



Essex
Wildlife Trust

Abbotts Hall Farm, Great Wigborough
Colchester, Essex, CO5 7RZ

T 01621 862960

E enquiries@essexwt.org.uk

www.essexwt.org.uk

Minutes from Essex Wildlife Trust Annual General Meeting
Saturday 22nd October 2022 at 11.00am
Online meeting

Introduction - Dr Andrew Impey, CEO

The President of the Essex Wildlife Trust and Chair for the AGM welcomed members to the 63rd Annual General Meeting and thanked them for attending.

Professor Pretty explained the Trust's independent scrutineer, Penny Carter had verified the proxy forms received prior to the event. The voting results during the AGM are independently verified and passed to the Chair by the meeting hosts, Mi-voice.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr A and Mrs J James.

Ordinary Business

1. Members were asked to accept the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 23rd October 2021 during the online webinar, as a fair representation of the meeting.

Automated polling was added to proxy votes and the following votes were counted:

313 votes For, 0 Abstentions and 0 Against

The motion was carried, and the 2021 minutes were accepted as a true record.

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3. Consideration of the Impact Report of the Board of Trustees for the Year 2021

Professor Pretty commended the Impact Report to members. Members were shown the pack and referred to the website for the digital version. The main theme of the 2021 Impact Report is 'Taking Action for Wildlife' with a particular focus on the power of committees to take positive action for nature and climate.

4. To receive the Impact Report and the audited Financial Statements of Essex Wildlife Trust Ltd for the Year ended 31 December 2021.

Treasurer Bob Holmes, who presented the financial overview of 2021. Mr Holmes began by advising members that a more detailed presentation can be accessed on the Trust's website via the AGM webpage. The Trust's finances had another positive year, despite some continuing disruption from the Covid pandemic, which we'd experienced to a greater extent in 2020. To summarises the income and expenditure of the Trust last year compared with 2020; income decreased by £1.4million to £8.6million. As a result of lower income and increased costs, our operating surplus decreased from £2.6million in 2020 to just £0.3million in 2021. This reflects changes in the value of the Trust's long-term investments and pension liabilities.

Bob went on to explain the Trust's cash balances in 2021. Although the income and expenditure statement show that we made a surplus of £1.4million in 2021, we ended the year with half a million pounds less cash than at the start of the year. Certain items of the year's income and expenditure are not cash items. Although we saw a cash outflow of £500,000 in the year, the Trust ended it with cash balances of £2.9 million, which is still a substantial figure. Under our reserves policy, we have decided to ensure the amount of cash is never less than £1.5million.

The big change in the figures in 2021 compared with 2020 is the increase in general funds and the decrease in designated funds. During the year, the Trustees reviewed the funds that had been set up as designated funds to consider whether they were all still required for their original purpose. They concluded that many were not and decided to release £3.5m back to general funds. In doing so, they were conscious that delivering all aspects of the Trust's strategic plan in the coming years will cost money. The Trustees have approved medium term plans that include increasing the expenditure on charitable activities. These plans project operating deficits for the next few years until income has been grown to support this higher level of expenditure. The release of designated funds in 2021 will allow these deficits to be funded while the Trust continues to maintain a prudent level of free reserves. This has been set at £3m including £1.5m held in cash, as mentioned previously. By incurring these deficits, we will be spending some of those funds that have been accumulated in recent years.

Mr Holmes thanked all those who worked on the 2021 report and accounts, including the Trust's newly appointed Director of Finance and Systems, Sue Howe and all of the finance team, as well as the auditors at Moore Kingston Smith. The Auditors have again issued an unqualified report on the financial statements, which the Board of Trustees approved in July. He finished by proposing the resolutions, taking items 3 and 4 of the agenda together, the Impact Report and audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2021 are received, and secondly that Moore Kingston Smith LLP are reappointed as Auditors for the year ended 31 December 2022 and the Trustees are authorised to agree the Auditors' remuneration.

Automated polling was added to proxy votes and the following total votes were counted.

317 votes For, 10 Abstentions and 2 Against

The motion was carried, and members agreed to receive the Impact Report and Financial Statements.

5a. Appointment of Auditors

5b. Auditors' Remuneration

Members were asked if they agreed to re-appoint Moore Kingston Smith as auditors for the Trust for the year ended 31 December 2021 and authorise the Board of Trustees to agree their remuneration. Items 5a and 5b were voted on together. Automated polling was added to proxy votes and the following total votes were counted.

317 votes For, 12 Abstentions and 1 Against

The motion was carried, and it was agreed to re-appoint Moore Kingston Smith and that the Board of Trustees would agree their remuneration.

6. Election of Trustees

Autobiographies were posted on the website and listed in alphabetical order by surname. Automated polling was added to proxy votes and the following total votes were counted.

Members were asked to approve the re-appointment of Sarah Balsler as trustee.

297 votes For, 28 Abstentions and 4 Against

The motion was carried, and it was agreed to re-appoint Sarah Balsler as trustee.

Members were asked to approve the re-appointment of Malcolm Hardy as trustee.

296 votes For, 31 Abstentions and 1 Against

The motion was carried, and it was agreed to re-appoint Malcolm Hardy as trustee.

Members were asked to approve the re-appointment of Thoko Kaime as trustee.

276 votes For, 48 Abstentions and 4 Against

The motion was carried, and it was agreed to re-appoint Thoko Kaime as trustee.

Members were asked to approve the re-appointment of Naomi Kingston as trustee.

289 votes For, 36 Abstentions and 3 Against

The motion was carried, and it was agreed to re-appoint Naomi Kingston as trustee.

Special Business

1. AGM quorate number

Members were asked to approve the recommendation that the AGM quorate number is reduced from 100 to 50. If carried, this will require a change to the Essex Wildlife Trusts governing document. Automated polling was added to proxy votes and the following total votes were counted.

282 votes For, 19 Abstentions and 29 Against

The motion was carried and the recommendation that the quorate number is reduced was approved.

2. Appointment of Scrutineer It was proposed that Essex Wildlife Trust re-appoint Penny Carter as Scrutineer for the forthcoming year and for her to count and oversee the voting for the 2023 AGM.

38 votes For, 0 Abstentions and 0 Against.

There were no proxy votes for this item. The motion was carried, and Penny Carter was accepted as scrutineer for a further year.

End of Formal AGM Business