

**Minutes of the seventy-sixth meeting of the Board of Trustees of  
the Open Spaces Society held at 18.20 on Thursday 19 January 2023  
by videoconference**

**PRESENT** Phil Wadey (chairman)  
Graham Bathe (vice-chairman)  
Stuart Bain (treasurer)  
John Hall  
Tara-Jane Sutcliffe

**APOLOGIES** Chris Beney

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

1/23 The trustees sent their best wishes to Chris Beney for a speedy recovery.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

2/23 There were no interests to declare.

**MINUTES OF MEETING ON 8 DECEMBER 2022**

3/23 The minutes of the meeting on 8 December 2022 were approved, and it was agreed to publish them on the website.

4/23 The confidential minutes of the meeting on 8 December 2022 were approved.

**LEGAL CASE**

**Water End, Hertfordshire, re-registration of common**

5/23 Barrister Philip Petchey had provided an opinion at a cost of £2,000 on the inspector's rejection of our application for re-registration of this common. While counsel had advised that the inspector's decision was wrong in law, staff and the legal team had decided that there was little to be gained from challenging it because of limited wider applicability.

**NATIONAL TRUST 2022 REPORT**

6/23 The trustees thanked Tara-Jane Sutcliffe, our appointee on the National Trust council, for her report of trust activities in 2022, and discussed some of the issues she raised.

**SEMINAR REPORT FROM TREASURER**

7/23 The treasurer spoke to his report of the seminar on 13 December 2022, 'What should be keeping honorary treasurers awake at night?' In particular he reflected

on the risk of reduced legacies, which are important to us; the need to embrace the digital strategy; the psychological safety of staff; and the opportunity, post-pandemic, to promote how we defend open spaces for the public to enjoy for free.

8/23 Trustees thanked the treasurer for his thought-provoking report.

### **LOCAL CORRESPONDENT APPOINTMENT**

9/23 It was agreed to appoint Nicholas Whitsun-Jones as local correspondent for the former West Dorset district, focusing on the area to the east of a line running between Yeovil and Weymouth. Since Nicholas had previously been a local correspondent, it was agreed to appoint him for three years.

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **Wild camping on Dartmoor**

10/23 The general secretary reported on the recent high court judgment which had ruled that the Dartmoor Commons Act 1985 did not provide a right to wild camping on the Dartmoor commons. The society hoped that the Dartmoor National Park Authority would decide on 27 January to seek leave to appeal, but failing that, there might be an opportunity for the society to intervene. If we wished to pursue that option, trustees would need to take a swift decision because an appeal must be lodged by 3 February. The matter would be referred to the legal committee, and then to trustees in the usual manner, but possibly during the coming week.

### **REVIEW OF MEETING**

11/23 The trustees were content with the meeting.

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

12/23 The next meeting would be on Thursday 16 February 2023 at 18.00.  
The meeting ended at 19.06.



Phil Wadey  
Chair of Trustees