

WORCESTERSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST

Minutes of the 2020 Annual General Meeting held virtually on Wednesday 14th October 2020 at 7:30pm

When the notice and Agenda for this Annual General Meeting were sent to all Trust Members with the July 2020 issue of Worcestershire Wildlife anyone wishing to attend was asked to apply to the Director and keep an eye on the Trust's website in case the meeting had to be postponed or arrangements altered in the light of Government Covid-19 pandemic movement restrictions in place. At the Council meeting on 17th August 2020 the decision was taken to hold this AGM as a remote video conference with the aid of the Zoom digital programme under the auspices of Eventbrite. Notice to this effect and further invitation to apply was posted in the What's On section of the Website including the option to ask for a proxy and submit any prearranged questions. Before the formal business the Honorary Secretary explained to participants, with a trial run, how voting would take place using the software side panel controls and options together with explanation as to how any questions could be raised.

David Mortiboys in the virtual chair and 34 members attending online representing 31 votes with no proxy votes held.

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Tessa Carrick, Pat Gildea, Harry Green, Ed Leszczynski, Nick Packham, James Raeside and Mark Wrench.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 16th October 2019

The minutes had been previously circulated through the Trust website. Approval was proposed by Peter Scriven, seconded by Linda Butler and agreed *nem con*. The minutes were to be signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising

4. To receive and adopt the Report of Council

The report had been previously circulated. The Chair, David Mortiboys reminded the meeting that the year under review was prior to the pandemic but would comment later on events during the current year. During 2019/20 the Trust had acquired more land, with almost 3000 acres now under its stewardship, and advice given to land managers on over 100,000 acres through a range of other projects and partnerships. The year had seen the launch of the Saving Worcestershire's Heathlands appeal to raise funds for the purchase of land at Dropping Well Farm and thus creating the largest connected block of heathland in the county. Considering it a once in a generation opportunity to guide how land for biodiversity, soil health, water quality and other public goods was to be managed, the Trust had joined the national campaign for powerful Environment and Agricultural Acts. Beyond the end of the financial year David commented that it was too early to evaluate the impact of the continuing crisis which had forced difficult measures to be introduced such as initially closing and stopping all work on the reserves and having staff work from home, busy developing plans and projects to ensure a strong future. One of the areas upon which the Trust was focusing was involvement in wider areas of our community, particularly urban areas, in order to broaden and diversify engagement. £205,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund Emergency Fund had been secured for some of these projects, and also support welcomed from the Covid business support grant. With these grants and careful financial control the Trust had avoided redundancies and the need to furlough any staff and would continue its work in a cautious manner. Through the Chair Council once again thanked staff, volunteers and members who had done so much for the Trust and who made it all work, and of course the many organisations from whom support had been received, including the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Severn Waste Services.

Adoption of the Report was proposed by Sandra Young, seconded by Peter Holmes and agreed *nem con*.

5. To receive and adopt the Report of the Honorary Treasurer

The report had been previously circulated. Using visual screen aids and referring to the chart accompanying the report the Honorary Treasurer, John Blakiston, highlighted that incoming resources for the year ended 31st March 2020 were £2.652 million of which £482k was given by donors or funding bodies for a specific restricted purpose and £572k was designated by the Trustees for defined purposes leaving a balance of £1.598 million to be used to meet the charity's objectives without any such restriction or designation. Expenditure was £1.912 million resulting in a surplus of £493k for the year after deducting £247k losses on investment movements. Net assets stood at £15.678 million, chiefly the nature reserves and investments of £2.497 million. The Treasurer commented that much of the fall in the value of the Trust's investments had been recouped between the end of the financial year, the time of the stock market collapse, and the summer of 2020. He considered that with income and asset figures healthy, the Trust was in a robust state to prudently weather economic pressures resulting from the pandemic.

Adoption of the Report was proposed by Chris Greensmith, seconded by Bob Gillmor and agreed *nem com*.

[A full copy of the accounts with auditor's statement would be published on the Trust's website]

6. To elect Members of Council

For this agenda item Graham Martin assumed the virtual Chair as unusual circumstance this year had resulted in three of the four Trustees seeking re-election being all the Honorary Officers reporting to the AGM. Introduced by Graham Martin, proposed and seconded, John Blakiston, Richard Cory, David Mortiboys and Roger Pannell were all re-elected *nem con*.

7. To appoint Auditors

The Honorary Treasurer informed the meeting that the appointment of the Trust's auditors had been the subject of competitive tendering during 2020 and proposed, seconded by Mervyn Needham, that Thorne Widgery Accountancy Limited continue as auditors as their proposal was the most competitive and they had served the Trust well. The resolution was approved *nem con*.

8. Any other business

There was no other business and the meeting closed at 8:00pm.

The AGM would have normally been followed by the annual awards ceremony but under the unusual circumstances it had been decided to postpone this and present the awards later in the year in some other format. The recipients are however listed with these minutes.

Worcestershire Wildlife Trust 2020 Awards

Worcestershire Wildlife Medals 2020 as recognition for dedicated service to nature conservation in Worcestershire.

Gordon Forrest – Keen supporter and publicist of the Trust through large numbers of illustrated talks and film shows all the way back to the 1970's. Author and illustrator of a number of books on his life as a naturalist and on local wildlife habitats.

John Hodson – Working for the Trust since the 1970's in several practical conservation posts, culminating in becoming leader of the Trust's team of volunteers. A life-long amateur ornithologist involved with bird-ringing and research at home and abroad. Undertaking Breeding Bird Surveys and other species recordings for Worcestershire's database.

Michael Liley – An excellent botanist, ornithologist and naturalist who has been a leading player in conserving many Worcestershire habitats. Began working for the Trust in 1998 and developed a passion for lowland meadows, undoubtedly leading to the conservation of many such county sites.

Alan Shepherd – An outstanding naturalist who has used his skills to make a difference to a wide range of conservation projects in Worcestershire over many years, always being associated with amphibians and reptiles. Whilst working for the Trust, one particular enthusiasm was for the conservation of slow-worms and their survival at Worcester allotments owes a lot to Alan.

Wild Service Awards 2020 as recognition of outstanding voluntary service to the Trust.

Margo Bish (Practical work at Feckenham Wylde Moor and Ipsley Alders), Caryl and Lyndon Bracewell (Organising members of Worcester Local Group), Dave Cook (Treasurer of Malvern Local Group for ten years), Nigel Davies (Thirty year member of Worcestershire Conservation Volunteers and volunteer at Penorchard and Piper's Hill), Sue and Andy Duffield (Active members of Stourbridge Local Group and volunteers at Chance Wood and Penorchard), Andrew Forecast (Wide-ranging volunteer for the Trust and Hollybed Farm reserve manager), Michael Griffiths (Studying wildlife on Wilden Marsh and its reserve manager for many years), Chris Jewson (Practical work at Piper's Hill, Eades Meadow and other reserves), Bernie and Mary McLean (Active volunteers at Penorchard and supporters of South Birmingham reserves group), Enid Linturn (Active member with Worcester Local Group for ten years), Ivan Richards (volunteer at Hollybed Farm, manager of Piper's Hill and organiser of Trust's bird food sales), Tony Simpson (practical work at Blackhouse Wood and widespread Lepidoptera recording), Carl and Iris Sweeting (Active members of Stourbridge & Hagley Local Group and volunteers at Chance Wood and Penorchard), Helen Thomas (Roving volunteer for many years and promoter of wildlife gardening), Glyn Walters (Outdoor activity organiser for Wyre Forest Local Group committee and practical volunteer at Chaddesley Wood), Wendy Wilkins (Practical volunteer at Chance Wood and Penorchard for over ten years).

Ten-years On Awards as recognition of active volunteer work for the Trust continuing for ten years and or more after initial Wild Service Award

Year of first award 2005 - Richard Cory, John Tilt

Year of first award 2007 - Michael Jeeves, Leighton Lavell

Year of first award 2008 - Carol Bradley, John Buckley, Gary Farmer, John Holder,
Brenda and David Rea

Year of first award 2009 - Jayne Bache, Penny Dykes, Bob Gillmor, Cyril Johnson,
Mervyn Needham, Steve Payne

Year of first award 2010 - Tina Alvin, Ray Henson, Diana Jones, Paul Meers

Richard Cory October 2020