

**Minutes of the forty-first meeting of the Board of Trustees of  
the Open Spaces Society held at 12 noon on Thursday 3 October 2019 at  
Tintagel House, 92 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TY**

<b>PRESENT</b>	Chris Beney (chairman) Graham Bathe John Hall Chris Meewezen Phil Wadey
<b>APOLOGIES</b>	Steve Warr
<b>IN ATTENDANCE</b>	Kate Ashbrook (general secretary)

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

68/19 There were no declarations of interest.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- 69/19 It was noted with sadness that two of our vice-presidents, Len Clark and Edgar Powell, had died.
- 70/19 It was noted that Tara-Jane Sutcliffe had resigned as a trustee because she has been appointed as director of the St Helena National Trust.
- 71/19 It was noted with pleasure that we had reached agreement in the Leigh Common case (a highway and common case in Dorset which was set to go to the high court). The bulk of our costs would be paid by the developers and Dorset Council, the conceding parties, and money raised from the spring appeal would go towards other legal cases taken by the society.
- 72/19 The trustees congratulated and thanked Nicola Hodgson on her 20 years as the society's case officer.

## MINUTES OF MEETINGS ON 13 JUNE AND 11 JULY 2019

- 73/19 The minutes were approved as a correct record and for publication on the website.

### DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE LAST MEETING

- 74/19 It was noted that we had decided not to appeal against the inspector's decision to deregister part of Yateley Common in Hampshire which we had fought on the definition of 'curtilage'. Hampshire County Council was seeking leave to appeal and we would reserve our option to join with it.

### FINANCIAL MATTERS

#### Note of finance committee meeting on 13 June.

- 75/19 This was noted. Because of the change of date for the trustees' meeting there had been no finance committee meeting this quarter.

- 76/19 **Management report to 30 June 2019, reserves spreadsheet and treasurer's commentary**

These were noted. The trustees would, in addition, like to see the chart showing legacies over the last decade or so.

#### Budget 2020 process

- ~~77/19 It was noted that trustees should send any ideas for additional expenditure to the office by 31 October.~~

- 78/19 The chairman suggested a campaign about failure to reinstate a public path after ploughing. After discussion it was agreed to consider a campaign against the agricultural abuse of paths, and that the budget for 2020 could include the cost of a counsel's opinion on the exact meaning of the section, cost of an event to demonstrate good practice, cost of preparing a leaflet and website information highlighting the good practice, cost of travel for staff to run the campaign, and possible legal action on a suitable case. It was agreed that Chris Beney and Chris Meewezen would draft a paper ~~for the next board meeting~~, and that we could ask local correspondents for examples of good and bad practice.

#### Autumn appeal

- 79/19 It was agreed that the appeal should be to top up the legal fund, for helping members with their cases, which was about £500 overdrawn. The appeal should mention the cases on which the legal fund had been spent.

### COMMITTEES, SUBCOMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES

#### General purposes committee

- 80/19 The terms of reference were agreed, with the chairman, vice-chairman and treasurer as members.

**Finance committee**

- 81/19 The terms of reference were agreed with Graham Bathe, Chris Beney and Steve Warr (chairman) as members.

**Legal subcommittee**

- 82/19 The terms of reference were agreed with Chris Beney, John Hall, Phil Wadey (chairman) and Steve Warr as members.

**TRUSTEES' ROLE DESCRIPTIONS**

- 83/19 It was agreed to add to the vice-chairman's role: '3 Normally to act as the reporting officer for the general secretary's appraisal (leaving the chairman to deal with any appeal)'. With this amendment the role descriptions were approved.

**TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT**

- 84/19 It was agreed to invite Simon Hunt (chairman of the Friends of Finsbury Park) as a guest to the next meeting so that he and the trustees could decide whether he should be co-opted.
- 85/19 It was further agreed to repeat the free advertisement on the NCVO website for candidates for co-option from Wales, and with legal and marketing experience.

**STAFF UPDATE**

- 86/19 It was noted that, after a second advertisement, we had still not been able to appoint a case officer (rights of way) but Rosalinde Emrys-Roberts had agreed to do some consultancy work for us which was welcomed. It was further noted that we had not made progress with the appointment of a Welsh officer. We had engaged Pat Michael as financial assistant to assist during busy times and to cover for Lucie Henwood when she was away.

**INVOLVING STAFF MORE IN TRUSTEES' MEETINGS**

- 87/19 The chairman introduced his paper in which he suggested that staff should have the occasional opportunity to share their work as part of attending trustees' meetings, and to discuss views and explore future opportunities in their work. After discussion it was agreed that: (a) trustees should raise any issues on the quarterly reports on which they would like further information; (b) if any member of staff wanted to come to the trustees' meeting and the general secretary thought it appropriate they would be welcome, (c) if the general secretary perceived a gap developing between the staff and trustees (eg relating to workloads, direction and purpose) she should alert the trustees, and (d) every one or two years the trustees should visit Henley and offer to meet staff to explore current issues.

## DRAFT OPERATIONAL PLAN 2019-24 AND DIGITAL MARKETING REPORT

- 88/19 The plan with traffic lights for the current year's work was noted. The trustees would like some explanation when a red or amber traffic light had been assigned.

### DIGITAL MARKETING ACTIVITY RESPONSE

- 89/19 The report was noted with interest. The trustees asked for clarification of the web sessions chart, and what it tells us.

### MEMBERSHIP TO END AUGUST 2019

- 90/19 The membership figures were noted.

### LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS

#### Appointment

- 91/19 It was agreed to appoint Stuart Bain as local correspondent for Bridgend and the Vale of Glamorgan for one year in the first instance.

#### Reappointments for three years

- 92/19 It was agreed to reappoint Jo Bird (County Durham, former Teesdale and Wear Valley districts), Paul Brown (West Sussex, Mid Sussex District), Jeremy Clyne (London Boroughs of Lambeth and Wandsworth), Paul Partington (Somerset West and Taunton Council, former Taunton Deane District) for a further three years.

#### Resignations

- 93/19 It was noted with regret that Yvonne Hunt (Rochdale Borough) and Mary Traynor (Cumbria, South Lakeland District) had resigned.

#### Reports

- 94/19 The correspondents' reports had been circulated to the trustees, and John Lavery and Chris Meewezen had collated comments. The general secretary had followed up a number of them. The chairman drew attention to the difference in wording of the 'NB' in the notes on the quarterly reports and the wording of the current local correspondents' reports process (trustees meeting June 2019 appendix G).

#### Reports process

- 95/19 It was agreed that John Lavery and Chris Meewezen should continue to collate comments from the trustees on the local correspondents' reports.

### PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE

- 96/19 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

- 97/19 **65/19 AGM:** It was agreed that we needed to have rows of seats which were closer to the front, and to ensure we had enough seats readily available.

## ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED TO THE CHAIRMAN

### **Forder village green, Saltash, Cornwall**

- 98/19 It was noted that Colin Brown (who spoke at the AGM) was soon to appear at a public inquiry into his green application. It was agreed to check whether Jackie Warr was able to help and if not to consider if other support could be found should he need it.

### **Welsh policy on footpaths**

- 99/19 Phil Wadey felt the policy on upgrading footpaths for use by horses and cycles in Wales (as expressed in the society's response to the Welsh Government's consultation on the strategic management of natural resources) was unduly negative and he suggested that we rephrase it to point out that, while not all paths may be suitable for upgrading, there should be criteria against which to decide whether a path was suitable. This would save having to address the matter on a case-by-case basis. This was agreed.

### **Donation of a highway**

- 100/19 Phil Wadey said that a landowner in Three Rivers district, Hertfordshire, would like to donate a path by transferring the land to another party and dedicating it as a highway. Phil asked whether the society would be prepared to consider becoming the recipient. It was agreed that Phil should write a paper on this for a future meeting.

### **Climate crisis**

- 101/19 Graham Bathe questioned whether we were adequately engaged with the climate-crisis agenda, which was a youth-led movement. He considered we should look at the extent to which we contribute to climate-crisis mitigation and should demonstrate our alignment with this movement. It was agreed that we should pursue this.

### **Ethical policy review.**

- 102/19 Graham Bathe asked that we review our investment policy at the next finance committee meeting.

## DATES AND LOCATIONS OF MEETINGS IN 2020

- 103/19 The following were agreed (all at Friends House):  
 Thursday 5 March  
 Thursday 11 June  
 Thursday 9 July (AGM)  
 Thursday 24 September  
 Thursday 3 December.

**Review of meeting**

- 104/19 The trustees considered the meeting had gone well. Graham Bathe asked for more opportunities to have work-related (rather than administrative) topics on the agenda and he agreed to make some suggestions.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 105/19 Thursday 5 December 2019 at Friends House, London (John Woolman room)

The meeting closed at 3.10pm

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Bathe', with a long horizontal stroke underneath.