

**Minutes of the eighty-fourth meeting of the Board of Trustees of
the Open Spaces Society held at 18.00 on Thursday 7 December 2023
by videoconference**

PRESENT Phil Wadey (chairman) (from 201/23)
Graham Bathe (vice-chairman, chairing to 200/23)
Stuart Bain
Chris Beney (to 212/23)
John Hall
Simon Hunt (to 207/23)

APOLOGIES Tara-Jane Sutcliffe

IN ATTENDANCE Kate Ashbrook (general secretary)

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

194/23 There were no interests to declare.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

195/23 The general secretary reported that the legal-action fund appeal was going exceptionally well.

MINUTES OF MEETING ON 2 NOVEMBER 2023

196/23 The minutes of the meeting on 2 November 2023 were approved and it was agreed to publish them on the website.

CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF MEETING ON 2 NOVEMBER 2023

197/23 The confidential minutes of the meeting on 2 November 2023 were approved.

DRAFT MINUTES OF LEGAL COMMITTEE MEETING ON 30 NOVEMBER 2023

198/23 The trustees noted the draft minutes of the legal committee meeting, at which the legal-cases summary paper and the suggested proactive legal cases were discussed.

DELEGATED EXPENDITURE

199/23 It was noted that the general secretary had approved up to £2,000 as a contribution to counsel's opinion, obtained by the Ramblers. This was on the meaning of 'park' in the definition of excepted land for mapped access, in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, schedule 1 paragraph 4.

Draft minutes of finance committee meeting on 21 November 2023

- 200/23 The draft minutes were noted. It was also noted that the finance committee would discuss at its February 2024 meeting ideas for new methodology for determining the annual staff salary increments.

Draft budget for 2024

- 201/23 The trustees unanimously approved the draft budget, as recommended by the finance committee.

RISK REGISTER

- 202/23 The trustees considered each item on the risk register and agreed various amendments, which included the merging of the pandemic-related items into business as usual. The trustees approved the risk register with their amendments.

TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT

- 203/23 The trustees noted the paper from the general secretary setting out the process and costs of advertising for up to two trustees to co-opt. We had spent £565 in advertising in four places, and the response had been disappointing. However, we had been able to extend our advertisement with Trustees Unlimited at no extra cost and were now receiving some applications. The general purposes committee would consider these after the closing date of 15 January 2024 and report to trustees.

LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS

Renewals

- 204/23 It was agreed to reappoint the following for a further three years: Kevin Abraham (Wiltshire, various parishes), Brendan Clegg (East Sussex, Wealden District and Eastbourne Borough), Aidan Harris (Buckinghamshire, former Chiltern District), Chris Meewezen (Cheshire East), and Lucy Wilson (Cornwall, former North Cornwall District).

Appointments

- 205/23 It was agreed to appoint Jonathan Brierley (Worcestershire, Malvern Hills District) and Richard Price (north Ceredigion, the exact area to be agreed) for one year in the first instance.

Reports from local correspondents

- 206/23 The trustees noted that most correspondents had reported using the new, streamlined format, which staff had found easier to read and analyse. The general secretary said that there were no issues of strategic interest, but various issues had been raised to which staff had responded.
- 207/23 The trustees agreed to review the new format after the next quarter.

CALENDAR FOR MEETINGS IN 2024

- 208/23 The trustees agreed the calendar of meetings for trustees, finance committee, and legal committee, with thanks to the staff for creating it.

PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE

- 209/23 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

210/23 The matters arising were noted.

REVIEW OF MEETING

211/23 The trustees were content with the meeting.

THANKS TO STAFF

212/23 The trustees extended their heartfelt thanks to the staff for all their hard work; it had been a productive year with some wonderful successes.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

213/23 Thursday 18 January 2024 at 6pm.

The meeting ended at 19.07.

Meeting dates for 2024 (all Thursdays at 18.00)

15 February

14 March*

11 April

16 May

6 June*

4 July (AGM)

8 August

5 September*

3 October

7 November

5 December*.

* = quarterly meetings