

**Minutes of the eighty-second meeting of the Board of Trustees of
the Open Spaces Society held at 18.00 on Thursday 5 October 2023
by videoconference**

PRESENT Phil Wadey (chairman) (present from minute 168/23)
Graham Bathe (vice-chairman)
Stuart Bain (treasurer)
Chris Beney
John Hall

APOLOGIES Simon Hunt
Tara-Jane Sutcliffe

IN ATTENDANCE Kate Ashbrook (general secretary)

CHAIRMAN

155/23 In the absence of Phil Wadey, Graham Bathe chaired the first part of the meeting.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

156/23 There were no interests to declare.

MINUTES OF MEETING ON 7 SEPTEMBER 2023

157/23 The minutes of the meeting on 7 September 2023 were approved, with the addition of Chris Beney in attendance, and it was agreed to publish them on the website.

158/23 Minute 145/23, finance committee to design policy for assessing staff salaries: Stuart Bain reported that he had discussed this with Simon Hunt and would put a paper to the finance committee meeting on 10 October.

159/23 Minute 148/23, professional advice on deposit and investment strategy: Stuart Bain reported that he had identified four independent advisers specialising in wealth management and charities. He would speak to all four and either put a proposal to trustees or invite the finance committee to meet some of them. The cost would be in the region of £2,000-£2,500 + VAT.

MINUTES OF MEETING BY EMAIL ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2023

160/23 The minutes of the meeting on 26 September regarding Woodcock Hill village green in Hertfordshire were approved.

MINUTES OF LEGAL COMMITTEE MEETING ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2023

161/23 The minutes of the legal committee regarding Woodcock Hill village green in Hertfordshire were noted.

MINUTES OF LEGAL COMMITTEE ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2023

- 162/23 The minutes of the legal committee regarding Finch Lane at Bushey in Hertfordshire were noted. Chris Beney expressed regret that we were not pursuing this case.

MINUTES OF GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2023

- 163/23 The minutes of the general purposes committee regarding trustee recruitment were noted, and the trustees thanked staff for their work on this.

DELEGATED EXPENDITURE

- 164/23 The trustees confirmed that the general secretary's delegated limits were £2,000 for legal matters and £2,000 for non-legal matters, running in parallel (ie total £4,000) before reporting to trustees.

Legal

- 165/23 Redmayne D'Abitot, Gloucestershire: Highways Act 1980 section 116
It was noted that the general secretary had approved a further sum of £250 +VAT (£300) on this case, being one-third of the costs (shared with the Ramblers and Trail Riders Fellowship) of a meeting with counsel to discuss the case which comes to the magistrates' court on 16 October. It was necessary to ascertain our potential costs and risks to make a case to legal committee for further engagement in the case. The advice was awaited.

- 166/23 Finch Lane, Bushey, Hertfordshire
It was noted that the general secretary had approved the sum of £2,000 for urgent counsel's opinion regarding the inspector's decision not to confirm a definitive map modification order to record this route as a byway open to all traffic.

Non-legal

- 167/23 It was noted that the general secretary had approved the sum of £83 as the landlord wished to charge the society £500 a year for a car-parking space at the office, starting in November.

LEGAL-ACTION FUND

- 168/23 Phil Wadey asked Graham Bathe to chair this item so that he could contribute as chairman of the legal committee.
- 169/23 The trustees considered a paper from the general secretary and after discussion agreed the following.
- 170/23 As our legal fund for member cases was now exhausted, we would establish a new fund, the legal-action fund, to cover all our legal work including grants to members for legal action. The trustees would allocate £10,000 to the fund for immediate needs, and we would run an appeal shortly to amplify the fund. The fund would be included in the annual budgeting, and the treasurer would propose a process for topping up the fund during the financial year, to be approved by trustees. This process would involve the finance committee making a recommendation to trustees.
- 171/23 It was noted that the process for delegated authorities for expenditure while the fund was in credit was unaffected.

LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS' REPORTS

- 172/23 Following discussion at the last meeting, the general secretary, with the agreement of the case officers, proposed a new system for considering local correspondents'

quarterly reports. This was intended to be more useful to the organisation, to ensure that matters of strategic interest were brought to trustees, and to reduce the burden on local correspondents, staff, and trustees.

173/23 After discussion, the trustees agreed the new process with the opportunity to review in due course. Local correspondents would be asked to report on a template with a list of headings to ensure that we capture the information which is most useful to all concerned. Staff would study these and report to trustees on matters of strategic importance. Trustees would continue to receive the reports and the list of who had submitted reports. Trustees reiterated that we greatly value the work of our local correspondents.

REVIEW OF MEETING

174/23 The trustees were content with the meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

175/23 2 November 2023 at 6pm.

The meeting ended at 18.48.



Phil Wadey
Chair of Trustees