

**Minutes of the thirty-seventh meeting of the Board of Trustees of
the Open Spaces Society held at 12 noon on Thursday 6 December 2018 at
Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ**

PRESENT Chris Beney (chairman)
John Hall
John Lavery
Jean Macdonald
Chris Meewezen
Steve Warr

IN ATTENDANCE Kate Ashbrook (general secretary)

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

154/18 There were no declarations of interest.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

155/18 It was noted with regret that Hilary Hunt had resigned from the board. The chairman read out the letter he had written in response to hers. The trustees agreed to write collectively to thank her, with particular reference to all her hard work on the strategic plan.

156/18 It was noted with sadness that John Barnes, local correspondent for East Hertfordshire 1998-9 who had founded the East Hertfordshire Footpaths Society, and David Jefferson, trustee 1991-2002, had died.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 27 SEPTEMBER 2018

157/18 The minutes were approved as a correct record and for publication on the website

DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE LAST MEETING

- 158/18 It was noted that the general purposes committee had approved the draft of the strategic plan which had been published on the website for consultation with members.

CO-OPTION OF TRUSTEES

- 159/18 The trustees approved the text of the proposed advertisement to go on the National Council for Voluntary Organisations' trustee bank website, for advertisement in January, free for 30 days. The advertisement would also go on our own website. It was agreed to delegate to the general purposes committee the sifting and interviewing of candidates.

OFFICE BREAK-IN

- 160/18 The general secretary reported that the office was broken into over the weekend of 24 November, and the entire contents of the safe were stolen, including about £40 in cash, office keys, bank cards and a number of unrecorded cheques. The general secretary had written to all members to tell them of this and ask them to check with the office if they thought their cheque might have gone missing and to reissue it if it had. We were working with the landlord to make good the damage. The staff had dealt with this excellently, but it was causing us considerable inconvenience. We are likely to make a claim on the insurance.

DEREGISTRATION OF WARCOP COMMONS

- 161/18 The general secretary reported that Cumbria County Council had that day approved the recommendation of the inspector to deregister 70 per cent of the Warcop commons by 11 votes in favour, one against and one abstention. We were consulting our legal team about next steps.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Minutes of finance committee meeting on 27 September 2018 and 21 November 2018

- 162/18 These were noted.

Management report to 31 October 2018 and treasurer's commentary

- 163/18 The report and commentary were noted. The treasurer said that we had made generous provision for some things to happen this year which had not been undertaken, and we were in a healthy financial position.

Investment and cash summary at 31 October 2018

- 164/18 The report was noted.

Draft budget for 2019

- 165/18 The treasurer introduced the draft budget. For each of the items which were underspent he had determined what was the realistic expenditure for next year, whether it had been done more cheaply so the surplus could be cancelled (IT for instance), or whether there were things which still needed to be done and which should be rolled forward if they were likely to be done.
- 166/18 There were three areas where we still had to make decisions: further recruitment of staff, repairs and maintenance for redecorating the office, and commons re-registration.
- 167/18 The general secretary reported that we had offered a commons re-registration job to Frances Kerner, as an employee for 28 hours a week focusing on Lancashire. We had also interviewed a firm of consultants, Acorn, who would focus on the deskwork element. Figures for the budget would be available shortly.
- 168/18 After discussion, the trustees agreed an increase in staff salaries of 3.2 per cent (in line with the retail price index in October 2018), explaining that this was not automatic.
- 169/18 The trustees approved the draft budget subject to the three unknown figures in minute 166/18 above.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2024

- 170/18 The general secretary introduced the latest version of the draft strategic plan which included many of the comments from members.
- 171/18 The trustees agreed the vision and mission and proposed a number of amendments to the text. Subject to these amendments they approved the plan.

RISK REGISTER

- 172/18 The trustees discussed the risk register and agreed a number of amendments. With regard to risk A3, 'current trustee nomination process can lead to inappropriate appointments' they recognised that, with potentially five vacancies at the 2019 AGM, the society could be at risk. They agreed to consider at the next meeting whether to propose a motion amending the articles reducing the maximum number of elected trustees from nine to seven. The trustees asked the general secretary to circulate the updated version of the risk register.

LIST OF DEFINITIVE MAP MODIFICATION APPLICATIONS MADE IN THE NAME OF THE OPEN SPACES SOCIETY

- 173/18 The trustees noted the list as a potential risk for the society should it need to take on any of the cases. It was noted that most of the applications had been made by one local correspondent, Chris Smith. It was agreed that we should remind local correspondents that they should submit their applications in the name of the society (after the initial checking process previously agreed).

MEMBERSHIP

Membership figures at the end of October 2018

- 174/18 It was noted that membership was 1,922 at the end of October, and had been 1,921 a year ago, indicating that it was stable.

LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS

Reappointments

- 175/18 It was agreed to reappoint Ian Witham (Breckland, Broadland, King's Lynn & West Norfolk and North Norfolk) for a further three years.

Resignation

- 176/18 It was noted with regret that Malcolm Lees (Essex) had resigned for personal reasons.

Change in correspondent

- 177/18 It was agreed that Marion Law (local correspondent for Telford and the Wrekin) would take on Shropshire from Harry Scott who would continue to cover Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

Reports

- 178/18 Correspondents' reports had been circulated to the trustees who discussed them. John Lavery and Chris Meewezen had made useful comments which the general secretary was following up.

PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE

- 179/18 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

- 180/18 The trustees noted the paper listing outstanding matters arising.

181/18 **7/18 ideas for projects:** it was noted that the working group had not yet considered ideas for heritage projects, but that this should be postponed until we had resolved our issues of capacity. It was agreed that the general secretary would produce an operational plan for the March trustees' meeting, setting out what we would like to do by when and how we were going to do it.

182/18 **140/18 Finsbury Park:** it was noted that we were unlikely to find out the reasons for the Supreme Court's refusal to give leave to appeal on the Finsbury Park case.

REVIEW OF MEETING

183/18 The trustees were satisfied with the meeting, noting that everyone had contributed.

GENERAL SECRETARY APPRAISAL

184/18 It was agreed that the chairman and John Lavery would carry out the general secretary's appraisal, and that it should be two-way.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

185/18 Thursday 7 March 2018 at Friends House, London (John Woolman room)

The meeting closed at 2.50 pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Lavery', is written over a horizontal line.

