

**Minutes of the sixty-eighth meeting of the Board of Trustees of
the Open Spaces Society held at 18.00 on Thursday 17 March 2022
by videoconference**

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

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

18/22 There were no interests to declare.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

19/22 The general secretary reported that we had appointed Lucy McKean as our administrative assistant, working 20 hours a week, and Abbie Cavendish as our digital marketing and content manager, starting on 7 April and working eight days a month. The trustees looked forward to meeting them both in due course.

MINUTES OF MEETING ON 20 JANUARY 2022

20/22 The minutes of the meeting on 20 January were approved, and it was agreed to publish them on the website.

CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF MEETING ON 20 JANUARY 2022

21/22 The confidential minutes were approved.

MINUTES OF LEGAL COMMITTEE ON 31 JANUARY AND 21 FEBRUARY 2022

22/22 The minutes relating to the legal case regarding approval for works on common land at Barking Tye, Suffolk, were noted.

MINUTES OF MEETING ON 25 FEBRUARY 2022

23/22 The minutes of the meeting by email regarding the Barking Tye legal action were approved.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

- 24/22 The treasurer said that the papers he had presented to the meeting showed the 2021 year-end position. The independent examiner had made no comments and awaited the draft annual accounts. Our cash position was adequate. We had rolled over the United Trust Bank deposit and the interest of £1,000 would be incorporated into the annual accounts for 2021. We had a number of deposits maturing in the summer and would need to consider how to arrange them so that they matured at different times.
- 25/22 Charifund had recovered after the prices of units fell in January and February. In response to a question the treasurer confirmed that we had no Russian investments at Charifund. Legacies were satisfactory at £148,000 for the year. Because we increased our salaries budget we had adjusted the strategic reserve by £300,000 to take account of the budget for next year. There were no cash consequences but it would help us to assess our headroom when considering any new costs. The treasurer was not proposing a change in the reserve for the registration of commons and paths.
- 26/22 The trustees thanked the treasurer for his clear report. They discussed the implications of an increase in inflation and noted that we still have substantial reserves. It was noted that the trustees would consider the effect of inflation when they came to consider staff salaries for 2023, which they would do in good time.

MEMBERSHIP SUMMARY AT 31 DECEMBER 2021

- 27/22 The treasurer reported that, although membership had fallen in December 2021 for the first time for over a year, the figures were still good.

APPEAL TOPIC FOR THE SPRING

- 28/22 The general secretary said that the staff had not had any ideas for the spring appeal. It was agreed that, unless any trustee had an idea by the end of March, we would not run a spring appeal.

AGM ARRANGEMENTS

- 29/22 It was unanimously agreed to offer a video-conference option for those not wishing to attend the AGM in person, at a cost of approximately £500. The chairman said that he hoped that all voting would be done in advance, unless there was a need for an urgent vote on the day.

RISK REGISTER

- 30/22 The trustees discussed the additional risk and mitigations proposed by Stuart Bain, Tara-Jane Sutcliffe and the general secretary, relating to lack of diversity among our membership and audience which could threaten our long-term viability. They noted that the risk was red, and remained so even after the mitigations proposed, but recognised that this was not something which was easily resolved and that the mitigations identified were only first steps. It was agreed to add the risk to the risk register.

LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS

Renewals

- 31/22 It was agreed to reappoint the following for a further three years: Stephen Hill (Kirklees); Gerry Stewart (Gloucestershire, Cotswold District), and David Thornewell (Kent, Tonbridge and Malling Borough).

Reports

- 32/22 The local correspondents' reports had been circulated to the trustees, with comments from the staff, and Chris Beney and John Hall had collated comments. Chris Beney presented the paper. The chairman asked that in future the paper set out any recommendations which trustees needed to discuss, otherwise it would be for noting. Chris Beney urged trustees to send in their comments on the reports.

PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE

- 33/22 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

- 34/22 The paper were noted. It was agreed that item 189/21 on ethnic diversity should be closed and the new action should be addressing the risk identified in the risk register (29/22 above).
- 35/22 **Minute 3/22, strategic plan review** recorded that, at the time of the meeting, staff had not yet had an opportunity to consider Phil Wadey's paper (as discussed at minute 3/22) on the strategic plan review. The general secretary noted that the staff have now seen the paper and signalled their endorsement.
- 36/22 **Minute 12/22, renewable energy policy.** It was noted that the staff were working on the draft policy on renewable energy and hoped to have it ready for discussion by the end of March.

REVIEW OF MEETING

- 37/22 The trustees were content with the meeting.

MAY MEETING DATE

- 38/22 It was agreed to change the date of the May meeting to 19 May.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 14 April 2022 at 6pm

The meeting ended at 19.01.



Phil Wadey
Chair of Trustees