greens*, which the society had recently published with Pitkin.

## NEXT MEETING

26/16 This would be on Thursday 9 June at Friends House, London.

27/16 The chairman noted that we would discuss:

- *Choosing Direction*, progress report
- A campaign for the year
- Projects related to the legacy of £200k.

The meeting closed at 2.30 pm.