

North Wales Wildlife Trust

Minutes of the 56th Annual General Meeting held on Saturday, 2nd November 2019 at Plas Pentwyn, Coedpoeth, Wrexham.

The President, Robin Grove-White, welcomed the large audience. He described the Trust as a model of democratic governance and a source of enormous expertise, contributing to a healthy civic society at a time when this was more important than ever. As the recent State of Nature report confirmed, the continuing diminution of wild nature meant that Trusts like ours were vital.

1. Apologies for absence.

Gillian Coates, Rosemary Eagle, Tim & Mary Iliffe, Morag McGrath, Gwyneth & Tony Peters, Ivor & Jane Rees, Malcolm Watling, Lyndell Williams, Ian & Margaret Wright, Carl Payne.

2. Minutes of the 55th Annual General Meeting held on 3rd November 2018

These were agreed as a correct record (Proposer: Kate Gibbs; Seconder: Miriam Shepherd). There were no matters arising.

3. Chairman's Report.

The Chairman, Roger Thomas, noted that during a year dominated by Brexit, staff and volunteers had worked tirelessly to make places better for wildlife and connect people and wildlife – the Trust's two strategic aims. This included work on the Anglesey Fens, Alun & Chwiler and Wrexham Industrial Estate projects, the Living Seas programme, and reserves including the newly opened Minera Quarry. Species work included Swift conservation and the reintroduction of the Beaver, while habitat work included promoting the proper management of meadows and road verges.

The Trust had given advice to 130 landowners, and worked with more than 26,000 people through 500 events on Trust sites and a further 200 events elsewhere, connecting with 100 primary schools, 130 secondary schools, almost 90 youth groups and 150 other bodies. Living Seas Wales had run 80 events involving almost 2,000 people, and volunteer effort had been equivalent to 13 full-time staff. As well as community engagement work funded by NRW, the Trust continued to work with communities and schools through its Wildlife Gardening, Living Churchyards and Orchard Recovery projects. We work closely with our national advocacy wing, WTW. The Chairman paid a special tribute to the Treasurer, Ian Dunsire and all those who work with him on our finances. Special thanks and gratitude are also due to Les Starling, who is standing down after 23 years, including spells as Chair and Vice-chair, an exceptional record of service to the Trust; and to John Good, who is standing down after a shorter time during which we have enjoyed his wealth of knowledge and wise advice. Howard Davies has also stepped down because of his work commitments, but hopes to return when he has more time. The Chairman ended with a reminder about this year's Lacey Lecture and a note about the importance of the forthcoming General Election for our environment's future.

4. Adoption of the Reports and Accounts, together with the Treasurer's and Auditor's Report for the year ended 31st March 2019.

The President commended the Chairman's impressive account of the year's achievements. The Report was formally adopted. (Proposer: Jenny Briggs; Seconder: Penny Radford.)

The Treasurer noted that in the five previous financial years for which he had reported, after budgeted losses, miracles had happened and we had ended up in profit. This year was

different. Although income rose significantly, a great achievement, expenditure rose by more. This in itself was a success – we had not sat on cash but spent it on our charitable aims - £883K on conservation and £582K on education. General support costs had risen, staff numbers have grown from 30 to 35 and we had a full year renting our new Head Office – Llys Garth. Spare space there is being sublet to help cover costs. Aberduna office improvement costs have helped to provide a stable base in the East. Two examples of investing past surpluses to generate unrestricted income are restoring and improving Pen y Llyn cottage, which is now let out on a long-term rental, and investing in a full-time membership manager to boost recruitment and retention. As a result we now have the highest cumulative growth in membership of all the Wildlife Trusts; an excellent result from Mark Roberts and team. Our subsidiaries had a good year, Enfys Ecology contributing £86K and Trading contributing £20K. Local Branches have also made a very welcome contribution of £6K to our funds.

The fall in cash reserves at the end of the year has meant we have needed to manage cash flow very carefully, especially core costs, in the current financial year. The outlook is much improved on the budgeted loss thanks to a windfall from a windfarm. In return for allowing a temporary access over our adjacent reserve the windfarm have agreed to pay us £357K. The Treasurer concluded with the hope that he would bring his usual profit message when he reports to the AGM next year. The Accounts were formally adopted. (Proposer: Simon Mills; Secunder: Les Starling.)

5. Election of Council Members and Honorary Officers.

The President noted the retirement of Less Starling and John Good with gratitude. He invited the two new Council members to tell the meeting about themselves.

Sarah Bird, well known to many members of the Trust, has been biodiversity officer at Chester Zoo for the past 20 years and has worked with the Trust all that time. She hopes to bring this knowledge and expertise to the Trust.

David Davies described his career and his experience of community engagement. Among many appointments after retirement his explained why he was keen to join the Trust and support its excellent record in working with the community.

Both new members were elected. (Proposer: Joanna Robertson. Secunder: Sue Starling.)

Roger Thomas was reappointed as Chair and Ian Dunsire as Treasurer. (Proposer: Kate Gibbs; Secunder: Simon Mills).

Council were urgently seeking an Honorary Secretary.

6. To re-appoint Bennett Brooks of Llandudno as auditors to the Trust and to authorise Council to fix their remuneration.

This was agreed (Proposer: Ian Dunsire; Secunder: Geoff Gibbs.)

This concluded the formal part of the meeting. On behalf of the Trust, Robin Grove-White awarded a Gold Badge to Ian Roberts of Dolgellau: a mainstay for about 40 years, Ian had been a lynchpin of the Meirionnydd Branch and a true all-rounder. He also awarded Gold Badges to Mark Sheridan and Jill Tattershall for their outstanding work for the Conwy Branch and the Trust.

Trustees and Honorary Officers

President: Professor Robin Grove-White
Vice Presidents: Goronwy Wynne, Peter Hope Jones, Howard Davies,
Pippa Bonner

Council of the Trust since AGM 2019 and until AGM 2021

Sarah Bird	Simon Mills
Gillian Coates	Steve Palin
David Davies	James Robertson
Emily Davies *	Roger Thomas
Ian Dunsire	Lyndell Williams
Frankie Hobro	

* Member co-opted by Council since AGM 2019

Officers

Chairman	Roger Thomas
Treasurer	Ian Dunsire
Company Secretary	Ian Dunsire
Honorary Secretary	James Robertson

Committee Chairs or their representatives

Finance Committee	Simon Mills
Conservation Committee (West)	James Robertson
Conservation Committee (East)	Bethan Beech
Marine Advisory Group	Gina Mills