

**Draft Minutes of the 59th Annual General Meeting of the
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
Company no. 00676313 and Charity no. 201081
held electronically at 7pm on Tuesday 10 November 2020**

The meeting opened with 256 households online, attendance fluctuated during the meeting. Members were welcomed by the Chief Executive, Debbie Tann, who introduced John Collman (President) who took the meeting. Debbie advised that the meeting would be recorded and the highlights posted on the Trust's website.

1. Opening address.

John Collman welcomed members to the meeting, together with guests. This is the first time the AGM has been held electronically but the format has been kept the same, as far as is possible, and so will be familiar to members who have attended before. John advised members that after the formal AGM there would be a presentation by the Chief Executive together with a question and answer session. There was also an opportunity to ask questions about the Annual Report and Accounts before the vote was taken on agenda items 4 & 5. If there are more questions than time then there will be answers to all questions posted on the Trust's website.

The AGM was properly focused on reporting on the financial year ending in March 2020, however given the extraordinary events arising from the pandemic there would also be updates for members on how the Trust has fared over recent months. John observed that the Trust was just a few days short of its 60th birthday and that was something to celebrate.

John advised members that three Trustees were retiring at this AGM. On behalf of the members John thanked Mary Parker, Paul Tyler and Tim Pinchen for their unstinting service for the Trust.

John introduced the panel, namely David Jordan (Chairman), Mary Parker (Hon Treasurer) Debbie Tann (Chief Executive), Natasha Thorneloe (Director of Finance and Resources) and Clive Chatters (Company Secretary).

2. Apologies for absence.

Apologies had been received from A M Kenyon, G Norrie and R Young with 78 members participating by casting proxy votes.

3. Minutes of the 58th Annual General Meeting.

The President asked those present if the minutes were an accurate record.

Members were advised on the means of voting (being a Zoom poll), including how two members from the same household, using a single device to attend the AGM, may vote.

On the motion 'That the minutes are accepted as a true record of the 58th Annual General Meeting' as proposed by Sarah Ball as seconded by Graham Roberts, the majority of those present approved the motion, with 77 proxy votes in favour with 1 abstention, the motion was therefore passed.

The minutes were therefore approved.

4. Report of the Chairman of the Trust.

John Collman introduced David Jordan, the Chairman of the Trust, who made his report.

David reflected that 2019-20 had been an extremely successful year with a good balance of work being achieved by the Trust. David highlighted the activity of the Trust on the Isle of Wight, including the acquisition of nature reserves in the Eastern Yar valley which was made possible due to a legacy, a successful appeal and support from key partners. David also reported on the long-held aspiration to acquire Deacon Hill, outside Winchester; a purchase that had now been successfully completed with the support of another legacy, an appeal, the support of Hampshire County Council and other partners. David highlighted the work of the Trust outside our own estate, including providing advice and support to farmers managing over 16,000ha. David also celebrated the work of the New Forest Non-native Plants Project and the recognition it had achieved in the highest layers of government. As a campaigning organisation the Trust has been promoting its Wilder vision and the aspiration to secure the recovery of wildlife in 30% of our land and seas, this message was being well received and has been echoed in a statement by the Prime Minister.

David advised that the impact of the pandemic mostly occurred after the year-end being reported. He advised that many Trust activities had been halted and many staff were furloughed. Whilst this was a national crisis it was not a crisis for the Trust given the support of government for furloughed staff, the prudence of the financial reserves policies of the Trust and the robustness of the Trust's financial controls. The Trust's nature reserves were put under intense pressure over the summer due to people seeking out places for fresh air and exercise. This experience emphasises the importance of providing attractive green places near to where people live that can divert harmful pressure away from nature reserves

Looking ahead, David recognised the need to address the long-standing crises of climate change and the loss of biodiversity. The Trust is committed to lead local actions to address these challenges.

David praised the leadership team in the Trust, his fellow Trustees and the officers under the leadership of Debbie Tann; he thanked members for their continued support and gave especial thanks to Paul Tyler, Tim Pinchen and Mary Parker, all of whom were retiring as Trustees at this AGM.

John thanked David on behalf of the members.

5. Report of the Trust's Honorary Treasurer and approval of accounts for the year ended 31st March 2020.

John Collman introduced Mary Parker, Trustee and Honorary Treasurer.

Mary advised that she would report on the past financial year and would conclude with observations on recent months.

Mary opened by advising members that the accounts had been audited and had received a clean report. Mary thanked Natasha Thorneloe (Director of Finance & Resources) and her team for producing the accounts and supporting the audit during the period of lockdown.

Mary advised that on 31 March 2020 the Trust held assets of £11.2m, of which £6.6m was land and buildings.

The total income for the year was £6.4m which was up by £1m from the previous year. This comprised £2.4m of funds where the use is specified by the donor and £4m of unrestricted funds where the Trustees can elect how they are spent. Membership income was up by 7.5% and the number of members by 3.4%. Legacy income was £376k, an important but unpredictable source of funds. The increase in income from the previous year is substantially accounted for by funds that have been received in advance of major projects.

The total expenditure was £4.8m which is just £50k lower than the previous year. Expenditure was slightly down on conservation work, mostly due to work being delayed due to the exceptionally wet winter. Expenditure included an upgrade of the IT system, which was unexpectedly timely in supporting home working during the pandemic lockdown.

The Trust has transferred its investments to the CCLA Charities Ethical Investment Fund which screens investments for issues such as climate change and biodiversity, the fund has also disposed of investments relating to oil and gas production. There was a loss on investments in March 2020 as a result of the pandemic, but these losses have been reversed in recent months.

Having reported on the financial year 2019-20 Mary advised members on the financial implications of the pandemic. Trustees and the Executive team used robust financial measures to reduce expenditure and to secure new lines of income. Some aspects of the Trust's work stopped, notably activities that require face to face contact with people, and those undertaken by staff that were furloughed. External emergency funding was secured from local authorities, the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the government's furlough scheme.

The pandemic is currently one of a number of financial uncertainties, which include the UK leaving the European Union and the complete restructuring of government support for agriculture and associated environmental funding. The Trustees continue to apply strong budgetary controls and are facing these challenges with confidence.

Mary concluded by thanking members and supporters whose commitment to the Trust underpins our work.

John thanked Mary on behalf of members, not only for this report but also for her long, dedicated service to the Trust.

John then took questions from members relating to the Annual Report and Accounts.

In response to questions, Mary advised that the initial impact of the pandemic on the Trust's accounts was predicted to be a deficit of £450k, far greater than the budgeted £30k deficit. The response of the Trust has reduced this exposure to a £50k deficit. However, the impacts on the Trust's income are likely to occur for a number of years and will require continuous attention.

Natasha confirmed that the Trust banks with Unity Bank.

Mary advised that investments had recovered following the year-end deficit and currently stood at an unrealised c.£160k gain since 1 April 2020. These investments had been reviewed and the results compared well with the performance of alternative companies.

A question relating to Christmas cards was deferred to the later Question and Answer session.

On the motion 'That the Annual Report and Accounts be approved', proposed by Lesley Hancock and seconded by Brian Matthews, the majority of those present approved the motion. All 78 proxy votes were for the motion; the motion was therefore passed.

6. Election of Trustees

John Collman advised members that he would take the elections as a block vote.

On the motion 'That Oliver Cox, Christopher Langford, Andrew Lee, Helen McCormack and Matt Prescott be re-elected as Trustees', as proposed by David Smart and seconded by Alison Bolton, the majority of those present approved the motion. Of the proxy votes 76 were for the motion with 2 abstentions; the motion was therefore passed.

7. Appointment of Auditors.

In introducing this item John Collman expressed his thanks to the Trust's outgoing auditors, Sheen Stickland, with particular thanks to Paul Wright.

On the motion 'That Azets (formerly Wilkins Kennedy) be appointed as the Trust's auditors', as proposed by Mike Urwin and seconded by Jenni Tubbs, the majority of those present approved the motion. Of the proxy votes 76 were for the motion with 2 abstentions; the motion was therefore passed.

John Collman advised members that this concluded the formal part of the meeting, he thanked members for attending and for engaging with the novel form of the meeting. John thanked the numerous officers who had worked so hard to make the meeting a success by choreographing unfamiliar technology to deliver an effective meeting; he looked forward to the possibility of members getting together to meet, sometime in the future.

The meeting closed at 8.01pm.

Clive Chatters