

LINCOLNSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST

Minutes of the 72nd Annual General Meeting of the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust held on Saturday 23 October 2021 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT: Geoff Trinder (President), David Cohen (Chair), Julian Purvis (Honorary Treasurer), 10 other members of the Trust, one member of staff and 182 members represented by proxy

In advance of the Annual General Meeting, members had received a copy of the AGM Notice, a Proxy Form and the Annual Review for the year ending 31 March 2021. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic and associated social distancing rules, attendance at this year's meeting had been restricted and members had been required to book their attendance in advance.

1. Minutes of the 71st Annual General Meeting held on 24 October 2020 were approved.
2. A summary of the Trustees' Report for the year ended 31 March 2021 was set out in the Annual Review. The full Annual Report and Financial Statements had been available to members on request and were on the Trust's website.

The Chair reported that 2020/21 had been dominated by three things: the continued Covid restrictions; working towards a revised Trust strategy; and the first successful breeding of common cranes in Lincoln in 400 years at Willow Tree Fen nature reserve. The Trust's head office was closed to visitors and the majority of staff have been working from home with some put on furlough. Face-to-face meetings did not take place and Trust events were cancelled, which included all Area Group activities. A small number of volunteering activities took place under tight restrictions including Crane Watch, where a team of volunteers undertook over 500 three-hour shifts over sixteen weeks to ensure there was no disturbance to the breeding cranes at Willow Tree Fen, which was closed to the public.

There has been a lot of focus during the year on developing the Trust's strategy for the next 10 years to address biodiversity loss and climate change. The new strategy is due to be finalised in 2022. The Trust is also involved in collective work with the other 45 Wildlife Trusts, through The Wildlife Trusts movement, to campaign for nature's recovery in terms of space and abundance on land and at sea. Other advocacy work with government has covered the Environment Act going through parliament, marine environment, planning reform, Nature Recovery Networks, Build Back Better campaign and ELMS (Environmental Land Management Schemes, the successor to the current agri-environment schemes).

Our work on nature reserves has continued despite lockdown. Highlights were noted as: habitat improvements at Far Ings to benefit bitterns, marsh harriers and bearded tits (funded by Biffa); installing a water control sluice at Anderby Creek to allow the site's water levels to be increased to encourage breeding and over wintering birds (funded by the Environment Agency); and working on a strategic partnership with Severn Trent to improve habitat on fifty-three hectares of land on seven nature reserves in the north-west of the county.

The Chair thanked all staff and volunteers who have helped the Trust to work through the difficulties faced during the twelve months covered by his report.

Following the Chair's report, questions from members were answered in relation to the River Ancholme and species protection. The Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2021 was accepted.

3. Copies of the audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021 had been available to members on request and were on the Trust's website. An overview of the detail was in the Annual Review.

The Honorary Treasurer reported that at the start of the period and going into the first Covid lockdown, the Trust had a lot of financial resilience due to reasonably strong financial reserves, diverse sources of income and some capacity to reduce expenditure. During the year, £100,000 had been received in Government funding and £200,000 of support was received through the Jobs Retention Scheme. The Trust's investments recovered their loss in value and went on to show a substantial gain by the year end. Headline figures in the Annual Review show an income of £2.8 and expenditure of £2.9m. In addition to this, investments increased in value by nearly £700k. Given all the operational and financial challenges faced throughout the year, this was a very good outcome and the Trust ended the year with stronger reserves than it had at the beginning.

The Honorary Treasurer thanked the Chair for his help and support during the eight years he has been in post. He said the Trust has stronger finances than ever before and there are good grounds to be optimistic about the future. He also thanked Sarah Jane Smith, Head of Finance, and her team for their support and hard work during the year, plus the Chair, Paul Learoyd (Chief Executive), Cheryl Aggett (PA to the CE) and his colleagues on the Finance Monitoring Group for their help during what was a challenging year.

Following the Honorary Treasurers report, questions from members were answered in relation to investment management and the early repayment of the CBILS loan. The audited Financial Statements were accepted.

4. It was resolved that Wright Vigar Limited be re-appointed as auditors for 2021/22. A tendering process is planned for 2022/23.
5. Special resolution

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust's Articles of Association were last revised in 2018. Members had been advised in advance of the meeting of a number of proposed changes to be made to the Articles to allow for virtual AGM meetings to be held if necessary (via Zoom or some other electronic platform as deemed appropriate at the time of the meeting). The following changes are the addition of new articles 25, 26 and 27 as follows:

- The directors may make whatever arrangements they consider appropriate to enable those attending a general meeting to exercise their rights to speak or vote at it.
- In determining attendance at a general meeting, it is immaterial whether any two or more members attending it are in the same place as each other.
- Two or more persons who are not in the same place as each other attend a general meeting if their circumstances are such that if they have (or were to have) rights to speak and vote at that meeting, they are (or would be) able to exercise them.

The draft Articles had been made available to members on the Trust's website and hard copies were supplied on request.

The proposed changes were accepted. The Chair initialled a set of the revised Articles of Association at the meeting for the purposes of identification for adoption 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

Members had been advised in advance of the meeting that two nominations were being recommended by the Board of Trustees: Tim Sands and Mark Smith. Both nominations were approved.

Following the formal business of the meeting, the Chair advised that after 12 years on the Board of Trustees he would be standing down as Chair and Trustee after this meeting. He gave a review of his time on the Board and the changes that he has seen within the Trust during that time. He also advised that two other Trustees, Janet Mellor and David Sheppard, were also standing down at this AGM, and paid tribute to their contributions over the last 11 and 28 years respectively. Anita Quigley, who will be taking over the role of Chair, was introduced to the meeting. The President added his thanks to David, Janet and David, for their service to the Trust and his congratulations to Anita.

The meeting was closed.