

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF OPEN SPACES SOCIETY
(limited company number 7846516, charity number 1144840)**

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at
Friends House, Euston Road, London
on Thursday 5 July 2018**

PRESENT

Mr Paul Clayden	(vice-president)
Mr Graham Bathe	(chairman)
Dr Phil Wadey	(vice-chairman)
Mr Steve Warr	(treasurer)

and 34 other members of the society, six members of staff and 2 guests. .

APOLOGIES were received from 110 members.

WELCOME BY THE AGM CHAIRMAN

- 18/1 The AGM chairman, Paul Clayden, welcomed members to the meeting. He said that not only was today the 70th anniversary of the National Health Service, but we had two days ago celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Countryside Act 1968. This empowered local authorities to create country parks so that people could enjoy informal recreation close to home. Now, in these times of austerity, our parks were under unprecedented threat of sale, neglect and commercial abuse. The act also improved the law on rights of way, but this was still not being fully upheld. The society would continue the campaign to ensure that all the aims of the 1968 Act were achieved.

APPROVAL TO LIMIT SPEECHES

- 18/2 It was agreed that speeches on resolutions (other than the adoption of the annual report and accounts) would be limited as follows: proposers of motions maximum five minutes, others maximum three minutes.

APPOINTMENT OF TELLERS AND SCRUTINEERS

- 18/3 It was agreed to appoint Ellen Froggatt and Christine Hunter as tellers and scrutineers.

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON 6 JULY 2017

- 18/4 It was agreed that the minutes be approved and signed.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- 18/5 **Minute 16/6 Finsbury Park:** John Lavery (trustee) gave an update on the Finsbury Park court case. The Friends of Finsbury Park, supported by the society, had lost the case in the Court of Appeal on 2 November and had sought leave to appeal to the Supreme Court. This had been refused and we were waiting to hear the reasons.
- 18/6 **Minute 17/26 independent examiners:** Steve Warr (treasurer) said that following the request at last year's AGM to review the choice of independent examiner during 2018, the finance committee had reviewed the performance of the existing independent examiner, Villars Hayward. It had done this against criteria suggested by the Honorary Treasurers' Forum for selecting auditors, in its publication *The Honorary Treasurers' Handbook*. He and the committee had concluded that we were content with Villars Hayward. In addition, in the last four years we had had three different financial assistants on the staff and Villars Hayward provided continuity.

ADOPTION OF TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR 2017

- 18/7 Graham Bathe (chairman) proposed the adoption of the trustees' report for 2017. He had been looking back as well as forwards in drawing up our next five-year strategic plan. The society has remained true to the vision of its founders and forebears. What is different this year is how financially secure we are, and the reason why we are in such a privileged position is due to our members who have been so generous with their legacies and responses to our appeals. This will enable us to take on further projects. As outgoing chairman, he said that it was not the job of the trustees to run the society but to ensure the society is properly run, and they should not get involved in fine detail unless invited to do so.
- 18/8 The trustees' report was seconded by Chris Beney.



- 18/9 The general secretary, Kate Ashbrook, spoke to the trustees' report. She introduced the staff team and said that the work of the office was collaborative. In this competitive and fast-changing world we had the advantage of being small and agile, able to move fast, with campaigning at our core. During the Brexit turmoil we, with others, were arguing that post-Brexit money should go into new and better access.
- 18/10 She spoke of our work on commons, greens, open spaces and public paths. We had introduced our casework prioritisation scheme to focus our casework so that it meets our charitable aims. Policy and legislation in England and Wales were diverging; the Welsh Government had recently announced that it was not going to take forward long-awaited comprehensive new proposals on public access. With other organisations, we had managed to help prevent some worrying changes to designated landscapes in Wales. The recent legacies gave us great opportunities and staff and trustees would consider carefully where we should invest the money to increase our capacity and clout.
- 18/11 The general secretary ended by thanking the trustees, local correspondents, other volunteers, staff and members.
- 18/12 The adoption of the annual report was carried with one abstention.

ADOPTION OF ACCOUNTS FOR 2017

- 18/13 The adoption of the annual accounts was proposed on behalf of the board of trustees by Steve Warr (treasurer). Steve said that 2017 was a successful year for recruitment and retention of members, with year-end numbers up for the second year in a row, after several years of decline. Our appeals were also up, so our members are financially supporting the work that we do. The financial position for 2017 was dominated by over £540,000 of legacies. In addition to this, we have also received over £520,000 of legacies so far in 2018. This puts the society in a very strong financial position, and it provides a strong foundation for the next five-year strategic plan.
- 18/14 Hilary Hunt seconded the adoption of the accounts.
- 18/15 Simon Pearson (Llandrindod Wells) asked if we were trying to find new members and Steve Warr assured him that we are.
- 18/16 Vic Parks (Surrey) asked if we held events for members. The general secretary replied that we had done so in the past but they had not always been well supported and we did not have the staff capacity. If members would like to offer events for other members this would be welcome.



18/17 Jeremy Clyne (London) was concerned that other organisations were encroaching on our territory, for instance we had not been invited to sponsor the Charter for Parks, although we were supporting it. The general secretary said that it was disappointing when this happened.

18/18 The adoption of the annual accounts was carried unanimously.

ELECTION OF VICE-PRESIDENTS AND MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Vice Presidents

18/19 John Lavery proposed and Phil Wadey seconded the election of the following vice-presidents: David (Lord) Clark of Windermere, Len Clark, Mike Clarke, Paul Clayden, Roger de Freitas, Tony (Lord) Greaves, Richard Mabey, Edgar Powell and Ronald Smith. This was carried with six abstentions.

18/20 There was a request for more information about the vice-presidents and the general secretary offered to provide this with the meeting papers next year.

Trustees

18/21 Six members had called for a ballot and so the election of the trustees was undertaken by a paper vote and the proxy votes were included. There were four vacancies and three people were standing for election: Chris Beney, John Hall and Chris Meewezen. All three were elected as trustees with votes as follows.

Name	Votes for	Votes against	Abstentions
Chris Beney	119	1	4
John Hall	113	0	9
Chris Meewezen	110	0	7

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS FOR 2018

18/22 It was proposed by Brian Reader, seconded by Diane Andrewes and agreed unanimously that Villars Hayward, chartered accountants and registered auditors of Henley-on-Thames, be appointed independent examiners for 2018.

MOTIONS

18/23 The following special resolution was proposed on behalf of the board of trustees by Phil Wadey and seconded by Jean Macdonald.



To replace article 9.7 in the articles of association with the following words:

- a. *For the election of Trustees, voting shall be by ballot.*
- b. *For all other matters, voting at a general meeting shall be by show of hands unless a ballot of those present is demanded by either the person presiding at the meeting or by any six Members who are present. In the case of equality of votes the person presiding shall have a second or casting vote.*

Taking account of the postal and proxy votes the motion was carried by 123 votes for, two against and one abstention.

PRESENTATION TO RETIRING TRUSTEES

18/24 The general secretary said that four of our trustees were standing down: Graham Bathe, Phil Wadey and Diane Andrewes because they had completed two terms of three years, and Mary Traynor after one year due to personal circumstances.

18/25 Graham, Phil and Diane were present at the meeting. On behalf of the society the general secretary thanked them for their significant contributions, wise advice and dedication to the cause. She presented them each with a hand-made wooden paperweight as a small token of our appreciation.

18/26 The meeting ended at 12.00.

~~~~~

The following took place outside the AGM:

- Strategic plan 2019-2024: discussion led by Hilary Hunt
- Commercial use of parks: Simon Hunt, chair of the Friends of Finsbury Park
- Commons re-registration project: Hugh Craddock
- Emerging soundscape campaign: Roger Kirkham
- Ongoing campaign to register Meadow Triangle, Cambridge as a village green: Dai Davies



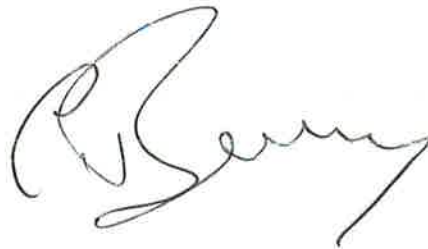
**The Open Spaces Society 25a Bell Street Henley-on-Thames RG9 2BA**

Charity no 1144840 Registered in England and Wales, limited company no 7846516



- That OSS should research and publish a document to evaluate claims that only 8% of Britain is built on and that OSS should campaign for a truly universal right to roam similar to the 2003 Scottish legislation: Vic Parks
- Successful campaign to register Goudhurst village green in Kent: David Boniface
- Oxford-Cambridge expressway: Terry Pollard
- Aston Rowant National Land Access Centre and the new British Standard for structures: Chris Beney

The afternoon session closed at 3.00 pm.



**The Open Spaces Society 25a Bell Street Henley-on-Thames RG9 2BA**

Charity no 1144840 Registered in England and Wales. limited company no 7846516

