

## **Minutes of the 61st Annual General Meeting of North Wales Wildlife Trust**

Saturday 9 November 2024

James Robertson, former trustee welcomed everyone to the Trust's 61<sup>st</sup> AGM, and chaired the meeting.

### **1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Roger Thomas, Ian Dunsire, and Jane and Ivor Rees.

### **2. Minutes of the 60<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting held 11 November 2023**

The minutes of the above meeting were agreed to be a true and accurate record of events.

Proposer: Gillian Coates

Seconder: Ian Wright

### **3. Report of Council for the year ended 31 March 2024**

Howard Davies, trustee and chair of the NWWT presented a report on the work of the Trust for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. His presentation reflected the full scope of the Trust's work in delivering on our collective goals, from the management of nature reserves and the opportunities we provide for people to connect with nature on land and in the sea, through to the aspirational work we are doing around collaboration and farmer engagement. He touched on the cultural and economic value of nature, the work we are doing to protect threatened species, and the importance of seeing the bigger picture and the need for systemic change.

He ended highlighting three actions members could take to help wildlife – think locally (manage your garden for wildlife), think landscape (recognise that nature recovery requires systemic change and this has a social and cultural component), and spend wisely (recognising that we all have the power to support change by choosing from whom we buy products, specifically how we might help enlightened farmers and growers who farm with the natural environment in mind).

### **4. Adoption of the Report and Accounts, together with the Treasurer's and Auditor's Report for the year ended 31 March 2024**

Treasurer Alex Lord reported that North Wales Wildlife Trust had another successful financial year, whilst expanding our operations to meet new demand for our services. Despite the cost-of-living crisis, our membership has continued to grow to 9,977 at year-end: a net increase of over 600 during the year which maintains our position as one of the best performing Wildlife Trusts. The income and support received provide a considerable contribution towards our success, and we continue to be grateful to our members for their generosity.

Turnover for the year reached £4.5 million if the subsidiaries Enfys Ecology and NWWT Trading are included. NWWT on a standalone basis generated turnover of £4.0 million: although this was down £1.5 million compared with prior year: last year's turnover included a significant donation from Aviva to go towards the purchase and renewal of the Bryn Ifan site, which was completed shortly after the end of last year. The Balance Sheet at the end of the financial year included £1.5 million in respect of the Bryn Ifan site within Fixed Assets, which was not included in the prior year due to the timing of the purchase. Despite current economic pressure, turnover grew by £800,000 compared with two years' ago.

Enfys Ecology had a more challenging year, generating turnover of £490,000 and a small loss for the year, compared with a £45,000 profit prior year. A turnaround plan has been put in place and the Trustees remain committed to regularly reviewing performance and future forecast trading against the plan. NWWT Trading benefited from a longer opening season for its shops and turned last year's small loss into a £15,000 profit this year.

Overall, a busy year - for which the staff, volunteers and all North Wales Wildlife Trust supporters deserve congratulations and thanks for all that has been achieved!

As at the 31 March 2024, unrestricted funds have decreased by £395,168 to £1,937,561 and restricted funds have

increased by £522,271 to £2,830,693. Included in restricted funds is £192,933 relating to the Cors Goch nature reserve and £1,536,229 relating to Bryn Ifan nature reserve, which can only be realised by disposing of these tangible fixed assets.

The above-mentioned Reports and Accounts, together with the Trustees' and Auditor's Report, were adopted *nem con*.

Proposer: Simon Mills  
Secunder: Kate Gibbs

## **5. Election of Council Members and Honorary Officers**

Howard Davies thanked Gillian Coates and Frankie Hobro for their services as Trustees, who were both standing down at the end of their terms.

Dr Catherine Duigan had been co-opted as a trustee during the past twelve months, was standing for election, and introduced herself to the meeting.

Proposer: Joanna Robertson  
Secunder: Ffion Mitchell-Langford  
She was duly elected *nem con*

The following current trustees had previously agreed to continue in their roles: Daniel Bos, Chris Brown, David Davies, Howard Davies, Ian Dunsire, Alasdair Forman, Alex Lord, Gina Mills, Bridget Osborne

## **6. To re-appoint Williams Denton of Bangor as auditors to the Trust and to authorise Council to fix their remuneration**

Williams Denton of Bangor were re-appointed as auditors to the Trust, and the Board of Trustees were authorised to fix their remuneration; both *nem con*.

Proposer: Julie Rose  
Secunder: Ian Wright

## **7. Volunteer Awards**

The following awards were presented:

- Young Volunteer of the Year 2023-24: Anna Williams
- Volunteer of the Year 2023-24: David Pritchard
- Volunteer of the Year 2023-24: Kevin Peers (not present to receive his award)
- Volunteer Group of the Year 2023-24: Shop volunteers at Breakwater & the Great Orme

## **8. Questions for CEO and Trustees**

Several Questions were put to the CEO and Trustees, who gave the summarised responses as follows:

### *Question 1*

Julia Rose asked whether we might be burning too much timber cut on nature reserves on site, as part of conservation management works?

Answer: Frances Cattnach noted that we must, and do keep under review how we deal with material cut as a result of management works, particularly in relation to Carbon emissions, potential deadwood habitat and safeguarding valuable habitat on site.

### *Question 2*

David Stephenson asked whether we have considered engaging the support of volunteers in the provision of advice to landowners.

Answer: Frances Cattnach said we are currently finalising how our land advisory service might work, but that considering how volunteers could continue to be part of this is a valuable part of its development.

### *Question 3*

We were asked what our view was on re-wilding and whether the work at Knepp, in Sussex was something the Trust might emulate.

Answer: Frances Cattnach recognised the value of letting nature and ecological processes take their course, but noted that leaving nature to its own devices may not always be the best for wildlife, where influences of invasives such as *Rhododendron* can have unintended consequences. Also, that with the pressures facing nature, which are largely due to human influence, we feel people must be part of the solution to create a sustainable future for wildlife.

Howard Davies: reminded us that the term 're-wilding' now means many things to many people. For some it is simply the support of natural processes, such as 're-wiggling' a watercourse, for others it might involve complete land abandonment akin to the highland clearances; something we clearly wouldn't support. The history of land management in the UK is such that people have influenced it significantly, meaning many of our species are only viable because of the way management holds back natural succession. With this in mind it isn't really possible to give a simple response to the question.

### *Question 4*

Simon Mills asked whether the Board of Trustees would re-consider our policy on dogs on nature reserves, by considering whether they should be banned.

Answer: Howard Davies said the trustees would review this.