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**Minutes of the one hundred and ninth meeting of the Board of Trustees of
the Open Spaces Society held at 18.13 on Thursday 18 June 2026
by videoconference**

PRESENT Phil Wadey (chairman)
Stuart Bain (vice-chairman)
John Hall
James Lean (treasurer)
Andrew Packman
Tara-Jane Sutcliffe

IN ATTENDANCE Kate Ashbrook (general secretary)

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

120/26 There were no declarations of interest.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

121/26 It was noted with deep sadness that our trustee, Chris Beney, had died on 26 May aged 93. Chris had been our local correspondent in Hertfordshire since 1993, and a trustee from 1997-2017, and again from 2018, serving as chairman 2018-2020. In 2022 we presented him with the Eversley Award for outstanding personal endeavour, in particular for his work on paths and access. He chaired the British Standards Panel for three revisions of BS5709, obtaining agreement for the changes made. He made a significant contribution to the society and to the wider world of rights of way and access. The general secretary had spoken at his funeral on 15 June.

MINUTES OF MEETING ON 21 MAY 2026

122/26 The minutes of the meeting on 21 May 2026 were approved and it was agreed to publish them on the website.

MINUTES OF LEGAL COMMITTEE ON 1 JUNE 2026

123/26 The minutes of the legal committee meeting on 1 June 2026, regarding legal case 24-16, were noted.

DELEGATED EXPENDITURE

124/26 It was noted that the general secretary had approved £3,000 for legal advice on case 26-06, and £1,800 for counsel's assistance with case 24-16.

GOVERNANCE

Board officer succession

- 125/26 It was noted with sadness that Phil Wadey was standing down as chairman after the AGM. Stuart Bain agreed to stand as chairman and Andrew Packman as vice-chairman at the August meeting.

Trustee-recruitment update

- 126/26 James Lean and Tara-Jane Sutcliffe updated trustees on the recruitment process for two co-opted trustees. We had 22 applicants of whom nine were shortlisted. After further shortlisting they had interviewed six. They recommended two candidates to trustees, with a reserve.
- 127/26 The trustees discussed the paper and the recommendations and agreed to offer the places to two candidates, who would be invited to attend the August meeting before a final decision was made. They also agreed to offer one candidate observer status.
- 128/26 Stuart Bain and Tara-Jane Sutcliffe agreed to produce an induction plan for all three candidates, and to act as mentors.
- 129/26 The trustees thanked James, Tara-Jane, and Phil Wadey for their work on this.

MILEAGE RATES

- 130/26 It was noted that HMRC had increased mileage rates from 45p to 55p a mile from 6 April 2026. It was agreed that OSS would increase the reimbursement rate to 55p a mile, backdated to 6 April.

AGM ARRANGEMENTS, THURSDAY 2 JULY 2026

- 131/26 The AGM arrangements were noted. The trustees thanked the operations and marketing manager for all her work on this.

ANNUAL LEGAL-CASES REPORT

- 132/26 The trustees noted the report which had been seen by the finance committee and legal committee and thanked staff for it.

COMPLAINTS REPORT FROM CHAIRMAN

- 133/26 The trustees noted the chairman's report that there had been no complaints to which he had to respond in the last year.

RAMBLERS' GENERAL COUNCIL, 25 APRIL 2026

- 134/26 The trustees noted the chairman's report of his attendance at the general council as the representative of the society, a nationally-affiliated organisation.

LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS

Renewals

- 135/26 It was agreed to reappoint John Hall (Coventry), Marion Law (Shropshire, and Telford & Wrekin), and Barry Thomas (Derbyshire: South Derbyshire District; Leicestershire: North-West Leicestershire District).

Reports

- 136/26 The reports and staff comments were noted. The trustees thanked the local correspondents for all their hard work, and the staff for their comments.

PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE

- 137/26 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

- 138/26 The report was noted.

REVIEW OF MEETING

- 139/26 The trustees were content with the meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 140/26 Thursday 6 August at 18.00. Stuart Bain said that he would produce a paper about inclusive language.

SEPTEMBER MEETING

- 141/26 It was agreed to change the date to Thursday 3 September.

THANKS TO CHAIRMAN

- 142/26 As this was Phil Wadey's last trustees' meeting as chairman, the general secretary thanked him for his leadership and support over the last six years. The trustees endorsed this.

The meeting ended at 19.19.

Meeting dates for 2026

Thursday 3 September*

Thursday 8 October

Tuesday 3 November

Thursday 10 December*

* Quarterly meetings

Other meetings

Members' day: Saturday 19 September

Local correspondents' event: 29-30 September.

Strategic-plan awayday: Tuesday 24 November



Phil Wadey

Chair of Trustees