

**Minutes of the thirty-fourth meeting of the Board of Trustees of**

**the Open Spaces Society held at 12 noon on Thursday 7 June 2018 at**

**Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ**

**PRESENT** Graham Bathe (chairman)

Diane Andrewes

Hilary Hunt

John Lavery

Jean Macdonald

Mary Traynor

Phil Wadey

Steve Warr

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

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

50/18 There were no declarations of interest.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

51/18 It was noted with regret that Mary Traynor was resigning as a trustee with effect from the AGM, and that this was also the last meeting for Diane Andrewes, Graham Bathe and Phil Wadey who have reached the end of their terms of office. Those who were not leaving the board thanked most warmly those who were leaving.

52/18 It was noted with sadness that solicitor Jerry Pearlman, our local correspondent from Leeds and former chairman of the society, had died in March. He had given us significant help with legal work.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 8 MARCH 2018**

53/18 The minutes were approved as a correct record and for publication on the website.

**TRUSTEE AND STAFF SUCCESSION**

54/18 John Lavery introduced the paper which he had written jointly with Hilary Hunt. He said that at the AGM we were losing four trustees. Fortunately, there were three nominations but we were weak in certain skills and should consider co-opting to fill the gaps. There was also the problem that we had no trustees from Wales.

55/18 It was agreed that, notwithstanding that the articles provide for nine trustees plus two co-options, the ideal number of trustees was about nine including co-options. Also it was important to have rotation so that large numbers of trustees did not retire at the same time.

56/18 It was agreed that we need to carry out a skills audit when the new trustees join the board, and that this should be undertaken independently with advice about how to attract a more diverse board. It was agreed that the general secretary would ask NCVO if it could assist, or recommend someone to assist, with this process. We should also think about the Welsh complement.

57/18 With regard to induction of new trustees, there would be a visit to Henley and a discussion with the new chairman, plus the opportunity to have a mentor/buddy from the board. It was noted that the trustees’ handbook needed updating.

58/18 The trustees thanked John and Hilary for a thorough paper.

**FINANCIAL MATTERS**

**Report of finance committee meeting on 7 June 2018**

59/18 The treasurer gave an oral report of the finance committee meeting held immediately before the trustees’ meeting. He reported that we have three timed deposits which reach maturity before the next trustees’ meeting and that the finance committee proposed to roll them forward. The Candy bequest had been put in a Charifund account.

**Management report to 30 April 2018 and treasurer’s commentary**

60/18 The report and commentary were noted.

**Investment and cash summary at 30 April 2018**

61/18 The report was noted.

**REVIEW OF COMMONS RE-REGISTRATION PROJECT**

62/18 The general secretary referred trustees to her email of 21 May enclosing a spreadsheet from Tomas Hill and report from Hugh Craddock. It was disappointing that limited progress had been made in the last year (and therefore that we had spent little on the project) but Tomas was now putting in applications and he seemed to be organised and able to devote more time to it. The trustees accepted that Tomas had the skills for the job and that there were probably few other people who had his knowledge and expertise. They agreed that we should advertise for others to share the work, and that there was merit in putting greater resources in to ensure that lost commons in the registration areas with a 2020 deadline were claimed. It was hoped that Tomas would make applications in Devon as well as Cornwall and act as a mentor for other workers. It was agreed to look favourably on releasing funds for the work if we could find suitable candidates.

**IDEAS FOR HERITAGE PROJECTS**

63/18 The treasurer reported that the group consisting of Jean Macdonald, Kate Ashbrook, Hugh Craddock and himself had had one round of consultation. There was no clear direction emerging so they needed to continue the discussions.

**STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2024**

64/18 Hilary Hunt introduced her papers. She said that this was the first time that all the details of all the activity had been brought together for trustees to discuss. The aim was to have a clear, short strategic plan with SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timed) objectives. The AGM and local correspondents’ meeting were part of the consultation process. Phil Wadey said that there had been a lot of good work, data collection, analysis and proposals.

65/18 The revised timetable was approved, with trustees considering the first draft in September and signing off the document in December.

66/18 After discussion the trustees agreed that the vision for the purposes of discussion should be: *Everyone is able to enjoy rights to open spaces and paths.*

67/18 After discussion, the trustees agreed that the mission for the purposes of discussion should be: *The Open Spaces Society promotes people’s rights to urban and rural open spaces and paths in England and Wales.*

68/18 The trustees agreed that the goals should be linked to charitable objects, and they agreed the strategic themes which were needed to deliver the goals.

69/18 It was agreed that Hilary Hunt and Phil Wadey would produce a paper for discussion at the AGM. They would also consider John Bullivant’s maturity matrix and recommend how and when it should be used.

70/18 The trustees thanked Hilary Hunt for all her work on this.

**CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

71/18The chairman said that we do not have a guiding policy on how we approach conflicts of interest and so he had drafted a paper to provide general guidance for trustees and staff having roles outside the purview of the society.

72/18 After discussion the trustees endorsed the paper and agreed that it should be included in the trustees’ handbook.

**REVIEW OF CASEWORK POLICY**

73/18 The trustees were pleased that the pilot year for the casework policy had gone well and agreed to review it in three years’ time unless there was a reason to do so earlier.

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 5 JULY 2018**

**Draft agenda**

74/18 The trustees approved the draft agenda and agreed that in the afternoon we would allow 30 minutes for the strategic plan, with questions for people to answer. Because John Lavery was unable to be present for the afternoon it was agreed to omit the item on privately-owned public spaces, and to be flexible about the other items depending on how many people volunteer to speak on their campaigns.

75/18 It was noted that we would like a more interesting lunch, and provision of roving and lapel microphones.

**MEMBERSHIP**

**Membership figures at the end of April 2018**

76/18 The trustees noted that membership was 1,916 at the end of April, an increase on the previous month.

**Membership working party**

77/18 The trustees noted the report of the membership working party telephone conference on 10 May which had focused on proposals for the design and development of the new website, for which there was £20,000 in the budget.

78/18 Diane Andrewes proposed that we consider appointing a membership officer for the society, to consider how to strengthen our relationship with members and local correspondents. It was agreed to add this to the list of heritage projects.

79/18 It was noted that trustees would like to know what resources will be required for rewriting the content of the website.

**GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR) UPDATE**

80/18 The trustees noted that the policy was now on the website.

**RISK REGISTER**

81/18 The risk register had been deferred from the March meeting. It was agreed that it was a useful tool which should be reviewed regularly.

**LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS**

**Reappointments**

82/18 It was agreed to reappoint the following for a further three years: Peter Newman (Herefordshire, former Leominster district and Powys, former Radnorshire district) and Maggie Thomas (Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Torfaen).

**Reports**

83/18 John Lavery had studied the reports and sent some notes, which the general secretary was following up. The trustees noted that Graham Wanstall had been our correspondent for 30 years and agreed that the general secretary should write to thank and congratulate him. They also noted that use of councils’ formal-complaints procedures can be an effective means of getting action.

**PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE**

84/18 The trustees were not aware of any new claims or circumstances or problems which may give rise to a claim.

**ANY OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

85/18 The trustees noted the paper listing outstanding matters arising.

**REVIEW OF MEETING**

86/18 The trustees were satisfied with the meeting.

87/18  **DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

88/18 Thursday 5 July 2018 (AGM) at Friends House, London (George Fox room)

Thursday 27 September 2018 at Friends House, London (George Fox room)

Thursday 6 December 2018 at Friends House, London (George Fox room)

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Update on Dorchester-on-Thames case**

89/18 The general secretary reported that Andrew Reid was suing the *Oxford Mail* for defamation and there had been an initial hearing in court. The matter could go to a full hearing and the *Oxford Mail* was preparing its defence and had contacted her for information. It was possible that the *Oxford Mail* would ask her to produce a witness statement, but she had expressed caution given current pressures. The trustees agreed that if she decided to go ahead they would give her their full support.

**Correspondence from member who wished to put motions to AGM**

90/18 Phil Wadey reported on correspondence he had conducted with a member while the chairman was away. The member wished to put two motions to the AGM but had not submitted them in the proper form in time to be considered. The member had asked that trustees should see the correspondence and Phil had reported this to the trustees. Phil said that he would reply to explain again that the member had missed the closing date, but he would encourage him to attend the AGM and talk to people and perhaps raise his issues under the discussion on the strategic plan.

**Good Governance website**

91/18 Hilary Hunt said that John Bullivant, who had run our strategic plan workshop, had reminded her that we could put a testimonial on his Good Governance website. It was agreed that Hilary should draft it and send it to the general secretary.

**Role of Human Rights on paths**

92/18 Hilary Hunt referred to an article she had seen in the Ramblers’ magazine regarding the use of human rights law (European Convention on Human Rights) in helping to get surveying authorities to consider definitive map modification applications more quickly. She wondered if the Human Rights Act, being UK domestic law, could more usefully be applicable. John Lavery offered to send his thoughts on this.

The meeting closed at 3.10 pm.

