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**Minutes of the sixty-sixth meeting of the Board of Trustees of
the Open Spaces Society held at 17:30 on Thursday 9 December 2021
by videoconference**

PRESENT	Phil Wadey (chairman) Graham Bathe (vice-chairman) Chris Beney John Hall Tara-Jane Sutcliffe Steve Warr (treasurer)
APOLOGIES	Stuart Bain Simon Hunt
IN ATTENDANCE	Kate Ashbrook (general secretary)

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

198/21 Tara-Jane Sutcliffe declared that she is a trustee of CPRE London.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

199/21 The general secretary reported that our freelance digital marketing and content manager, Nichola Finan, was leaving us in the new year as she had taken a full-time job with the NHS. We were considering our options for replacement.

200/21 It was noted that the general secretary has been elected a trustee of the Campaign for National Parks.

201/21 It was noted that the chairman, as a director of our company, had signed an agreement with BDW Trading Ltd. This was to withdraw our objection to a footpath diversion at Swaffham in Norfolk in exchange for an increased width for an alternative path, and the dedication of an open space as a village green. The deal had been achieved by our local correspondent Ian Witham. We would publicise this success in due course. The trustees congratulated Ian on his achievement.

MINUTES OF MEETING ON 4 NOVEMBER 2021

- 202/21 The minutes of the meeting on 4 November were approved, and it was agreed to publish them on the website.

DRAFT MINUTES OF FINANCE COMMITTEE ON 16 NOVEMBER 2021

- 203/21 The draft minutes were noted.

DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2022

- 204/21 The treasurer introduced the draft budget, which had previously been discussed by the finance committee which had recommended it for approval by the trustees. He highlighted the main points which were as follows. We were expecting the income to be down a bit on the budget for 2021, due to interest rates being lower and allowing for only one appeal. Expenses were up due to a proposed increase in salaries of 3.5 per cent (CPI announced in October); a mistake on the publicity and promotion last year where we had omitted to include the pay of the digital marketing and content manager; the inclusion of an event for local correspondents, and nine months of Landman consultants (as previously agreed) for commons re-registration. The result was a deficit of £275k, which is roughly what we budgeted for 2020. [This was affordable as recent legacies give us a strong reserves position and the budget does not attempt to forecast legacy income or other large gifts.]
- 205/21 It was agreed, with Chris Beney abstaining, to increase staff salaries by 3.5 per cent with effect from 1 January 2022.
- 206/21 The budget was approved unanimously.

STAFF SALARIES: BENCHMARKING

- 207/21 The chairman explained that the society had no planned career structure and there was no system for rewarding changes to job descriptions. The general secretary said that we had last done a benchmarking of salaries in 2012, and that the same individual from the same consultancy could repeat the exercise and also give advice on the banding of salaries, at a cost of £2,500.
- 208/21 This expenditure was approved for inclusion in the 2022 budget. It was noted that the report would be presented to trustees to take any decisions.

TREASURER

- 209/21 The Chairman reported that the treasurer Steve Warr, who has been a member of the board since 3 June 2014, was considering standing down at the next annual meeting. Stuart Bain had expressed an interest in taking the role. Although the treasurer would be elected by the post-AGM board it was considered desirable to line up a good candidate and the board was delighted that Stuart was interested in the role. The treasurer would discuss it further with him.

RISK REGISTER

- 210/21 The trustees reviewed the risk register and noted that, while the ratings might not be entirely correct, it was a good discipline for the staff to prepare, and the trustees to scrutinise, the register.
- 211/21 Stuart Bain had asked that the trustees consider the financial risk of having an insufficiently diverse membership base. It was agreed that Stuart and Tara-Jane Sutcliffe with the general secretary would discuss this to identify the risks and the ratings.
- 212/21 Subject to this, the risk register was approved.

LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS

Renewals

- 213/21 It was agreed to reappoint the following for a further three years: Ian Witham (Norfolk: Breckland District, Broadland District, Kings Lynn & West Norfolk Borough, North Norfolk District); Keith Yarwood (Dorset: former North Dorset District).

Retirement

- 214/21 It was noted with regret that Gordon Sencicle was standing down as local correspondent for Thanet District in Kent after 11 years. The chairman would write to thank him.

Appointment

- 215/21 It was agreed to appoint David Howerski as local correspondent for the former South Hereford District of Herefordshire, for one year in the first instance.

Reports

- 216/21 The correspondents' reports had been circulated to the trustees, with comments from the staff, and Chris Beney and John Hall had collated comments. The trustees expressed their appreciation to the local correspondents for their immense amount of work on behalf of the society.

PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE

- 217/21 The trustees were not aware of any new claims or circumstances or problems which may give rise to a claim.

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

- 218/21 These were noted.

CONTRIBUTION TO A BID FOR A PLANNING COORDINATOR

- 219/21 The general secretary introduced a paper from case officer Nicola Hodgson recommending that we contribute £2,000 to support a bid from the planning coalition, of which we are a member, to the European Climate Fund. This was to appoint a coordinator to work on the Levelling-up Bill and the Planning and Regeneration Bill, and review of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 220/21 The trustees agreed this nem con, with Tara-Jane Sutcliffe abstaining in view of her membership of CPRE London's board. The sum would be added to the 2022 budget.

REVIEW OF MEETING

- 221/21 The trustees were content with the meeting.


MEETING DATES FOR 2022

- 222/21 The chairman asked if we could alter the date of the May meeting and it was agreed to consult trustees after the meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 20 January 2022 at 6pm

The meeting ended at 18.32.



Phil Wadey
Chair of Trustees