

**Minutes of the ninety-eighth meeting of the Board of Trustees of  
the Open Spaces Society held at 18.00 on Thursday 20 March 2025  
by videoconference**

<b>PRESENT</b>	Phil Wadey (chairman) Stuart Bain Graham Bathe Chris Beney John Hall (from minute 37/25) James Lean Andrew Packman (from minute 37/25) Tara-Jane Sutcliffe
<b>IN ATTENDANCE</b>	Kate Ashbrook (general secretary)

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

31/25 There were no declarations.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Case officer (open spaces and greens)**

32/25 It was noted with pleasure that we had appointed Helen Monger as our case officer (open spaces and greens) and that she would start work on 31 March, three days a week.

**Gordon Sencicle**

33/25 It was noted with sadness that Gordon Sencicle had died at the age of 90. He was our local correspondent for Thanet District in Kent from 2010 to 2021 and a staunch defender of public paths. The general secretary was hoping to speak at his funeral on 16 April.

**Case 24-07, Hayton Woods, Cumberland**

34/25 It was noted with pleasure that the outcome of this case (to which we had contributed financially, with other organisations, for a counsel's opinion) had been successful. On the strength of the opinion, the Ramblers had proceeded to court and the judge had held that the break in user of claimed routes due to foot and mouth restrictions did not amount to an interruption in use, and that the decision not to confirm the definitive map modification order would be quashed. It was possible that the defendants might appeal, and there would probably be a further public inquiry into the order. The chairman noted that it was a pleasing result.

## **MINUTES OF MEETING ON 13 FEBRUARY 2025**

- 35/25 The minutes of the meeting on 13 February 2025 were approved and it was agreed to publish them on the website.

## **MINUTES OF LEGAL COMMITTEE ON 13 FEBRUARY 2025**

- 36/25 The minutes of the legal committee decision regarding case 24-12 were noted.

## **COMPANIES HOUSE, NEW REQUIREMENT**

- 37/25 The trustees noted that all company directors, persons with significant control, and anyone who uploads information to Companies House, will be required to prove their identity with effect from 25 March 2025 and that it was a legal requirement to do so. Once this comes into effect the general secretary will send a note to trustees to remind them of this and to ask them to report to her when they have done it.

## **EVERSLEY AWARD**

- 38/24 It was noted that the Eversley working party was not making a recommendation for an award this year.

## **TOWN AND VILLAGE GREENS SURVEY**

- 39/25 The trustees unanimously approved expenditure of up to £3,400 for digitisation of the National Federation of Women's Institutes' survey of town and village greens, which was undertaken in the 1990s for Aberystwyth University. It is a comprehensive survey which had been housed by the Countryside and Community Research Institute of the University of Gloucester, but the institute could no longer give it space and the papers have now been passed to the Museum of English Rural Life (MERL). Once digitised we shall investigate on which website the material might be held; for example MERL or the Association of Commons Registration Authorities. This may require some further funding in due course.
- 40/25 Trustees asked that we check whether it is a requirement to redact all the names as the data is now 35 years old.

## **TREES AT PARLIAMENT PIECE**

- 41/25 The general secretary reported that Warwick District Council and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, who lease and manage our land at Parliament Piece, were delighted to learn that the society wished to donate some trees, and they have planted three Elm trees, *Ulmus sapporo* Autumn Gold, which are partially-resistant to Dutch Elm disease. The society has paid the bill, but the general secretary proposed that one tree would be paid for out of the funds donated by trustees towards her 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the other by herself to celebrate that event, and the third by the society to celebrate its 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The trustees approved this unanimously.

## **AGM ARRANGEMENTS, THURSDAY 3 JULY 2025**

- 42/23 The AGM arrangements were agreed on the same basis as 2024.

## **Vice-presidents**

- 43/23 It was agreed to propose Diane Andrewes, David (Lord) Clark, Mike Clarke, Roger de Freitas, and Richard Mabey as vice-presidents. Tara-Jane Sutcliffe would propose, and James Lean would second them.

### **Afternoon entertainment**

- 44/23 For the afternoon entertainment it was agreed to invite members to speak about their campaigns. The trustees were encouraged to consider whether they would like to have a speaker and if so to suggest someone in the near future.

### **TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT**

- 45/25 It was agreed to commence recruitment of two trustees, to be co-opted if there is space after the AGM. The chairman would circulate a note of the process adopted last time, and we would investigate where to advertise.

### **LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS**

#### **Renewals**

- 46/25 It was agreed to reappoint Stephen Hill (Kirklees MBC), Ashley Redsell (Surrey, Spelthorne Borough), and David Thornevell (Kent, Tonbridge and Malling Borough) for a further three years.

#### **Reports**

- 47/25 The reports and staff comments were noted. The trustees thanked the local correspondents for all their hard work, and the staff for their comments.

### **POSSIBLE EVENT TO CELEBRATE THE LATE BERNARD SELWYN'S CENTENARY**

- 48/25 The general secretary reported that Bernard Selwyn, who died in 2013 aged 87, was a long-standing trustee, parliamentary agent, and correspondent for London who did much valuable work for the society. His relatives would like to mark his centenary on 21 August this year, and have asked that the society arrange an event.
- 49/25 It was suggested that we have a walk on a common or other open space, probably in London, with which Bernard was associated. The general secretary would see if other organisations with which Bernard was involved might like to be included.

### **PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE**

- 50/25 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**

- 51/25 The report was noted. With respect to the action regarding the society's carbon footprint, the board agreed not to pursue any further benchmarking based on 2019 and to close that action. In the light of this, the former working party will consider any outstanding activities necessary to fulfil our strategy.

### **REVIEW OF MEETING**

- 52/25 The trustees were content with the meeting.

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 53/25 Monday 7 April 2025 at 18.00.  
The meeting ended at 18.56.

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### **OTHER MEETINGS IN 2025**

Wednesday 21 May

Friday 13 June\*  
Thursday 7 August  
Thursday 4 September\*  
Thursday 2 October  
Thursday 6 November  
Thursday 4 December\*

\* = quarterly meetings

Additional events

Thursday 3 July, AGM, London

Saturday 13 September, members' day, Kenilworth, Warwickshire

Tuesday 30 September – Wednesday 1 October, local correspondents' get-together, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P Wadey', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Phil Wadey  
Chair of Trustees