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**Minutes of the thirty-eighth meeting of the Board of Trustees of  
the Open Spaces Society held at 12 noon on Thursday 7 March 2019 at  
Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ**

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

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

**APOLOGIES** John Lavery

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

1/19 There were no declarations of interest.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

2/19 It was noted with sadness that John Purdy had died. He was the society's treasurer from 1999 to 2003.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 6 DECEMBER 2018**

3/19 The minutes were approved as a correct record and for publication on the website.

**DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE LAST MEETING**

4/19 It was noted that the trustees had agreed the following, on the recommendation of the legal subcommittee:  
(a) not to appeal against Cumbria County Council's decision to deregister most of the Warcop commons;

- (b) to allocate £7,500 to the judicial review of Dorset County Council's decision to deregister part of Leigh Common, Wimborne
- (c) to allocate a further £4,000 to the public inquiry into the deregistration of Yateley Common at Blackbushe
- (d) to allocate £2,000 towards counsel's opinion on how to save paths in use from the 2026 cut off.

## CO-OPTION OF TRUSTEE

- 5/19 The trustees noted that, following our advertisement with Charity Job, Tara Sutcliffe who lives in Wales had applied to be a trustee. Chris Beney, Jean Macdonald, Steve Warr and the general secretary had met her the previous week and recommended her co-option to the board. The board agreed to co-opt her until the AGM when her co-option would need to be renewed if she was to continue. It was also agreed to invite her to the next finance committee meeting.
- 6/19 The general secretary said that, Tara having inquired whether we have job descriptions for the officers and trustees, she had checked and they were out of date. She would review them and circulate updated versions for consideration.

## FINANCIAL MATTERS

### Minutes of finance committee meeting on 27 February 2019

- 7/19 These were noted.

### Management report to 31 December 2018 and treasurer's commentary

- 8/19 The report and treasurer's commentary were noted.

### Investment and cash summary at 31 December 2018

- 9/19 The report was noted.

### Accounts for 2018 and letter of representation

- 10/19 The trustees approved the independently-examined accounts and authorised the treasurer to sign the letter of representation on their behalf.

### Draft budget for 2019

- 11/19 The treasurer introduced the draft budget which had been updated as explained in the commentary and now had a deficit of £268,000 for 2019, some of which would come from the Candy Fund\*. The trustees approved the draft budget.

### Spring appeal

- 12/19 It was noted that the autumn appeal had done exceptionally well, raising over £22,000 excluding gift aid. It was agreed to have a spring appeal and trustees suggested that this could be related to the appointment and proposed work of the rights-of-way case officer.

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\* This is affordable because of the large retained reserves.

**New post: case officer (rights of way)**

- 13/19 The trustees noted that the finance committee had confirmed that we had the funds for the appointment of an additional part-time post of case officer (rights of way). They approved the appointment at a minimum of three days a week. They considered that the job description should be pruned, and that the tasks should be reordered to clarify the priorities of the new post.

14/19 **STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2024: DRAFT OPERATION PLAN**

The trustees discussed the draft operational plan. They felt it needed to be clearer about what would be done when, that the work needed to be spread out over the five-year period, and that use of the word 'ongoing' should be more sparing. It was agreed that the general secretary would refine the plan and produce a version in chronological order which she would send to the trustees.

- 15/19 Jean Macdonald offered to meet the general secretary to discuss the review of staffing and development of the staff succession plan.

- 16/19 It was agreed to add 'education of highway authorities' in item 4.1.

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2019**

**Agenda and minutes**

- 17/19 The trustees approved the draft agenda and agreed to invite Paul Clayden to chair the AGM. The vice-presidents would be proposed by Jean Macdonald and seconded by John Hall. The treasurer would propose the independent examiners.

- 18/19 It was agreed to invite Hugh Craddock and Frances Kerner to speak on commons re-registration, and to invite members to make short contributions on their campaigns. Chris Beney volunteered a presentation on the frustrations and successes of the National Land Access Centre and he said that Phil Wadey might be willing to speak on the Finch Lane project at Bushey.

**Draft annual report**

- 19/19 The annual report was approved for presentation to the AGM

**Amendment to articles**

- 20/19 The trustees considered whether to propose amendments to the articles relating to the number and terms of elected trustees. They agreed to propose that the maximum term for a trustee before standing down for at least a year was nine rather than six years; this would provide greater stability. While making this amendment they felt it would be useful to make some further corrections. They therefore agreed to propose the following.

- (a) In article 3.5.4 amend 'six' to 'nine' where it appears three times in this article.

- (b) Delete from article 9.8 the words 'whether in a show of hands or in a ballot' which are redundant following the amendment to article 9.7 last year.
- (c) Delete the last sentence of 9.11 which is redundant in the light of article 9.7a.

#### **ACCESS TO WATER**

- 21/19 The trustees confirmed that the society's objects include campaigning for access to water, meaning that we support waterside access and access leading to water, as well as legitimate activities on water, such as canoeing and kayaking.

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

##### **Membership figures at the end of January 2019**

- 22/19 It was noted that membership was 1,929 at the end of January, an increase of 18 on a year ago. The trustees congratulated all involved.

#### **LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS**

##### **Reappointments**

- 23/19 It was agreed to reappoint Gerry Stewart (Cotswold District, Gloucestershire) and David Thornewell (Tonbridge and Malling District, Kent) for a further three years.

##### **Resignation**

- 24/19 It was noted with regret that Maggie Coleman (Medway) had resigned.

##### **Reports**

- 25/19 The 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**

- 26/19 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**

- 27/19 The trustees noted the paper listing outstanding matters arising. The general secretary would circulate her revised job description following her appraisal.

#### **REVIEW OF MEETING**

- 28/19 It was agreed that the meeting was satisfactory.

#### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 29/19 Thursday 13 June 2019 at Friends House, London (John Woolman room)  
The meeting closed at 3.20 pm.

