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**Minutes of the fifty fourth meeting of the Board of Trustees of
the Open Spaces Society held at 18.00 on Thursday 10 December 2020
by videoconference**

PRESENT Phil Wadey (chairman)
Stuart Bain
Graham Bathe
Chris Beney
John Hall
Simon Hunt
Tara-Jane Sutcliffe
Steve Warr

IN ATTENDANCE Kate Ashbrook (general secretary)

RESIGNATION

193/20 The trustees noted with regret that Chris Meewezen had resigned from the board on 30 November. It was agreed that Stuart Bain would offer to have an exit interview with him.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

194/20 There were no declarations of interest.

**MINUTES OF MEETING ON 12 NOVEMBER 2020 AND DECISION BY EMAIL ON
30 NOVEMBER 2020**

195/20 The minutes of the meeting on 12 November and the decision by email on 30 November were approved as a correct record, and the minutes of 12 November for publication on the website.

MINUTES OF LEGAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON 19 AND 27 NOVEMBER

196/20 The trustees noted the minutes.

MINUTES OF FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING ON 4 DECEMBER

197/20 The trustees noted the minutes.

INVESTMENT POLICY AND REVISED FINANCIAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR APPROVAL

- 198/20 The trustees approved these as recommended by the finance committee, noting that it was not proposed at present to delegate any decisions on investments to the finance committee.
- 199/20 It was further noted that we would undertake an annual review of our investments to ensure as far as possible that our ethical policy was being followed (noting the limitations of having funds without our own investment manager).
- 200/20 The treasurer would amend the terms of reference of the finance committee to reflect the new policy.

DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2021

- 201/20 The trustees approved the draft budget for 2021 as recommended by the finance committee, and agreed to a staff salary increase of 0.7 per cent (RPI to September 2020) with agreement that the finance committee and then the board would discuss staff salaries in the first quarter of 2021.

FUNDING OF LEGAL CASES AND LEGAL COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 202/20 The trustees discussed two papers: the revised draft terms-of-reference for the legal committee, and a paper by Phil Wadey setting out how the committee sits within the broader decision-framework on legal cases.
- 203/20 It was agreed that, by the time that cases had been submitted to the board, there had been considerable expert (and often lengthy) scrutiny of the legal issues, and that the board cannot rehearse all the arguments again. Hence, if the legal committee has fulfilled its role, the board's examination of such issues can be relatively light. Instead, it should be addressing the different question of whether the financial sum would be a good use of the society's charitable funds when considered against other priorities.
- 204/20 The board approved the terms of reference for the legal committee.
- 205/20 The trustees also approved an increase in the delegated level of authority from the trustees for the legal committee's expenditure from £1,000 to £3,000.

LEGAL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

- 206/20 With the resignation of Chris Meewezen there was potentially a space on the legal committee. The trustees agreed to appoint Steve Warr.

LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS

Appointment

207/20 It was agreed to appoint Keith Yarwood for the old North Dorset District Council area (74 parishes) for one year in the first instance.

Reappointments

208/20 It was agreed to reappoint Brendan Clegg (East Sussex: Eastbourne Borough and Wealden District), Chris Meewezen (East Cheshire) and Lucy Wilson (former North Cornwall District) for a further three years.

Reports

209/20 The correspondents' reports had been circulated to the trustees, and Chris Beney and John Hall had collated comments. The trustees thanked Chris and John for their work.

RISK REGISTER

210/20 The trustees approved the risk register updated to December 2020 with an amendment to risk C3 (volume of work, stress-related illness and/or external abuse lead to loss of staff enthusiasm and motivation). Since we knew that casework was increasing, the chance should be increased to 3, with the mitigation that the rights-of-way case officer would be appointed next year, and the office manager was increasingly able to assist with casework.

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

211/20 **30/20 Note on deposits under s31A of the Highways Act 1980**

Phil Wadey had offered to write this note, but no one could recall why it was needed. It was agreed to drop this but instead to consider an information sheet about deposits under s31A of the Highways Act 1980 and sections 15A-15C of the Commons Act 2006. The general secretary asked trustees to let her know of points they would like included.

210/20 **156/20A Strategic away day, in person or virtual**

It was agreed that Graham Bathe, Simon Hunt, Tara-Jane Sutcliffe, Phil Wadey and the general secretary would consider options and make a recommendation to the board by the March meeting.

212/20 **156/20D Finance committee to review financial position in respect of the risk of insolvency**

This would be on the agenda of the next finance committee meeting. The treasurer said that the market had recovered substantially since September and our Charifund investments had increased by £130,000.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Appreciation of open spaces

213/20 Simon Hunt suggested that we should capitalise on people's increased appreciation of open space as a result of lockdown. He agreed to write a blog for the website.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thurs 21 January 2021 at 6pm.

The meeting ended at 19.15.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "P Wadey", is written over a horizontal dotted line. The signature is written in dark ink.

Phil Wadey
Chair of Trustees