

What to expect at our AGM

If you've never attended an Annual General Meeting (AGM) before, don't worry—you're not alone. Our AGM is a welcoming event where members can hear about Somerset Wildlife Trust's work over the past year and help shape its future.

Before the meeting

The notice of meeting will be sent at least 21 days before the meeting – but often earlier than this. The notice can be sent by email or by post, but to keep costs down, we will send by email if we can.

The notice will formally announce the meeting, as well as telling everyone about the date and time, and full details of the resolutions – what members will be voting on. It will also include a link to an online proxy form, so if you can't attend, you can ask the chair of the meeting to vote on your behalf in the way YOU want them to vote. You'll also be directed to where our Annual Report and Accounts are on our website, as well as the minutes of the previous AGM, so you can see what will be discussed.

During the AGM

The meeting usually lasts around two hours and will include:

- A welcome from the Chair.
- A review of the Trust's achievements over the past year.
- A look forward to what we hope to achieve in the future
- The formal business – which takes the form of several statutory resolutions that the room votes on, such as:
 - Agreeing the minutes of the previous year's AGM.
 - Approval of the Annual Report & Accounts
 - Voting in the auditors who will be reviewing the accounts at the end of this financial year
 - Voting in new Trustees
 - Voting in Trustees who have reached the end of their three-year term (which is seen as best practice for Trustees)
- An opportunity for members to ask questions.

Voting

Voting is done on a show of hands. Only members are permitted to vote and everyone within a membership has one vote – for example, two adults in a joint membership have one vote each.

The chair of the meeting will read each resolution and ask for members to raise their hands – first for those that vote for, then for those that vote against and finally for anyone

who abstains – which means you are formally declining to vote. You can also not vote by just not putting your hand up for any of the three choices – for, against or abstain.

The chair will review the hands that are held up and if it's obvious, he will announce the result of the vote. If the vote is very close, he may ask people to keep their hands up and count every vote, so that we can be sure the vote is recorded accurately.

How you vote is entirely your choice and no one in the room should judge you for voting one way or the other.

Do I have to speak?

Not at all. Many people simply come to listen and learn more about the Trust's work. If you'd like to ask a question, there will be an opportunity during the meeting. Every member is encouraged to ask questions, and the room is very welcoming to people who do want to do so.

If you have a question, but don't want to ask it aloud, there will be plenty of opportunities for you to speak to a member of Staff – you can spot them by their branded polo shirts – during one of the breaks. If they don't have the answer, they'll be able to direct you to someone who does.

What happens before and after the AGM?

Both before and after the AGM, there will be a chance to have some refreshments and look around some of the information stands that will be there. There will be lots of people present; staff, volunteers and members, and they're a friendly group who will be happy to talk with other guests. However, if you want to just look round quietly that's absolutely fine too.

Somerset Wildlife Trust Staff and Trustees will have name badges, and many will be in branded clothing – if you have any questions on the day, they will be happy to help.

This year, the AGM will be followed by our afternoon forum: "What Will Tomorrow's Resilient Landscapes Look Like—and How Do We Get There?"

Through expert speakers and a panel discussion, we'll explore the economic, ecological, climate and community actions needed to create resilient landscapes across Somerset. There will once again be a chance to ask questions to the panel should you wish to, and we'll follow this session with tea and cake before you head off.

We hope you can join us for our AGM this year!