

**Minutes of the forty-seventh meeting of the Board of Trustees of
the Open Spaces Society held at 6.00 pm on Thursday 11 June 2020
by videoconference**

PRESENT Chris Beney (chairman)
Graham Bathe
Stuart Bain
John Hall
Simon Hunt (from minute 70/20)
Chris Meewezen (by telephone, from minute 70/20)
Phil Wadey
Steve Warr

IN ATTENDANCE Kate Ashbrook (general secretary)

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

67/20 There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF 5 MARCH, 13 MAY AND 22 MAY 2020

68/20 The minutes were approved as a correct record and for publication on the website (the minutes of the meeting on 15 April having already been approved).

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Minutes of finance committee meeting on 3 June 2020

69/20 These were noted. Stuart Bain said he was willing to give his views on the ethical policy, and he and Steve Warr would discuss this.

Management report and reserves spreadsheet to 30 April 2020 and treasurer's commentary

70/20 The report and treasurer's commentary were noted. The trustees noted that our surplus reserves remained at over £700,000.

LEGAL CASE: BLACKBUSHE, YATELEY COMMON, HAMPSHIRE

- 71/20 Phil Wadey explained the subcommittee's recommendation that the society should continue to intervene in the Blackbushe case, against the deregistration of a large area of Yateley Common, at the court of appeal, accepting the small risk of a small potential for costs subject to the total expenditure (high court and court of appeal) being up to £45,000, as already agreed, plus any costs exposure.
- 72/20 He explained that we had obtained legal advice that the risk of having a costs award against us was low, that there was a significant risk that our application for costs protection could be refused in which case we would have to drop the case, and in any case the protection would only be for costs above £10,000 and so the cost of obtaining the protection (in the region of £5,000) would cost more than gaining the protection. Hampshire County Council had confirmed it would not offload any costs burden on us.
- 73/20 After discussion, it was agreed by seven votes in favour and one against to continue to intervene without seeking costs protection.

EVALUATING RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE

- 74/20 The trustees considered the paper from Graham Bathe and Phil Wadey, which addressed how to ensure that the trustees have a full understanding of the deliberations of the legal subcommittee before they take a decision on a legal matter.
- 75/20 The trustees endorsed the recommendation that a simple procedure should be adopted to enable all trustees to exercise due diligence on future proposals. It was noted that this was likely to involve a review of the terms of reference of the legal subcommittee as approved in October 2019. Initially Phil Wadey as chair of the subcommittee would invite and collate views. A recommended process would then be submitted to the board by Phil Wadey and Graham Bathe.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE AGM

- 76/20 The general secretary gave an oral update of the arrangements for the virtual AGM. The mailings were in the process of being sent out and the majority of members would be invited to vote online. There was one candidate for the board of trustees: Tara-Jane Sutcliffe.

DIGITAL REPORT FOR MAY 2020

- 77/20 The digital report was noted with pleasure. Chris Beney reported on his fruitful conversation with Nichola Finan, and said that she looked forward to attending a face-to-face meeting of the trustees when that becomes possible.

LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS

Reappointments for three years

78/20 It was agreed to reappoint Chris Beney (Hertsmere and Three Rivers, Herts), John Hall (Coventry), Dave Ramm (Hants), Harry Scott (Staffs and Stoke on Trent), and Barry Thomas (North West Leicestershire and South Derbyshire).

Reports

79/20 The correspondents' reports had been circulated to the trustees, and John Lavery and Chris Meewezen had collated comments. The trustees thanked John and Chris for their work. The chairman asked that the OSS consider adopting the nomenclature-in-orders wording policy referred to in appendix E, page 6, in relation to ensuring properly-defined structures in path orders.

PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE

80/20 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

81/20 The trustees noted the progress on matters arising.

REVIEW OF MEETING

82/20 It was agreed that the meeting had gone remarkably smoothly, given the limitations of videoconferencing.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

83/20 In response to a query from Phil Wadey about our moratorium on applications for commons and public paths during the pandemic, it was agreed to review this policy at the next meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

84/20 Thursday 9 July (the day of the AGM) at 6pm.

85/20 Chris Beney said that he would be standing down as chairman at the meeting following the AGM, and the trustees would need to elect his successor.

The meeting ended at 7.05 pm.



Chris Beney
Chair of Trustees