

**Minutes of the seventy-fourth meeting of the Board of Trustees of  
the Open Spaces Society held at 18.00 on Thursday 3 November 2022  
by videoconference**

**PRESENT** Phil Wadey (chairman)  
Graham Bathe (vice-chairman)  
Stuart Bain (from minute 141/22)  
Chris Beney  
John Hall

**APOLOGIES** Tara-Jane Sutcliffe

**IN ATTENDANCE** Kate Ashbrook (general secretary)

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

135/22 There were no interests to declare.

**MINUTES OF MEETING ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2022**

136/22 The minutes of the meeting on 15 September were approved, and it was agreed to publish them on the website.

**INCREMENTAL LEGAL COSTS**

137/22 The trustees approved the report on incremental legal costs which they had discussed at the previous meeting. It was agreed that the chairman would consider whether there was a convenient method to explain in each case the stage we have reached, and he would present this to a future meeting.

138/22 The finance committee would consider at which trustees' meeting each year there should be a report on the progress of legal cases and the financial implications.

**TRUSTEE SUCCESSION AND SKILLS**

139/22 Graham Bathe presented his paper which addressed the trustee element of the strategic plan objective that the society has a succession plan for staff, trustees, and other volunteers, and a training programme for staff, trustees, and local correspondents.

140/22 The trustees discussed the options presented for a more rigorous approach to trustee recruitment, and agreed that the current system was broadly sufficient, but that all trustees and the general secretary should explore opportunities for bringing in suitable candidates.

- 141/22 It was further agreed that there should be an annual agenda item when the board would consider:
- a whether there were exceptional reasons, relating to the current or anticipated operating environment of the society, which dictate that particular expertise has become essential or highly desirable;
  - b whether there is any further expertise which would be advantageous on the board;
  - c options for attending courses such as those run by NCVO to enable trustees to fulfil statutory obligations,
  - d any group or individual training requirements and how these might be satisfied;
  - e any successional problems which might arise in the following two years, ie to allow adequate time for parties to stagger the year when they stand down to ensure continuity). The board should use its best endeavours to ensure that only one of the chairman, vice-chairman or treasurer should stand down in any year.

142/22 It was agreed that in its recruitment the society should recognise the benefits of having a diverse board.

143/22 The chairman reminded trustees that they could elect to go on an NCVO or other course if they felt a new topic, or a refresher, would assist them in their duties.

#### **MANAGEMENT REPORT, RESERVES SPREADSHEET, MEMBERSHIP, AND TREASURER'S COMMENTARY, TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2022**

144/22 The treasurer introduced the management accounts, noting that the income and expenditure were on course with no reason for concern.

145/22 On the reserves the treasurer explained that there had been delays with the application to Flagstone. This meant that our accounts which were due for reallocation were being held in a maturity account with loss of interest. We hoped to remedy this soon. It was noted that we had additional funds available to further our charitable objectives.

146/22 The chairman invited trustees who had ideas of projects to produce a paper.

147/22 On membership, the treasurer said that the figures were static but we were concerned that the costs of processing the 150 members who paid monthly were in excess of the income. The finance committee would consider this.

148/22 The trustees thanked the treasurer for his clear reports and agreed that his proposed red-amber-green (RAG) status for our performance against budget was useful, alongside a brief explanation.

#### **ETHNICITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION WORKING PARTY REPORT**

149/22 Stuart Bain presented the paper on the importance of inclusion to the society. It had been drawn up by the working party established to give initial consideration to this subject. It was agreed to set up a working party, to be called the Inclusion Working Party (omitting the words 'ethnicity' and 'diversity', in response to concerns expressed). Stuart would first draft terms of reference for discussion at the next meeting, and the membership of the working party would then be agreed.

## **LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS**

### **Appointments**

- 150/22 The trustees approved the appointment of Kevin Abraham for 24 parishes in south and west Wiltshire, and Aidan Harris for the former Chiltern District in Buckinghamshire, for one year in the first instance.

### **Retirement**

- 151/22 The trustees noted with regret that Harry Scott had retired. He was local correspondent for Staffordshire County and Stoke-on-Trent City from 2004 to 2022, and for Shropshire County and Telford & Wrekin Borough from 2010 to 2018. The trustees thanked him for his prodigious work on our behalf.

## **REVIEW OF MEETING**

- 152/22 The trustees were content with the meeting.

## **CLIMATE CRISIS**

- 153/22 The trustees discussed how the society might record the impact on climate crisis of the matters brought before them. Stuart Bain said that he had an action to set out how we measure our carbon footprint and that this would include measurement of the impact of trustee decisions.

## **TARA-JANE SUTCLIFFE**

- 154/22 It was noted with regret that Tara-Jane had been trying to join the meeting but had not been able to get onto zoom. The general secretary would invite her to contact the chairman with her comments on any of the papers.

## **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 155/22 The next meeting would be on Thursday 9 December 2022 at 18.00.  
The meeting ended at 19.05.



Phil Wadey  
Chair of Trustees