

**Minutes of the eighty-eighth meeting of the Board of Trustees of  
the Open Spaces Society held at 18.00 on Thursday 11 April 2024  
by videoconference**

**PRESENT** Phil Wadey (chairman)  
Graham Bathe (vice-chairman)  
Stuart Bain (treasurer)  
Chris Beney  
John Hall  
Simon Hunt  
James Lean  
Tara-Jane Sutcliffe

**OBSERVER** Andrew Packman

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

73/24 The chairman welcomed Andrew Packman, whom the general purposes committee was recommending for co-option to the board.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

74/24 There were no interests to declare.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Recent deaths of two members**

75/24 The trustees were sad to note the death of Kim Taplin, author of books and poetry about paths and the countryside, and of George Woolfenden, who was a member of the Lincoln Commons Advisory Panel from its inception and worked closely with our representative on the panel, Mick Commons.

**Appointment of finance officer**

76/24 The trustees noted that we had appointed Glynis Smith as our new finance officer, and Lucy McKean, was taking on the membership secretary role in addition to her current post as office assistant.

77/24 The trustees expressed their gratitude to the departing finance officer, Lucie Henwood, for her seven years with the society. Members commented on all the work she had done behind the scenes providing us with invaluable data which guided our financial decisions, and that she was a delightful, well-organised, and efficient person who would be greatly missed.

## **MINUTES OF MEETING ON 14 MARCH 2024**

- 78/24 The minutes of the meeting on 14 March 2024 were approved and it was agreed to publish them on the website.

### **DELEGATED EXPENDITURE**

- 79/24 It was noted that the general secretary had approved up to £2,000 for a pre-action protocol letter regarding a decision by a planning inspector to confirm a definitive map modification order at a different status from that in the order without following the correct legal procedure. The action was being taken with the Trail Riders' Federation. The chairman commented that this was a good example of the agility we could show with our delegated expenditure procedures.

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

#### **Draft minutes of meeting on 2 April 2024**

- 80/24 The trustees noted the draft minutes.

#### **Management accounts to February 2024 and treasurer's update**

- 81/24 The treasurer reported that for the first two months of the year we were tracking well and ahead of budget. The finance committee was reviewing the designated funds to ensure we make the most efficient use of our reserves.

#### **Operating-margin designation**

- 82/24 After discussion it was agreed to adopt the finance committee's recommendation that we move the allocation of the operating-margin designation from monthly to annual; we assume a 40 per cent year-on-year reduction to a budgeted deficit; and all the approved changes be included within the updated financial policies and procedures, and the investment report.

#### **Legal-action fund**

- 83/24 The finance committee had discussed the issue that, while all potential legal costs are allocated against the designated legal-action fund, trustees may not be aware of the balance within the fund when making a decision on how to proceed.
- 84/24 It was noted that in future all papers recommending legal expenditure would state the sum in the fund, and the potential expenditure already approved; the finance committee would consider these figures at its quarterly meetings and report to the board, so that the board could decide whether it wished to allocate additional funds to the legal-action fund.

### **REPORT FROM OUR NATIONAL TRUST COUNCIL APPOINTEE, TARA-JANE SUTCLIFFE**

- 85/24 Tara-Jane spoke about the process by which appointing organisations were selected, her role as our appointee, and the development of the trust's next strategy. She would provide a written report after the council's visit to North Wales in the summer. The trustees thanked Tara-Jane for her work on the council.

### **REVIEW OF MEETING**

- 86/24 The trustees were content with the meeting.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS****General secretary's 40 years**

- 87/24 The trustees congratulated the general secretary on achieving 40 years in her role; the chairman and John Hall had joined staff at a celebratory event in Turville on 2 April.

**Annual report and accounts**

- 88/24 It was noted that these would be signed off at the May meeting.

**DECISION ABOUT CO-OPTION**

- 89/24 In response to the chairman, Andrew Packman said he would be pleased to be co-opted to the board. He left the meeting.
- 90/24 The board agreed to co-opt Andrew Packman until the AGM. Andrew returned to the meeting.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

- 91/24 The chairman explained that trustee committees should consist of no more than half the members of the board so that the board can provide proper scrutiny. Now that we had nine members we could appoint a further member to the finance committee if we wished.
- 92/24 Stuart Bain proposed, Phil Wadey seconded, and the board agreed to appoint James Lean to the finance committee.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 93/24 Thursday 23 May 2024 at 18.00.  
The meeting ended at 18.52.

**Meeting dates for 2024 (all Thursdays at 18.00)**

6 June\*

4 July (AGM, 11-4)

8 August

5 September\*

3 October

7 November

5 December\* (at 18.30).

\* = quarterly meetings



Phil Wadey  
Chair of Trustees