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**Minutes of the ninety-ninth meeting of the Board of Trustees of  
the Open Spaces Society held at 18.00 on Wednesday 21 May 2025  
by videoconference**

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

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

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

62/25 There were no declarations.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Finance officer**

63/25 It was noted with pleasure that we had appointed Jenny Neagle as our finance officer, working two days a week. She would start on 1 July, with a handover from Glynis Smith before that.

**Welsh government to repeal 2026 cut-off**

64/25 It was noted with pleasure that, thanks to submissions from the society, the Senedd had approved amendments to the Legislation (Procedure, Publication and Repeals) (Wales) Bill to repeal the 2026 cut-off for public paths. The bill would become law shortly.

**Dartmoor backpack-camping case**

65/25 It was noted with pleasure that the five judges in the Supreme Court had unanimously ruled that there was a right to backpack camping on the Dartmoor commons. The society had intervened in the case *Darwall v Dartmoor National Park Authority* in the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court, and it was evident that our submissions had been respected by the judges. The outcome was excellent, and demonstrated the value of the society becoming involved in legal cases.

## **MINUTES OF MEETING ON 20 MARCH 2025**

- 66/25 The minutes of the meeting on 20 March 2025 were approved and it was agreed to publish them on the website.

## **MINUTES OF MEETING ON 11 APRIL 2025**

- 67/25 The minutes of the meeting on 11 April 2025 relating to legal case 24-12 were approved.

## **MINUTES OF LEGAL COMMITTEE ON 6 MAY 2025**

- 68/25 The minutes of the legal committee decision regarding case 25-02 were noted.

## **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

### **(a) Minutes of finance committee on 29 April 2025**

- 69/25 The minutes were noted.

### **(b) Quarter 1 management accounts, investments, and commentary**

- 70/25 The trustees noted the quarter 1 accounts, investments and commentary, and were pleased that the RAG status for the income and expenditure, and the reserves, was green.

### **(c) Accounts for 2024 and letter of representation**

- 71/25 On the recommendation of the finance committee, the trustees unanimously approved the independently-examined accounts for 2024 and agreed to sign the letter of representation from the independent examiner.

### **(d) Financial policies and procedures**

- 72/25 The trustees approved the final version of the financial policies and procedures, which had been amended since they had last seen them, and approved by the finance committee.

### **(e) Buxton and Creech Jones funds**

- 73/25 The trustees considered a paper which proposed that we start the process of incorporating the Buxton and Creech Jones funds into a fund where they would be more usefully spent on our charitable purposes. The trustees agreed that the finance committee should investigate this and bring a proposal to the trustees for approval.

### **(f) CAF signatory**

- 74/25 The trustees agreed to add Lucy McKean, as membership assistant, as a signatory to the Charities Aid Foundation bank account.

## **ANNUAL REPORT 2024**

- 75/25 The trustees unanimously approved the annual report for presentation at the AGM. They thanked the staff for all the work which was reflected in the report, and for the production of the report and accounts.

## **AGM 2026**

- 76/25 The chairman proposed that there be a discussion at this year's AGM to gauge the views of those present on how to run AGMs in future. There was a note in *Open Space* (to be repeated in the ezine) encouraging members to comment if they could

not attend. The trustees would discuss the feedback at their August meeting, and take a decision on the format of the 2026 AGM.

### **BOARD SUCCESSION**

- 77/25 The chairman presented his paper in which he pointed out that the vice-chairman was standing down this year, and he intended to stand down as chairman in 2026. He asked everyone to consider whether they could adopt one of the anticipated roles, including vice chairman in 2025/6, and chairman (and probable new vice-chairman) in 2026, and to discuss the matter with the current chairman or vice-chairman, or with colleagues.
- 78/25 He also reported that the treasurer intended to stand down at the August meeting, and James Lean had expressed a willingness to take on the role.
- 79/25 He recommended that we have a short discussion about future officers at the June board meeting, allowing time for people to put themselves forward for roles which would become vacant at, or soon after, the AGM.

### **NATIONAL TRUST REPORT**

- 80/25 Tara-Jane Sutcliffe, the society's appointee on the National Trust Council, presented her report. The trustees thanked her for her work on the council.

### **LEGAL-CASES REPORT**

- 81/25 The trustees noted the legal-cases report which had been considered by the legal committee, and which highlighted the updates since they last considered it.

### **RAMBLERS' GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING, 5 APRIL 2025**

- 82/25 The trustees noted the chairman's report of the meeting which he had attended in Birmingham.

### **REVIEW OF MEETING**

- 83/25 The trustees were content with the meeting.

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 84/25 Friday 13 June 2025 at 18.00.

The meeting ended at 18.49

### **OTHER MEETINGS IN 2025**

Thursday 7 August

Thursday 4 September\* [date to be changed]

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

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Phil Wadey", is positioned above a horizontal dotted line. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Phil Wadey  
Chair of Trustees