

**Minutes of the forty-second meeting of the Board of Trustees of
the Open Spaces Society held at 12 noon on Thursday 5 December 2019 at
Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ**

PRESENT Chris Beney (chairman)
Graham Bathe
John Hall
Chris Meewezen
Steve Warr

IN ATTENDANCE Kate Ashbrook (general secretary)
Stuart Bain (observer)
Simon Hunt (observer)

APOLOGIES Phil Wadey

WELCOME

106/19 The chairman welcomed Stuart Bain and Simon Hunt to the meeting as observers. Both had expressed an interest in being co-opted to the board.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

107/19 There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTES OF MEETING ON 3 OCTOBER 2019

108/19 With the deletion of 'for the next board meeting' in minute 78/19, the minutes were approved as a correct record and for publication on the website.

DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE LAST MEETING

109/19 It was noted that the trustees, on the recommendation of the legal subcommittee, had agreed by five votes for and one abstention to intervene in the Blackbushe case at the high court and court of appeal, on the issue of the definition of

'curtilage', subject to the following: the grant of a costs protection order; expenditure being up to £45,000; and the society being able to withdraw if the prospects of success are considered to have fallen after the high court decision is received.

DIGITAL PROMOTION AND PUBLICITY REVIEW

- 110/19 The trustees considered the paper from Ellen Froggatt and Nichola Finan, which had previously been discussed by the finance committee and amended in the light of comments at that meeting.
- 111/19 It was generally thought that this was essential work although it was difficult to measure the impact. Simon Hunt said that the results of our digital promotion were similar to those for his university student newspaper, using voluntary help only. He advised that we needed to be clear about our target audience and design the messages accordingly.
- 112/19 The trustees approved the proposed activities and the budget for 2020.

CASEWORK

- 113/19 The chairman had asked for more information about the society's casework and the general secretary considered it would be helpful to know what trustees would like, balanced against our capacity to provide it.
- 114/19 After discussion it was considered that our system was working well with overall figures given in the quarterly staff reports, and there was no need for trustees to be provided with additional information as a matter of course.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Minutes of the finance committee meeting on 20 November 2019

- 115/19 These were noted. Steve Warr reported that the finance committee was considering the implications of an ethical investment policy, looking at best practice.

Management report to 30 September 2019, reserves spreadsheet, legacy chart and treasurer's commentary

- 116/19 These were noted. There was a deficit of £600 but this was offset by the large donation of £135,000 and legacies of £26,000, and we are running to budget.

Registration reserve fund

- 117/19 Steve Warr presented his paper in which he recommended creating a designated fund to ensure we can follow through, in future years, applications for the registration of commons and public paths. The independent examiner had approved this treatment of the fund in our accounts. Steve proposed allocating £5,000 a case as an average with a better split between commons and paths to be decided later in the light of experience. After discussion this was agreed.

Draft budget for 2020

- 118/19 Steve Warr introduced the draft budget which was based heavily on the current year's budget as there was little by way of new proposals this year. There was an increase in investment income, and salaries for staff not yet appointed were removed. The marketing budget was renamed as promotion and publicity, and legacy promotion had been separated. The commons registration budget had been amended to reflect likely spend.
- 119/19 The trustees agreed, by three votes to two, to increase staff salaries by 2.5 per cent, the RPI for September being 2.4 per cent. The trustees asked the general secretary to alert them in future if we have an outstanding year which warrants a salary increase above RPI.
- 120/19 The budget for 2020 was approved.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2024: OPERATIONAL PLAN

- 121/19 The trustees noted the update on the operational plan and felt it to be a useful reminder of what we need to do.
- 122/19 It was agreed to prepare a communications strategy setting out who is the audience, what is the message, and how we communicate it. Simon Hunt offered to help with this.
- 123/19 It was agreed to reword ST2 to postpone the start of the accommodation review to 2021.

RISK REGISTER

- 124/19 It was agreed to adopt Phil Wadey's suggestion that we add a post-mitigation column.
- 125/19 It was agreed to add B5, reduction in value of financial investments due to market conditions, with controls being diversified investments and that we have adequate cash resources to avoid needing to crystallise any short-term losses. The chance was four, and the impact two, making it yellow. The trustees amended the chance of D3 (campaign by determined individual or group can harm reputation of OSS and its representatives) from one to two, and the impact of F2 (Brexit) from 1 to 2, making it red. The trustees then approved the risk register.

REGISTER OF DEFINITIVE MAP MODIFICATION ORDERS MADE IN THE NAME OF THE OSS

- 126/19 The list was noted. It was agreed that those applying should be reminded that the OSS or individuals can claim £100 per case from the British Horse Society for routes which add riding and/or carriage-driving rights. The trustees asked for the list of commons registrations to be circulated with the quarterly reports.

HORIZON SCANNING

- 127/19 Graham Bathe introduced his paper. He felt it was useful to have an opportunity to discuss issues at some meetings in a relaxed and less formal environment, perhaps over lunch. It was agreed that a few weeks before each meeting the general secretary would invite trustees to make suggestions for the slot and offer to lead the discussion.

THE OPEN SPACES AND THE CLIMATE-CHANGE AGENDA

- 128/19 Graham Bathe introduced his paper, which was an example of the horizon-scanning discussion envisaged in the previous item. He said that the climate crisis was the greatest environmental movement that the world has known but we were not part of it. Our work is relevant not least because we promote green space near where people live and the creation of green space in planning developments, reducing the need to travel elsewhere. Phil Wadey had suggested creating greenways encircling new settlements, and linking to each other where feasible.
- 129/19 It was agreed that we should recognise the climate-crisis implications in all our work and consider adding a reference to it in our aims and objectives.

MEMBERSHIP TO END OCTOBER 2019

- 130/19 The membership figures were noted.

LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS

Reappointments for three years

- 131/19 It was agreed to reappoint Ralph Holmes (Dorset, former Purbeck District and Weymouth & Portland Borough); Chris Smith (East Sussex, Lewes District) and David Williams (LB Hillingdon).

Reports

- 132/19 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.
- 133/19 It was agreed to offer to draft a legal event order for the 900 ways in Stoke-on-Trent as the council was unlikely to do this otherwise, and such action would benefit the public and bring kudos to OSS.

PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE

- 134/19 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

- 135/19 The trustees noted the list of matters arising. Steve Warr said that Jackie Warr had been helping with the Forder public inquiry which was the following week (minute 98/19), and the trustees expressed their appreciation for her work.

REVIEW OF MEETING

- 136/19 The trustees received positive feedback from the guests, and considered it had been a good meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 137/19 Thursday 5 March 2020 at Friends House, London (John Woolman room)

CO-OPTIONS

- 138/19 After the observers had withdrawn the trustees unanimously agreed to co-opt Stuart Bain and Simon Hunt to the board.

The meeting closed at 3.00pm

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Warr', with a long horizontal line underneath it.

