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**Minutes of the forty-eighth meeting of the Board of Trustees of
the Open Spaces Society held at 6.00 pm on Thursday 9 July 2020
by videoconference**

PRESENT Chris Beney (chairman to minute 88/20)
Graham Bathe
Stuart Bain
John Hall
Simon Hunt
Chris Meewezen
Tara-Jane Sutcliffe
Phil Wadey (chairman from minute 89/20)
Steve Warr

IN ATTENDANCE Kate Ashbrook (general secretary)

CO-OPTIONS

86/20 It was unanimously agreed to co-opt Stuart Bain and Simon Hunt.

WELCOME TO NEW TRUSTEES

87/20 The chairman welcomed Stuart Bain, Simon Hunt and Tara-Jane Sutcliffe back to the committee.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

88/20 The following were unanimously elected as officers:
Chairman: Phil Wadey (proposed by Graham Bathe, seconded by Steve Warr)
Vice-chairman: Graham Bathe (proposed by Chris Beney, seconded by Steve Warr)
Treasurer: Steve Warr (proposed by Chris Beney, seconded by Phil Wadey)

89/20 Phil Wadey thanked Chris Beney for his two years as chairman and for his many contributions to the society. He was delighted that Chris was remaining as a member of the board.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

90/20 There were no declarations of interest.

DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE

91/20 It was noted that, although we traditionally asked all members of the board to sign the declaration of acceptance and willingness to act as a trustee each year, under article 3.4.1 this was only necessary for newly-elected or appointed trustees. The chairman would review this before next year but, in the meantime, he asked that all board members sign and return the form to the general secretary.

REPORT FROM AGM

92/20 The general secretary reported that 142 members had voted, 43 of whom had given the chairman a proxy vote in whole, and 16 in part. The chairman had used the votes in accordance with the voting of the majority, ie in favour of all motions. The result was that the minutes and the annual report and accounts were approved; all vice-presidents were re-elected; the independent examiners, Villars Hayward, were re-appointed for 2020; and Tara-Jane Sutcliffe was elected as a trustee.

93/20 There had been one vote against the appointment of the independent examiners by a member who thought that we should use a different firm. The treasurer had responded that we had agreed to review the independent examiners regularly, ie every five years, and the next review would be in 2023.

94/20 The trustees considered that the AGM process had gone well, and thanked Ellen Froggatt for all her work on this. The process could be repeated in future should there be exceptional circumstances which required it.

FINANCE

95/20 The treasurer presented a proposal, recommended by the Finance Committee, to increase fixed-term deposits. The trustees resolved to open a two-year fixed rate deposit with Furness Building Society and authorised Katherine Jessie Ashbrook (General Secretary) and Lucinda Mary Celyn Henwood (Financial Administrator) to operate the account as authorised signatories—both to sign.

96/20 The treasurer reported that he was still searching for further appropriate financial services compensation scheme (FSCS) protected bank deposits to reduce the exposure to Nationwide. New entrant Allica Bank Ltd was a possibility, and one further was also required. The trustees supported the continued diversification of deposits.'

INDUCTION FOR 'NEW' TRUSTEES

97/20 It was noted that, when circumstances allow, new trustees would be invited to Henley to meet the staff and see the office, with any other trustees who wished to attend.

98/20 In the meantime new trustees were invited to contact the chairman or general secretary if they would like to talk to officers or members of staff to learn more about our work, or if they would like to have a trustee mentor. The general secretary would circulate details of online NCVO courses on the role of a trustee; and we would arrange a meeting of trustees and staff to discuss the society's direction, when circumstances allow. The chairman commended the NCVO courses to any that had not previously attended.

REVIEW OF DECISION TO HOLD APPLICATIONS FOR COMMONS AND PATHS

99/20 The trustees had agreed on 15 April 2020 that staff and local correspondents making applications for the re-registration of common land or for definitive map modification orders should hold all applications during the pandemic, with a review after three months. The reasons for this had been so as not to bring additional stress to those affected, and because of the potential reputational risk to the society.

100/20 On reviewing this, the trustees agreed to lift the moratorium, as the lockdown had now eased and it was felt there was no longer a reputational risk.

DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

- 101/20 Thursday 13 August, 6pm by zoom. Items on the agenda would include:
- review of whether the lifting of the moratorium on commons and rights-of-way applications had had any impact on the society's reputation.
 - terms of reference and membership of subcommittees and working parties.
- 102/20 Noting that meetings had been booked at Friends' House for 24 September and 3 December, the trustees recognised that cancellation of one or both of these might become necessary. It was agreed that we would monitor the situation, and in the interim the general secretary would find out the latest date we could cancel without incurring a penalty. A decision will be made at the next Board meeting if time permits. She would also enquire what provisions Friends' House would be making to ensure social distancing so that we might in due course return there.

The meeting ended at 6.55 pm.



Chris Beney
Chair of Trustees