



Minutes of the 2021 Annual General Meeting held virtually on Wednesday 13th October 2021 at 7:30pm

When the Notice and Agenda for this Annual General Meeting were sent to all Trust Members with the July 2021 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 any Government Covid-19 pandemic movement restrictions. At the Council meeting on 16th August 2021, taking into account the continuing and widespread number of Covid-19 cases and members' possible anxieties, the decision was taken to hold this AGM once again 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 together with explanation as to how any questions could be raised.

David Mortiboys in the virtual Chair and 32 members attending online, representing 29 votes with no proxy votes held.

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Linda Butler, David Howell, Mervyn Needham, Sandra Young.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 14th October 2020

The minutes had been previously circulated through the Trust website. Approval was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Bob Gillmor 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. As the Covid-19 vaccination programme was giving hope for a return to normality, the Chair, David Mortiboys, concentrated on the considerable impact on the Trust over the year resulting from the pandemic. The staff had to work remotely for much of the year, there had only been a handful of school visits, no fundraising events had been held and volunteers had been stood down. To keep the Trust's vital work on track creativity had been essential, utilising digital engagement, managing contractors for essential work and becoming experts in the use of Zoom! David was particularly grateful for members having stuck with the Trust throughout the year whilst facing their own uncertainty with health and financial concerns.

Due to the reduction in many revenue streams, the Trust had been financially conservative in ensuring tight control over expenditure. However through such

management and securing National Lottery Heritage funding, it had been possible to re-open and recover many areas affected by the pandemic including inception of a trainee scheme. One positive from the pandemic restrictions on face-to-face contact had been an 83 per cent increase in social media engagement and the hope was to continue growth in all areas of digital engagement. With over 3000 acres owned or managed by the Trust it continued to be driven to improve nature locally whilst contributing to the national objective of restoring 30 per cent of land for nature by 2030. David was thankful to the Trust's funders, particularly National Lottery Heritage Fund, Severn Waste Services, The Banister Charitable Trust, The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, The Rowlands Trust and all legators, but primarily the continuing support of members, the staff and trustees and the incredible work done by volunteers.

Adoption of the Report was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Peter Scriven and agreed *nem con*.

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

The report had been previously circulated. Using a power point presentation the Honorary Treasurer, John Blakiston, first gave members an overview of the Trust's financial framework such as, annual budgeting with quarterly accounts, reviews and management reports; a strong financial policy; day to day running costs and reserve management met from revenue income; wide-ranging individual specific projects met from a designated capital fund; a dedicated committee for investments. Moving on to the figures for the year ended 31st March 2021 where income was £2.596 million of which £941k was given by donors or funding bodies for a specific restricted purpose and £228k was designated by the Trustees for defined purposes, leaving a balance of £1.427 million to be used to meet the charity's objectives without any such restriction or designation. Expenditure was £2.118 million resulting in a surplus of £1.009 million after additions, nearly all being £519k of unrealised gains on investments. Net assets stood at £16.687 million, chiefly the nature reserves and investments of £3.607 million. John considered that the Trust had weathered the pandemic well and was in a fit state to meet the recovery albeit with continuing conservative financial control.

Adoption of the Report was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Tom Meikle 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

Each proposed by the Chair and seconded by the Honorary Secretary, nine Trustees were individually elected or re-elected *nem con*, Andrew Forecast, Pat Gildea, Harry Green, Chris Greensmith, Peter Holmes, Tom Meikle, Mervyn Needham, Christianne Tipping and Sandra Young

7. To appoint Auditors

The Chair, having reminded the meeting that the appointment of the Trust's auditors had been the subject of competitive tendering during 2020, proposed that Thorne Widgery Accountancy Limited be re-appointed as auditors. Seconded by the Honorary Treasurer, 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 2021 Awards

Worcestershire Wildlife Medals 2021 as recognition for dedicated service to nature conservation in Worcestershire.

Brett Westwood and Helen Woodman

Brett Westwood's citation –

Brett has been active in recording natural history in Worcestershire since the 1980s. Joint author with G H Green of "The Nature of Worcestershire" published 1991. Illustrator and member of the team that produced "A year in the Life of Worcestershire's Nature Reserves" published in 1995. Active participant in recording Worcestershire's natural history, especially since the founding of Worcestershire Recorders in the 1990s. Regular contributor to Worcestershire Record from then to the present day with articles on a wide range of natural history subjects. Expert botanist and leading member of the team that undertook detailed countywide recording for the production of "Worcestershire Flora" published 2014. Encyclopedic knowledge of natural history and always willing to share his knowledge with other people. With G H Green joint author of two papers on the Land Caddis after spending many years searching for this species which has a national distribution only in Worcestershire and bordering parts of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Staffordshire. Well-known as a radio presenter on natural history subjects at first locally and then nationally promoting Worcestershire's natural history and conservation whenever the job allowed. In recent years very active champion supporting the acquisition of heathland and adjacent areas near Kidderminster. Served for a short time on Trust Council and is a member of steering committees for Worcestershire Recorders and the Wyre Forest Study Group. One of four authors who wrote, edited and prepared the definitive book "The Nature of Wyre" published in 2015 and nationally praised. Regular contributor to the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust's Magazine in recent years. Author or joint author of several national recently published books on natural history subjects often including reference to Worcestershire.

Helen Woodman's citation –

Helen Woodman's contribution to wildlife conservation in Worcestershire over thirty years as a leading and valued member of Worcestershire Wildlife Trust's Conservation Team is outstanding. Helen Woodman first joined Worcestershire Wildlife Trust in December 1991 when she became the Trust's Reserves Officer, with responsibility for looking after the Trust's 60 nature reserves at that time. Helen soon became a very popular colleague with staff, volunteers and working partners, thanks to her infectious enthusiasm and hard work. Over the following decade Helen transformed the scope and level of work on the Trust's reserves, growing the team to 4 staff, delivering a five-year programme of major works and overseeing a massive increase in practical volunteering. Helen was promoted to the role of Reserves Manager, and continued to develop the reserves programme, notably through a series of major land acquisitions and innovative habitat creation and restoration projects. In 2017, Helen was appointed as Head of Conservation, taking overall responsibility for the Trust's work with farmers and landowners, authorities, agencies, and partner as well as the reserves. In her first four years as Head of Conservation, Helen has overseen another period of growth in the level of conservation delivery, made possible by a series of new and exciting projects to augment and complement existing conservation programmes. As we look forward to the Trust's next 10-year Conservation Strategy our Conservation Team has never been stronger or more effective, a situation of which Helen can be justifiably proud.

Wild Service Awards 2021 as recognition of outstanding voluntary service to the Trust.

Matthew Bridger (Trench Wood warden and long term Monkwood volunteer), **Andrew Cartlidge** (Lower Smite Farm garden volunteer leader and volunteer with WBRC and Plant Identification Group), **Sue Chandler** (long term member of SE Worcestershire local group and wide ranging volunteer at Tiddesley Wood), **John Coombes** (Upton Warren volunteer and avocet guardian), **Bill Drew** (wide ranging Tiddesley Wood volunteer), **David Finlow** (long term Chaddesley Wood volunteer), **Rosemary Hatton** (committed member of Wyre Forest local group and walk leader), **Harriet Howell** (long term Monkwood leader), **Rodney May** (wide ranging Tiddesley Wood volunteer and video documentary producer), **Dave Merriman** (wide ranging Tiddesley Wood and roving volunteer), **Christine Mitchell** (long term Ipsley Alders Marsh volunteer), **Richard Nash** (long term The Knapp and Papermill volunteer), **Bob Potter** (wide ranging Upton Warren volunteer and feeding station co-ordinator), **Carol Thompson** (regular roving work party volunteer), **Alison Uren** (active Malvern local group member and chair for last five years), **Linda Walters** (committed educational activities volunteer), **Terry Wells** (Upton Warren volunteer and avocet guardian).

Richard Cory October 2021