

# AGM & Members' Day 2023

## Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> November



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### Minutes of the 59<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting, held on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 11.00am

150 members attended the meeting in person with voting carried out in person through a show of hands. 11 members also attended via Zoom where online voting polls were conducted and are noted in respect of each resolution. And 151 proxy votes were recorded in advance of the meeting which are also noted.

#### 1. Welcome and formal apologies received

Graeme Mitchell, Chair of the Board of Trustees welcomed those present and noted that today would be about telling the journey the Trust has been on over the past year, whilst also conducting the formal business.

Formal apologies were received from Sarah Nason.

#### 2. Minutes of the last meeting held on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2022, to be approved

The minutes of the 58<sup>th</sup> AGM were accepted as a true and accurate record.

**Proposer:** Phil Holmes

Proxy votes received in advance:

Online votes:

**Seconded:** Matthew Bell

For: 141

Against: 0

Abstain: 10

For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

#### 3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

#### 4. Report from the Chair

Graeme Mitchell, Chair of SWT Council, began his report by explaining that our Wilder Somerset 2030 Strategy (which aims to have 30% of land and sea working for nature by 2030) continues to underpin all planning and decision making at Somerset Wildlife Trust. He went on to review some highlights of the year and how they contributed to each of the three main goals. He gave thanks to staff and volunteers who have contributed to this work.

He then spoke about how the Trust will continue to grow and develop using the 2030 Strategy as an ongoing blueprint for nature's recovery in Somerset. He noted that it had been another good year for us, however we must strive to continue to reach more people, so we can be a bigger movement for nature and to maintain and grow our income, particularly in these challenging times. Graeme also gave thanks to his fellow Trustees who he reminded, are also volunteers.

Graeme concluded his report by explaining that his 6 years as a Trustee (and 5 as Chair) had come to an end. In that time, much had happened and the members of staff had more than doubled. He thanked Georgia, noting that her vision and determination had contributed to the changes flourishing within the Trust. He enjoyed being part of The Wildlife Trusts movement and was proud

to be involved in the acquisition of Honeygar Farm. Graeme also thanked his past and present Trustees for their support.

## 5. Report from the Chief Executive

Georgia started her report by explaining that a three-year delivery plan had recently been signed off which would support the overall strategy and give a clear idea of targets. She then gave a review of actions we will be taking which contribute the three main goals of Wilder Somerset 2030.

She also talked about plans to develop the charity as an organisation and noted that we had almost reached twenty three thousand members. Georgia thanked members and said that, not only are donations important, but also that this amount of members gives us a strong voice to influence and talk to people in power.

She went on to announce that Somerset Wildlife Trust would be celebrating its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2024 and welcomed members and volunteers to share their memories and motivation for joining the Trust. These would be featured in some way as part of the celebrations.

Georgia concluded her report by talking about the Trust's commercial consultancy, First Ecology and how their work helps to deliver on the strategy by engaging with landowners and developers to achieve a higher outcome for nature. To align with the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, they will be rebranding next year will be renamed as Somerset Wildlife Trust Consultancy.

## 6. Presentation and adoption of the accounts

Steven Rogers, co-opted Treasurer began by thanking Richard Atkin, who had recently stepped down as Treasurer. He presented a summary of the 2022-23 with the main thing to note being that income exceeded expenditure, these means that we have been able to add almost £750k to our financial reserves.

Financial summary of the year:

	2022-23 £000s	2021-22 £000s
Income	5,436	6,071
Expenditure	(4,612)	(3,350)
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>2,721</b>
Net (loss)/gain on investments	(83)	34
<b>Net income</b>	<b>731</b>	<b>2,755</b>

Some other key points were:

- Income had reduced compared to 2021-22 however a £1.5m donation to buy Honeygar was received in 2021-22.
- Expenditure had increased by almost 40% which is positive and shows how much work has been done. The Trust undertook more projects last year than ever before.

- Membership income was £856,000 and whilst this is not the largest, it is the most important and Steve gave thanks to members. These funds come with no restrictions so can fund less exciting aspects of work including investing in staff.
- The Trust has net assets and financial reserves of just over £10.5 million making us a large and strong organisation.
- Investments have fallen slightly in value, regrettably in line with market trends

Steve closed his report by stating that the accounts had been independently audited by Albert Goodman who issued an unqualified report and also complimented the Finance Team. He reminded members that copies of the accounts were available to view on the day and also on the website.

The 2022-23 Annual report and accounts were adopted.

<b>Proposer:</b> Ed Green	<b>Seconders:</b> Tina Trickett		
Proxy votes received in advance:	For: 141	Against: 0	Abstain: 10
Online votes:	For: 4	Against: 0	Abstain: 0

## 7. Appointment of Auditors

Members approved the appointment of Albert Goodman as auditors.

<b>Proposer:</b> Richard Scarlett	<b>Seconders:</b> Dan Skinner		
Proxy votes received in advance:	For: 141	Against: 1	Abstain: 9
Online votes:	For: 4	Against: 0	Abstain: 0

## 8. Standing down of Graeme Mitchell (Chair of Trustees)

Stephen Moss, president of Somerset Wildlife Trust, spoke about Graeme's contribution to the board and thanked him for this.

## 9. Introduction and election of Council members

Matthew Bell, Vice-Chair, introduced the six Trustees who had been co-opted and were standing for election.

The following were elected via a show of hands for a three-year term of office:

<b>Amy Coulthard</b>	<b>Proposer</b> Dan Skinner	<b>Seconders</b> Tina Trickett	
Proxy votes received in advance:	For: 145	Against: 3	Abstain: 3
Online votes:	For: 4	Against: 0	Abstain: 0

<b>Steve Rogers</b>	<b>Proposer</b> Richard Scarlett	<b>Seconders</b> Ed Green	
Proxy votes received in advance:	For: 125	Against: 14	Abstain: 12
Online votes:	For: 4	Against: 0	Abstain: 0

<b>Richard Scarlett</b>	<b>Proposer</b> Phil Holms	<b>Seconders</b> Dan Skinner	
Proxy votes received in advance:	For: 125	Against: 11	Abstain: 15
Online votes:	For: 4	Against: 0	Abstain: 0

<b>Dan Skinner</b>	<b>Proposer</b> Tina Trickett	<b>Seconded</b> Richard Scarlett
Proxy votes received in advance:	For: 134	Against: 9      Abstain: 8
Online votes:	For: 5	Against: 0      Abstain: 0

<b>Rupert Taylor</b>	<b>Proposer</b> Ed Green	<b>Seconded</b> Graeme Mitchell
Proxy votes received in advance:	For: 143	Against: 5      Abstain: 3
Online votes:	For: 5	Against: 0      Abstain: 0

<b>Tina Trickett</b>	<b>Proposer</b> Rupert Taylor	<b>Seconded</b> Richard Scarlett
Proxy votes received in advance:	For: 138	Against: 7      Abstain: 6
Online votes:	For: 9	Against: 0      Abstain: 0

## 10. Volunteer Awards and thanks

Hannah Paddison, Volunteering & Community Support Officer reported that the awards this year were incredibly hard to decide as each person nominated had made an outstanding contribution.

She went on to present the awards to:

- Dave Cottle, who has been volunteering with the Trust for almost 50 years.
- Kiff Hancock, who after retiring from Somerset Wildlife Trust, continues to play an intrinsic role as a volunteer
- Naomi Palk, a long-term volunteer who sadly passed away after a short illness.

Hannah concluded by thanking all volunteers for the work they do, which plays a huge part in helping us to create a wilder Somerset.

## Close

There being no further notified business, the meeting formally closed at 12:40pm.