

**Minutes of the one hundred and fifth meeting of the Board of Trustees of
the Open Spaces Society held at 18.00 on Thursday 15 January 2026
by videoconference**

PRESENT Phil Wadey (chairman)
Stuart Bain (chairman for minutes 08-13/26)
Chris Beney
John Hall
James Lean
Andrew Packman
Tara-Jane Sutcliffe

IN ATTENDANCE Kate Ashbrook (general secretary)

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1/26 Stuart Bain reported that he was now a trustee of Cynnal Cymru (Sustainability Wales). Tara-Jane Sutcliffe declared that she was a member of the National Trust council and a magistrate in the Carmarthenshire jurisdiction, but she considered there were no conflicts with items relating to the legal committee annual report.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2/26 The trustees congratulated Phil Wadey on being made an MBE in the new year's honours, for services to rights of way.

3/26 The trustees noted with pleasure that the government legal department had conceded on receiving our pre-action protocol for case 25-06.

4/26 The trustees noted that, following the withdrawal of the amendment to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill which posed a threat to recreational rights on green spaces, we have received an assurance from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Housing and Local Government that the ministry will engage with the society on the proposed review of the law.

DELEGATED EXPENDITURE

5/26 The general secretary reported that she had authorised a payment for one of our consultants for additional work on the website during the fourth quarter of 2025.

MINUTES OF MEETING ON 11 DECEMBER 2025

- 6/26 The minutes of the meeting on 11 December 2025 were approved and it was agreed to publish them on the website.

MINUTES OF LEGAL COMMITTEE ON 13 DECEMBER 2025

- 7/26 The minutes of the legal committee meeting on 13 December 2025, regarding legal case 25-07, were noted.

LEGAL COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Minutes of legal committee on 3 December 2025

- 8/26 The minutes of the legal committee on 3 December 2025 were noted.

Legal cases summary paper

- 9/26 The report was noted.

Legislation shopping-list

- 10/26 Some points were raised and the report was noted.

Pro-active legal work

- 11/26 The report was noted.

Policy shopping-list

- 12/26 The report was noted.

- 13/26 Stuart Bain thanked the legal committee for all its work on these papers.

TRUSTEES' DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

- 14/26 The trustees discussed the chairman's paper on the email-voting rules for decision making. They agreed (a) to review the previous paper about trustee decisions on legal matters, and (b) to reconsider the wording of article 5.10 with the aim of clarifying it, next time we seek to amend the articles. In the meantime, trustees were content to continue as now, recognising that it was acceptable to object to a recommendation and to cause a trustees' meeting to be called, but also mindful that some decisions had to be made expeditiously.

LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS

- 15/26 The trustees confirmed the appointment of Kit Cawthorn as local correspondent for the London Borough of Ealing, for one year in the first instances. They had previously given informal approval by email.
- 16/26 The trustees agreed to appoint Becky Dymond Hall as local correspondent for the parishes of Biddestone, Box, Colerne, and North Wraxall in Wiltshire, for one year in the first instance.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Website presentation

- 17/26 The general secretary said that staff working on the new website would like to give a presentation to trustees ahead of the launch, so that trustees could understand it and ask questions. The trustees agreed to this, and the general secretary would circulate dates.

REVIEW OF MEETING

18/26 The trustees were content with the meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

19/26 Thursday 19 February at 18.00.

Items would include the finance committee report, and the note of trustee responses to the trustee horizon-scanning for the strategic plan.

The meeting ended at 18.47

Meeting dates for 2026

Tuesday 24 March*

Thursday 16 April

Thursday 21 May

Thursday 18 June*

Thursday 2 July AGM

Thursday 6 August

Thursday 10 September*

Thursday 8 October

Tuesday 3 November

Thursday 10 December*

* Quarterly meetings



Phil Wadey

Chair of Trustees