

LINCOLNSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST

Minutes of the 69th Annual General Meeting of the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust held at the Education Centre, Whisby Nature Park on Saturday 20 October 2018 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT: David Cohen (Chairman), Peter Stapleton (Honorary Treasurer) and 72 other members of the Trust together with 7 members of staff

1. Minutes of the 68th Annual General Meeting held on 21 October 2017 were approved.
2. The Annual Review for the year ended 31 March 2018, including the Trustees' Report, had been circulated to members, and the full Annual Report and Financial Statements had been available on request, were on the Trust's website and copies were available at the AGM. With the aid of Powerpoint illustrations the Trust's Chair gave a review of achievements during the year.

The Trust has continued to work in conjunction with the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts through The Greener UK coalition (an umbrella body comprising of 13 major environmental organisations including RSPB, National Trust, Friends of the Earth) focussing on the need to establish an Environment Act to ensure the UK's wildlife is properly protected as the country leaves the EU. The Chair gave details from the RSPB's "*Birds of Conservation Concern*" report, which has 67 bird species on its Red List and demonstrated the reduction in numbers of birds from all forms of habitats across the UK. He highlighted declines have been evident at some of the Trust's nature reserves: numbers of nightingales at Whisby Nature Park for example have gone down from 10 singing birds in 2017 to 3 this year.

The Chair went on to outline the opportunity Brexit brings to the UK to try to reverse the decline in biodiversity by ensuring regulations and practices that are currently enforced across the EU are brought into UK law as Britain leaves the union. He stressed the importance of there being a strong body capable of holding government and other authorities to account if they fail to fulfil their responsibilities to the environment, and the need to also establish an Agriculture Bill replacing the Common Agriculture Policy, aimed directly at land managers who are prepared to take action to improve farming activity.

Members were told of continuing work through the year to transform the old Woodhall Spa Airfield into a nature reserve, and habitat work at Moor Farm nature reserve creating greater wet heath which has resulted in the spread of lousewort and the expansion of cotton grass. Also within the Kirkby Living Landscape area, the impact of the discovery of mustard gas at Roughton Moor Wood nature reserve was reported on.

It was noted that the three year Heritage Lottery Fund project, Love Lincs Plants, is underway in partnership with Lincolnshire Naturalists' Union, Sir Joseph Banks Society, Natural History Museum and the University of Lincoln.

Membership continues to increase but has plateaued lately: it currently stands at 28,457.

The Chair thanked Trust staff for all their hard work during the year, and also thanked Trust volunteers who assist in all areas of the Trust's work, noting in particular the 480 individuals who hand-deliver the *Lapwings* magazine which saves £50,000 a year in postage. Cheryl Aggett, PA to Chief Executive, was thanked for organising the AGM and the Area Groups Forum held during the morning, and Adrian Royston, Senior Education & Community Officer at Whisby, for his hospitality at the Education Centre.

As a final note, the Chair advised that 2018 sees the Trust's 70th anniversary and establishment of the charity's first nature reserve, Gibraltar Point. As a fitting tribute a new 30 year lease with Lincolnshire County Council for Gibraltar Point was signed on 31 March 2017, securing the site's future and extending the partnership through to an impressive 100 years. He said the late Ted Smith, the Trust's founder, would have been delighted to know that his beloved Gibraltar Point will continue to be protected.

There were no questions from members. The Chairman's report was accepted.

3. Copies of the audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2018 were available at the meeting and an overview of the detail had been circulated to members in the Annual Review.

The Honorary Treasurer stated the accounts show that 2017-18 had been a successful year with income at £4m and expenditure at £3m. He went on to explain that the underlying picture is quite different: that without exceptional items there would have been a deficit of £239k (compared with £206k the previous year); the Trust is grateful for the receipt of a generous legacy of £750k but it is restricted and has to be used for the purposes stipulated and is not available for general work; although the Trust receives income on the Heritage Lottery Fund Catalyst Fund money, the £100k cannot be spent; and the total amount of HLF funding for the three year Lincolnshire Plants Past and Future project (£498k) has had to be brought into this year's accounts. He said all of this, together with uncertainties surrounding the future political and economic situation causes concern when looking at the Trust's budgets going forward. The delay in receiving HLS agri-environment payments is also a concern. As at 31 March 2018 £391k was outstanding, some of which relates to claims from 2016. At the time of the AGM, half this amount had been paid but the remaining outstanding income puts pressure on the Trust's cash position.

It was noted the Trust bought land during the year adjacent to Rush Furlong nature reserve at a cost of £103k. £80k of funding had been acquired to go towards the purchase price. It was also noted that the Trust's investments have performed quite well, with an increase of £48k in the year.

The Honorary Treasurer expressed his thanks to Sarah Jane Smith, Head of Finance, and her finance team for their support and hard work during the year.

There were no questions from members. The audited financial statements were accepted.

4. It was resolved that Wright Vigar Limited is re-appointed as Auditors for 2018-19.
5. Special resolution – proposed changes to Articles of Association

The Trust's Articles of Association were last revised in 2010. Copies of the draft Articles had been made available to members on the Trust's website and hard copies were available on request. The Chair outlined the proposed changes:

- Trustees are to be appointed by the eligible membership at a General Meeting, usually the AGM.
- Council will be disbanded. The functions of Council will pass to the membership for appointment of Trustees (as above) and to the Board of Trustees for the appointment of officers.
- The role of President no longer a constitutional role.
- Charities Act 2011 replaces 1993.
- Trustees are to make the rules of membership including fees, rights and privileges of such members.
- Change in language – modernised and gender neutral.

In response to questions from members, the Chair explained the process for appointing Honorary Officers, and why Council was being disbanded.

Members voted on the proposed changes. It was unanimously agreed the Articles of Association produced at the meeting and initialled by the Chair of the meeting for the purposes of identification, be adopted as the Articles of Association of the Trust in substitution for, and to the exclusion of, the existing Articles of Association of the Trust.

6. To elect Trustees

Five nominations had been recommended by the Board of Trustees:

- David Cohen, Clare Harrison, Tim Sands and David Sheppard who were due to retire and were seeking re-election.
- Mark Smith who was seeking election as a new Trustee.

Each nomination was approved.

The Chairman closed the meeting, thanking members for their support and attendance.

Subject to approval