

AGM 2023

Thursday 16 November



RE AGENDA ITEM 2 – MINUTES OF THE AGM 2022

Minutes of the 60th Annual General Meeting of the Devon Wildlife Trust, held via video conference on Thursday 3 November 2022 at 18.00

199 members were present.

The meeting had been scheduled to start at 18.00 but due to a national Zoom outage, the business actually commenced at 18.30.

The President, Prof Iain Stewart MBE, chaired the meeting. Also present on screen were the Chair of the Board of Trustees, Suzanne Goodfellow, the Honorary Treasurer, Rebecca Bower and the Chief Executive, Harry Barton.

The President welcomed everyone and declared the meeting open. He explained that, as a result of the positive feedback received regarding DWT's online events and as it was easier for members to attend online instead of travelling across Devon, the Trustees had taken the decision to hold this year's AGM as a virtual only meeting. Holding a virtual AGM was permitted by DWT's Articles of Association. Details of how to vote and how to ask questions during the meeting had been provided in advance of this meeting and the President re-iterated them. Questions were taken during the meeting and in the Open Forum that immediately followed it.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from: Dawn Battle, Kay Callis, Anthea Chapman, Vernon Clarke, Barbara Dearden-Potter, E Dunn, Laurence Eastwell, Diana Goodacre, Henry Jaggars, M Kingdom, Diana Letcher, Mary Mayfield, Judith Noble, John Rendle, Nigel Rendle, J Seager, Ellen Thomas and James Wilson.

2. Minutes of the 2021 AGM held on 20 November

The Chair called for a vote as to whether the Minutes of the 2021 AGM were a true record. The majority being in favour, the Minutes were duly approved.

3. Trustees' Annual Report

The Chair reminded members that the Trustees' Annual Report, which was a legal requirement, was contained within the full accounts, on pages 1-21. The Chair of the Board presented an overview of the range of Devon Wildlife Trust's activities during 2021-22. The Chair of the Board concluded by thanking Iain Stewart, who was retiring as President after five years in the role.

The Chair of the Board proposed that the Trustees' Annual Report be adopted. The Chair called for a vote and the majority being in favour, the Report was duly adopted.

4. Audited Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022 and the Auditors' Report

The Hon Treasurer, Rebecca Bower, presented some key points.

The Group's income had totalled £5,773,185 and expenditure £5,156,394. The result at year end was a satisfactory surplus of £647,374. This was largely due to generous contributions from members and income received in advance. £350k would go to restricted funds to be used for specific activities and £297k would be put towards unrestricted funds. Unrestricted financial reserves remained at a healthy level – a key aim and at the heart of DWT's financial resilience. Funds could be drawn down for key projects and initiatives to support DWT's Strategic Plan.

The Hon Treasurer said that the Group had achieved a clean audit, had a good track record of high quality and compliant fundraising activity, charitable income and membership numbers continued to grow, financial reserves remained healthy and a robust financial Reserves Policy was in place. This all put DWT in a good position to tackle the challenges ahead.

COP26 had highlighted the enormous environmental problems the world faced and DWT would continue to play a big part in tackling those issues in Devon. The current government had taken a very hostile attitude towards wildlife, with key laws, policies and protections at severe risk. Along with many other employers (including other Wildlife Trusts), DWT was facing challenges with the recruitment and retention of staff. DWT was still hugely ambitious and had so much to do to bring wildlife back across Devon and this would need more funds and resources.

The Hon Treasurer proposed that the Audited Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022 be adopted. The Chair called for a vote and the majority being in favour, the Accounts were duly adopted.

5. Election of Board members

The Board nominated Vice Admiral AP Burns, Ms G McKenzie and Prof VD Pope for re-election to the Board of Trustees.

The Chair proposed that Vice Admiral AP Burns be re-elected and called for a vote. The majority being in favour, Vice Admiral AP Burns was re-elected. The Chair proposed that Ms G McKenzie be re-elected and called for a vote. The majority being in favour, Ms G McKenzie was re-elected. The Chair proposed that Prof VD Pope be re-elected and called for a vote. The majority being in favour, Prof VD Pope was re-elected.

It was noted that Miss S Goodfellow was retiring from the Board. The CEO thanked her for her valuable contribution as a Trustee and in particular, as Chair of the Board for the past four years.

6. Appointment of the Auditors

The Hon Treasurer reported that, as DWT had had the same auditors for several years, the Trustees had carried out a review and recommended a change.

The Hon Treasurer proposed that Bishop Fleming be appointed as the Trust's Auditors and that the members authorise the Board to fix their remuneration. The Chair called for a vote and the majority being in favour, the proposal was duly approved.

The Chair closed the formal meeting at 19.10.