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**Minutes of the fifty fifth meeting of the Board of Trustees of  
the Open Spaces Society held at 18.00 on Thursday 21 January 2021  
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)

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

1/21 There were no declarations of interest.

**MINUTES OF MEETING ON 10 DECEMBER 2020 AND DECISION BY EMAIL ON  
13 DECEMBER 2020**

2/21 The minutes of the meeting on 10 December were amended so that in minute 199/20 the words in brackets read '(noting the limitations of having funds without our own investment manager)'. They were then approved as a correct record and for publication on the website.

3/21 The minutes of the decision by email on 13 December were amended so that the first sentence of 221/20 reads 'The two abstaining trustees expressed concern about the reputational risk of pursuing this case.' These minutes would not be published on the website because they relate to a legal case.

**MINUTES OF LEGAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON 12 DECEMBER**

4/21 The trustees noted the minutes.

5/21 It was noted with pleasure that the government legal service had conceded the Knowle Green case, having admitted that it did not give sufficient consideration to whether it was necessary to stop up so much of the highway. It would reconsider

whether to hold a public inquiry. It was likely that our overall costs would not exceed £2,500.

### **SUBCOMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES, TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- 6/21 The trustees noted the amended terms of reference, following discussions last year. It was agreed that, when next presented to trustees, the terms of reference of each subcommittee would have the same introductory paragraph as in the legal committee terms of reference, to give the legal context.

### **REQUEST TO PAY STAFF IN LIEU OF SOME HOLIDAY IN 2020**

- 7/21 The trustees unanimously agreed to pay staff in lieu of all except one week's worth of holiday not taken in 2020, totalling £6,313.13. This was an exception for 2020 in view of the pandemic. The trustees thanked the staff for all the extra work, but also expressed concern about staff welfare and asked the general secretary to encourage staff to take time off even when they could not go away.

### **COMMONS RE-REGISTRATION ADDITIONAL COSTS FOR 2020**

- 8/21 It was noted that Tomas Hill, our commons researcher in Cornwall, had submitted a claim for time and expenses of over £7,000, which had accrued since 2019. This took us over budget by about £7,000. However, Tomas had done valuable work and would continue to do so as commons applications were determined.
- 9/21 The treasurer said that we were not overspent on the overall budget, since Tomas had not claimed the money we had budgeted for him in previous years.
- 10/21 It was unanimously agreed to meet Tomas's claim.

### **COMMONS AND DEFINITIVE MAP MODIFICATION APPLICATIONS MADE, AND CONSIDERATION OF POTENTIAL RESERVE**

- 11/21 The trustees noted that the total of current cases was now 21 definitive map modification applications and 66 commons. The trustees had previously agreed to allocate a reserve of £5,000 per application so that the total was now £435,000, an addition of £270,000 on last year.
- 12/21 It was unanimously agreed that the reserve should be £435,000 to come from the Candy Fund.
- 13/21 The general secretary said that the staff would bring a paper to trustees in March to give further information on the commons reregistration work so far and an outline of how we intended to tackle Cumbria and North Yorkshire where the deadline is 2027.

### **APPOINTMENT OF LOCAL CORRESPONDENT**

- 14/21 The trustees approved the appointment of Nicholas Whitsun-Jones as local correspondent for Teignbridge District in Devon, for one year in the first instance.

## **LEGAL BRIEFING FOR TRUSTEES**

- 15/21 The trustees agreed to accept the offer from our case officers for a lunchtime briefing on judicial review and thanked them for proposing this.

## **PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS**

- 16/21 The board welcomed the revised draft procedure for handling complaints made to the society. It was agreed that there should be a complaints procedure as these provided an opportunity to improve processes or correct errors. It was considered important not to be too quick to classify correspondence as a complaint, and the general secretary should have discretion whether to treat correspondence that was not expressly labelled as a complaint using the procedure or as general correspondence.
- 17/21 The chairman will provide a note of complaints received during the year up to the board meeting prior to the AGM.
- 18/21 The general secretary will consider the points covered and report back.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 19/21 The chairman thanked Stuart Bain for conducting and reporting on the exit interview for a recently-retired trustee. The chairman will circulate the notes, and trustees were asked to indicate whether they wished to discuss at the March meeting or whether they wished to have a separate additional meeting.
- 20/21 Trustee succession was highlighted as a point for future discussion, with the aim of considering it further at the February meeting if there was time after the financial papers, otherwise in March.

## **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 17 February 2021 at 6pm.

The meeting ended at 19.00.



Phil Wadey  
Chair of Trustees