
RE AGENDA ITEM 2 – MINUTES OF THE AGM 2020

Minutes of the 58th Annual General Meeting of the Devon Wildlife Trust, held via videoconference on Saturday 21 November 2020 at 11.00am

248 members were present (the highest attendance in DWT's history).

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 the Trustees had decided to hold a virtual only meeting for the safety of members and staff in the unprecedented times brought about by the Coronavirus pandemic. The Trustees had taken legal advice in coming to this decision. Holding a virtual AGM was permitted by DWT's Articles of Association and under temporary legislation put in place by the government during the pandemic. 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 Kay Callis, Diana Goodacre, Stephen Hatch, Alan Jones and Helen Nathanson.

2. Minutes of the 2019 AGM held on 16 November

The Chair called for a vote as to whether the Minutes of the 2019 AGM were a true record. The majority being in favour, the Minutes were duly approved.

3. Trustees' Annual Report

The Chair of the Board reminded members that the Trustees' Annual Report, which was a legal requirement, was contained within the full accounts, on pages 1-27 and she then presented an overview of the range of Devon Wildlife Trust's activities during 2019-20.

The Chair of the Board proposed that the Trustees' Annual Report be adopted. Anna Ingram seconded the proposal. 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 2020 and the Auditors' Report

The Hon Treasurer, Rebecca Bower, presented some key points. The Group's income had totalled £5,406,904 and expenditure £4,369,391. The result at year end was a significant surplus of £1,013,083. This was largely due to generous contributions from members and income received in advance. £300k would be put towards unrestricted funds, while the remaining £700k would go to restricted funds. These would be drawn down in future years for specific activities. 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. DWT's central team had been particularly stretched this year and investment would be made in 'core' functions in the year ahead to ensure delivery to a high standard could be continued.

Regarding DWT's trading subsidiaries, Devon Wildlife Enterprises had made a surplus. Devon Wildlife Services had improved considerably but was not yet profitable (full details were included in the Trustees Annual Report).

The Hon Treasurer said that the Group had achieved a clean audit, had a good track record of high quality, 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. Covid-19 and Brexit still presented huge challenges and uncertainty. Ash dieback, sea level rise and other environmental pressures could lead to unplanned costs. 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 2020 be adopted and David Robertson seconded the proposal. The Chair called for a vote and the majority being in favour, the Accounts were duly adopted. The Report of the Auditors to the Members was printed on pages 28-30 of the Accounts and they confirmed that the Accounts gave a true and fair view of the state of the Group's and Charity's affairs.

5. Election of Board members

The Board nominated Dr M E Moser for re-election to the Board of Trustees. Martin Batt proposed that Dr M E Moser be re-elected, seconded by Simon Bates. The Chair called for a vote and the majority being in favour, Dr M E Moser was re-elected.

It was noted that Mr A C J Cooper, Mr G W Hearnden, Mr N W Rendle and Mr J Whetman were retiring from the Board. All had given many years of service to the Trust and the Chair of the Board thanked them for their valuable contributions as trustees.

6. Appointment of the Auditors

The Hon Treasurer proposed the re-appointment of Francis Clark and that the Board be authorised to decide their remuneration. Peter Bowers seconded the proposal. The Chair called for a vote and the majority being in favour, the proposal was duly approved.

The Chair closed the formal meeting at 11.40am.