

**Minutes of the eighty-ninth meeting of the Board of Trustees of  
the Open Spaces Society held at 18.00 on Thursday 23 May 2024  
by videoconference**

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

**APOLOGIES** Graham Bathe

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

101/24 The chairman welcomed James Lean and Andrew Packman as members of the board.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

102/24 There were no interests to declare.

**MINUTES OF MEETING ON 11 APRIL 2024**

103/24 The minutes of the meeting on 11 April 2024 were approved and it was agreed to publish them on the website.

**MINUTES OF MEETING ON 7 MAY 2024**

104/24 The minutes of the meeting by email, regarding legal case 24-04, Hotham byway open to all traffic 8, East Riding of Yorkshire, were approved.

**MINUTES OF LEGAL COMMITTEE**

105/24 The minutes of the legal committee meeting by email on 30 April, and 6 May, regarding legal cases 24-04 and 24-05 respectively, were noted.

**DELEGATED EXPENDITURE**

106/24 It was noted that the general secretary had approved expenditure of up to £2,000 in relation to legal case 24-06.

**ANNUAL REPORT 2023**

107/24 The trustees unanimously approved the annual report for presentation at the AGM and thanked the staff for the hard work it represented.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

### **Draft minutes of meeting on 7 May 2024**

108/24 The trustees noted the draft minutes.

#### **Applications reserve**

109/24 The trustees approved the finance committee's recommendation to reduce the reserve from £5,000 to £2,000 per application for both commons and public rights of way. This would reduce the applications reserve from £565,000 to £226,000.

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

110/24 It was noted that the finance committee would receive a quarterly report on the maximum exposure to legal costs and would track this through the biannual paper to the legal committee which records the approved sums and expenditure on legal cases, and then report to trustees.

#### **Annual accounts**

111/24 The treasurer, apologising for the lateness of the accounts, presented them to trustees, making the following points.

Income for 2023 was £267,138, and the previous year was £968,883. The key difference was due to the large legacy received last year.

Main income sources were subscriptions (£80,055 remaining static compared to last year), legal appeal (£31,682 with gift aid), and investment returns £86,867 (up from £59,544 last year).

Expenditure for 2023 was £457,182 (£430,629 last year). This was primarily due to the increase in salaries from £246,377 in 2022 to £286,408.

For our Charifund we had a reduction in the unrealised deficit of the value of the investments to £20,520 from £51,506 in 2022.

The total fund carried forward from 2023 was £2,114,097. This is split by:

- Charifund £882,685 (40%)
- Long-term deposits (over 12 months fixed-term deposits) £270,296 (13%)
- Short-term deposits (12 months or less) £934,904 (44%)
- Cash/accrued interest (3%)

The monies are designated as follows:

- Strategic reserve fund £948,059 (includes the close-down reserve of £70,000 and four-years' operating costs, reducing by 40% year on year)
- Applications reserve £226,000 (£2,000 allocated for each of the 113 applications made)
- Legal-action fund £23,059
- General fund £654,390
- Restricted reserves/endowments

112/24 Following discussion, the trustees unanimously approved the independently-examined accounts for 2023 and agreed to sign the letter of representation from the independent examiner.

### **Investment advisers: draft minutes of meeting on 30 April 2024**

- 113/24 The trustees unanimously approved the finance committee's recommendation to engage JM Finn as our investment advisers. They noted that there would need to be a great deal of discussion led by the finance committee, with substantive points coming to the board, and that the board would be involved in determining what would be an acceptable level of risk.

### **Amended version of financial policies and procedures**

- 114/24 The updated financial policies and procedures were noted.

### **STAFF REMUNERATION**

- 115/24 The trustees considered the paper from Simon Hunt. After discussion it was agreed to refer it to the finance committee. The trustees thanked Simon for the thought he had put into this.

### **RAMBLERS' GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING**

- 116/24 The trustees noted the report from John Hall who attended the Ramblers' general council meeting on 20 April 2024 as Phil Wadey's proxy.

### **LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS**

- 117/24 It was noted with regret that Gerry Stewart has retired after 26 years as our local correspondent for Cotswold District and other parts of Gloucestershire, and Peter Kidner had retired after 17 years as our local correspondent for South Somerset District. The trustees thanked them most warmly for all their work, and the chairman would write to thank them.
- 118/24 The trustees agreed to revoke the appointment of a local correspondent because we had been unable to contact him.

### **REVIEW OF MEETING**

- 119/24 The trustees were content with the meeting.

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 120/24 Thursday 6 June 2024 at 18.30.
- 121/24 It was agreed to explore a different date for the December meeting.  
The meeting ended at 19.05.

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

4 July (AGM, 11-4)

8 August

5 September\*

3 October

7 November

December to be confirmed\*.

\* = quarterly meetings



Phil Wadey  
Chair of Trustees