

LINCOLNSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST

Minutes of the 70th Annual General Meeting of the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust held at the Education Centre, Whisby Nature Park on Saturday 19 October 2019 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT: David Cohen (Chair), Julian Purvis (Honorary Treasurer) and 67 other members of the Trust together with 7 members of staff

Apologies: Diana Mansell, John & Georgie Richardson, Clare Harrison

1. Minutes of the 69th Annual General Meeting held on 20 October 2018 were approved.
2. The Annual Review for the year ended 31 March 2019, including the Trustees' Report, had been circulated to members. The Trust's Chair advised the meeting that the wrapper used for the mailing had been made out of potato starch and was compostable, although this had not been identified on the wrapper. The full Annual Report and Financial Statements had been available to members on request, were on the Trust's website and hard copies were available at the AGM. With the aid of Powerpoint illustrations the Chair gave a review of achievements during the year.

Under the heading "Caring for Special Places" it was reported 3,852 hectares of Lincolnshire's finest countryside is being protected and managed as Trust nature reserves. This equates to only 0.5% of the county; the majority of the remaining land is likely to be in farming. During the year the Trust purchased 2.2 hectares of SSSI grazing land adjacent to Far Ings NNR and more recently completed on the purchase of land that joins up Upper Sow Dale and Lower Sow Dale nature reserves near Spilsby, and land adjoining Lawn Wood, Bottleneck & Jackson's Meadow nature reserves near Castle Bytham. These acquisitions fit with the Lawton principal of making Trust nature reserves bigger, better and more joined up.

It was also reported that over 8,000 planning applications had been reviewed during the year, with 398 reviewed in detail and 89 responded to. Six osprey nesting platforms had been put up on farmland in south Lincolnshire, a project undertaken by the Bourne Area Group in conjunction with local farmers. Over 2,000 grey seal pups had been born last year at Donna Nook NNR and Far Ings NNR had its second consecutive year of successful breeding bitterns.

Trust membership had dipped from a high point of 28,457 in 2018 to 27,611 this year. This was primarily down to a lack of recruiters on the ground but there is now a full complement of recruiters and membership levels are gradually improving; up to 28,060 at the time of the AGM.

Under the heading "Inspiring and Empowering", the Chair reported: 12 Wildlife Watch Groups were providing opportunities for children to take part in monthly wildlife adventures; nearly 900 people had attended drop-in events at Gibraltar Point; more than 7,200 children had visited Trust reserves on school visits; 340 people had participated in the Trust's beach clean events as part of the Great British Beach Clean weekend in September; and the LoveLincsPlants project had delivered assemblies in 32 schools to 4,831 children.

The Chair went on to talk about the State of Nature report, which was compiled by Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) in the environment sector, including The Wildlife Trusts, and published earlier in October. The report highlights that one in three UK species have declined over the past ten years and of 8,431 UK species assessed, one in seven are at risk of extinction. The Wildlife Trusts movement, including Lincolnshire WT, has been pressing for a Nature Recovery Network, so that wildlife can spread out from nature reserves into existing corridors and buffer zones across the country. Nature Recovery also forms part of the Environment Bill which is currently due its second reading in the House of Commons. A short film on the Nature Recovery Network campaign featuring Sir David Attenborough was showed to members.

Following the Chair's report, questions from members were answered in relation to the breeding success of the little tern colony at Gibraltar Point and the Trust's policy on responding to planning applications. The Chair's report was accepted.

3. Copies of the audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2019 were available at the meeting and an overview of the detail had been circulated to members in the Annual Review.

The Honorary Treasurer reported the headline figures from the accounts showed income for the year had been £2.94m and expenditure £2.93m, and unrestricted income had exceeded unrestricted expenditure by around £60,000. Sustained growth in unrestricted income is critical to the Trust's long-term financial health and at just over £2.2m it was the highest in the Trust's history. This was largely due to a very generous legacy of £360,000 which meant that last year almost two thirds of the Trust's unrestricted income came from membership and legacies.

It was reported that the Trust's investments had also made good progress during the year with around 8% of unrestricted income coming from investments, a return of nearly 4% on the capital value. In addition to the income, the capital value grew by 6% which helped unrestricted reserves to grow by over £200,000.

In summary the Honorary Treasurer said it had been a more than satisfactory year for the Trust from a financial perspective and had given the charity the confidence to commit to two significant land purchases at Sow Dale and Castle Bytham which the Chair had alluded to earlier in his report.

The Honorary Treasurer expressed his thanks to members for their help and support during the year in helping raise income for the Trust. He also thanked Sarah Jane Smith, Head of Finance, and her finance team for their support and hard work during the year and also the Chair, the Chief Executive and Cheryl Aggett for their invaluable contributions in writing and producing the Trust's Annual Report and Financial Statements.

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 2019-20.
5. To elect Trustees

Members had been advised in advance of the meeting that four nominations were being recommended by the Board of Trustees. The Chair informed the meeting that one of the candidates, Cliff Morrison, had recently stepped down from his Trustee role and was therefore no longer seeking re-election. The remaining three candidates due to retire from their Trustee role and seeking re-election were Janet Mellor, Julian Purvis and Anita Quigley. Each nomination was approved.

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