

**Minutes of the ninety-second meeting of the Board of Trustees of  
the Open Spaces Society held at 18.00 on Thursday 5 September 2024  
by videoconference**

**PRESENT** Graham Bathe (vice-chairman, chairing the meeting)  
Stuart Bain (treasurer)  
Chris Beney  
James Lean  
Andrew Packman

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

**APOLOGIES** John Hall, Tara-Jane Sutcliffe, Phil Wadey

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

181/24 There were no declarations.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

182/24 The general secretary reported that the society had been granted leave to intervene in writing in the Dartmoor backpack-camping case in the supreme court in support of the Dartmoor National Park Authority. The case would be heard on 8 October 2024.

**MINUTES OF MEETING ON 12 AUGUST 2024**

183/24 The minutes of the meeting on 12 August 2024 were approved and it was agreed to publish them on the website.

**MINUTES OF MEETINGS ON 11 AUGUST AND 24 AUGUST 2024**

184/24 The minutes of the meetings on 11 August, regarding legal case 24-03, and 24 August regarding legal case 24-10, were approved.

**MINUTES OF LEGAL COMMITTEE**

185/24 The minutes of the legal committee meetings on 1 August, 9 August (legal case 24-03), and 21 August (legal case 24-10) were noted.

**LEGAL CASE 24-03**

186/24 It was noted that, following further investigation, we were not pursuing this case.

**LEGAL COMMITTEE REPORT**

**Legal cases summary paper**

187/24 The trustees noted this report which had been considered by the legal committee, setting out all our legal cases and those we had supported, with sums pledged,

actual costs, and outcomes. They recognised that it was a significant piece of work which they found extremely helpful.

### **Proactive legal work**

- 188/24 The trustees noted this paper which listed proposals for clarifying or changing the law, and asked whether it might set out chances of success and priorities. The general secretary explained that it was compiled by staff as issues came to light during their work, and that it was largely opportunistic. If we were to pursue any of them, we should probably need first to obtain legal advice. James Lean suggested we might find a university law department whose students or tutors might work on some of the topics. It was agreed that the paper needed an introductory explanatory paragraph, and that the legal committee should consider further how it might be used.

### **Legislative shopping-list**

- 189/24 The trustees noted the list, which was opportunistic, and to which suggestions could be added at any time. It would be discussed at the local correspondents' event in October.
- 190/24 The trustees thanked all those involved in producing the three papers which were excellent pieces of work.

### **LEGAL-ACTION DESIGNATED FUND**

- 191/24 The treasurer introduced his paper in which he clarified the use of the designated legal-action fund, which is for legal action only. The balances would be tracked via the reserves spreadsheet, and future financial commitments would be tracked quarterly within the management report. Legal costs may also be paid via unrestricted funds to avoid having to account for them within the designated fund. The legal committee would continue to publish an annual report breaking down the commitments so that trustees can understand the detail.
- 192/24 The trustees noted the paper and the consequent amendment to the legal committee's terms of reference.

### **LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS**

#### **Renewals**

- 193/24 It was agreed to renew the following for a further three years: Peter Berrecloth (London Borough of Barnet); Jack Jennings (Birmingham City Council: Sutton Coldfield; Warwickshire: North Warwickshire Borough); Ken Sharp (Lancs: West Lancs District; Merseyside: Knowsley Metropolitan Borough, Liverpool City, St Helens Metropolitan Borough, Sefton Metropolitan Borough).

#### **Reports**

- 194/24 The trustees noted the reports and staff comments, and that the production of the reports would be discussed at the local correspondents' event. The trustees thanked the local correspondents for their reports and all their work.

### **PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE**

- 195/24 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**

196/24 The report was noted.

## **PROPOSED DATES FOR MEETINGS IN 2025**

197/24 It was agreed to allow a further week for trustees to confirm their availability.

## **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

### **AGM 2025**

198/24 Graham Bathe reported that Phil Wadey had proposed that the AGM in 2025 should once again be hybrid, and we should shortly consider options for 2026, which could include a fully online meeting. This was agreed nem con.

## **REVIEW OF MEETING**

199/24 The trustees were content with the meeting.

## **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

200/24 Monday 23 September 2024, 13.00-1,400: informal session to discuss digital marketing and website review.

Thursday 3 October 2024 at 18.00.

The meeting ended at 18.37.

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

5 September\*

3 October

7 November



Phil Wadey

Chair of Trustees

12 December\*.

\* = quarterly meetings