
RE AGENDA ITEM 2 – MINUTES OF THE AGM 2023

Minutes of the 61st Annual General Meeting of the Devon Wildlife Trust, held via video conference on Thursday 16 November 2023 at 18.00

165 members were present.

The Chair of the Board of Trustees, Vicky Pope, chaired the meeting. Also present on screen were the Honorary Treasurer, Rebecca Bower and the Chief Executive, Nick Bruce-White.

The Chair of the Board welcomed everyone and declared the meeting open. The Chair explained that, as a result of the positive feedback received from 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 Chair 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: Rebecca Broad, Kay Callis, Diana Goodacre, Rosemary Hanvey, Douglas Herdson, Sara Papworth and Graham Ward.

2. Minutes of the 2022 AGM held on 3 November

The Chair called for a vote as to whether the Minutes of the 2022 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 3-19. The Chair presented an overview of the range of Devon Wildlife Trust's activities during 2022-23.

The Chair 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 2023 and the Auditors' Report

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

The Group's income had totalled £5,751,985 and expenditure £5,462,899. The result at year end was a satisfactory surplus of £182,526. This was largely due to generous contributions from members and income received in advance. £376k would go to restricted funds to be used for specific activities and £194k 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 government was not effectively responding to the immediate and severe threats our natural environment faced – key laws, policies, and protections which nature recovery relied on were at risk of delay or abandonment. 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 2023 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 Rebecca Bower, Dr Michael Moser and Ama Williams for re-election to the Board of Trustees.

The Chair proposed that Rebecca Bower be re-elected and called for a vote. The majority being in favour, Rebecca Bower was re-elected. The Chair proposed that Dr Michael Moser be re-elected and called for a vote. The majority being in favour, Dr Michael Moser was re-elected. The Chair proposed that Ama Williams be re-elected and called for a vote. The majority being in favour, Ama Williams was re-elected.

The Board nominated Catherine Fileman-Wright and Dr Charlotte Grezo for election to the Board of Trustees.

The Chair proposed that Catherine Fileman-Wright be elected and called for a vote. The majority being in favour, Catherine Fileman-Wright was elected. The Chair proposed that Dr Charlotte Grezo be elected and called for a vote. The majority being in favour, Dr Charlotte Grezo was elected.

The Chair said that, despite appointing two new Trustees this year, the Board was mindful of succession planning and a round of Trustee Recruitment would start soon. The opportunities would be widely advertised and members were encouraged to look out for further information if they or anyone they knew might be interested in applying.

6. Appointment of the Auditors

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 18.35.
